

Appendix

DEALING WITH RACIAL HARASSMENT

A Guide for Schools

December 2000

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A BACKGROUND

A1 The Authority's Policy

A1.1 The LEA has welcomed the definition of racial harassment in the Report of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry (Feb 1999). The Home Office Code of Practice on Recording and Reporting Racial Incidents (April 2000) states that "the definition of a racist incident that should be used by all agencies is that recommended by the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry". This definition is that a racist incident is:

"any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person".

The Home Office Code of Practice explains that, "The purpose of the definition ... is to ensure that investigations take full account of the possibility of a racist dimension to the incident and that statistics of such incidents are collected on a uniform basis".

Under this definition any incident which is perceived as racist will be investigated, recorded and monitored as such. This does not pre-empt the outcome of the investigation which ensues. Investigations should be based on the objective assessment of evidence gathered in each individual case.

In investigating any incident as defined above schools will be seeking to establish whether any act or expression has occurred which causes harm or offence, directed by a member of one racial or ethnic group to others, where the motivation or effect is to create racial dislike or hatred. Racial Harassment is not based on intentionality but on the effect of harm or offence. In some incidents the motivation may have been to cause that harm or offence, in others it may have been unintentional, but both would still constitute racial harassment. Incidents may not be racially explicit and yet still constitute racial harassment.

Ethnic groups will include European groups and Travellers. Incidents may include:

1. Threatened or actual physical assault.
2. Verbal abuse.
3. Expressions of prejudice calculated to offend others, or to influence the behaviour of others.
4. Racist graffiti (on school furniture, walls or books).
5. Distributing racist literature.
6. Wearing of badges or symbols belonging to known racist organisation.
7. Name calling.
8. Teasing in relation to language, religion or cultural background.
9. Inappropriate and hurtful humour.

Racial harassment may exist in more subtle forms and may not always be racially explicit. Minority ethnic pupils may be isolated, ignored or teased about their name, background or appearance. Pupils may unwittingly use offensive language which they do not understand and did not intend. These kinds of incidents are just as damaging as the more obvious examples above. Racist incidents can occur without a victim or target being present, for example telling racist jokes.

It is important to recognise that racist incidents are often complex and inter-related with other events and may involve group as well as individual behaviour. In any circumstances, racial harassment is unacceptable and must be dealt with effectively and with sensitivity. The experience of harassment carries the weight of inequality and prejudice and even a single act of harassment should be dealt with as a serious matter.

The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report defines institutional racism as being

“the collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people.”

This definition is helpful in alerting schools to the importance of clear policies, monitoring procedures and staff training to ensure that racism, in all its forms, can be identified and dealt with. Schools which develop procedures which are positive, rigorous, consistent, transparent and open to question will inspire the confidence of the diverse communities they seek to serve.

It is important to recognise that racial harassment in schools is part of a wider phenomenon of racism in society more generally and indeed Europe wide. The last few years has seen increasing numbers of incidents, including extreme examples of attacks and murders. We have also seen an upsurge in the activities of extremist groups in fomenting racial tensions. In 1999/2000 (figures available 19 January 2001) racist incidents were reported to the police nationally. In Hertfordshire, 703 incidents were reported to the police. The Commission for Racial Equality and the Home Office have estimated that there is under-reporting by at least a factor of 10. While this document seeks to establish the monitoring of all incidents of racial harassment, informal surveys of some schools show that such incidents are commonplace and for some pupils an everyday experience.

These guidelines aim to provide practical guidance and support to schools on dealing with such incidents effectively and on developing a prevention strategy.

It is important that schools develop and implement their policy on racial harassment so that it is consistent with their policies on managing pupil behaviour and part of a policy on equal opportunities in its broadest sense. It is very important that all staff and pupils recognise that school policy is fair and just and represents and protects the whole school community.

Hertfordshire County Council's equal opportunities policy, 'Putting People First' (July 1999) establishes principles and procedures for the local authority. A version of this policy is being prepared for school purposes and schools are strongly recommended to adopt it. The Hertfordshire Framework for School Self-Evaluation (September 2000) refers schools to systematic consideration of aspects of racial equality in their evaluation of all aspects of school effectiveness.

A1.2 Incidents Involving Staff

People who work at the school, whether they are direct employees or contractors' staff, may be the subject of allegations of racial harassment, either as perpetrators or recipients.

Such allegations must be investigated fairly.

Teaching and non-teaching staff who are employed by the governors are subject to the schools' disciplinary and grievance procedures. Any investigation of an allegation against an employee must be consistent with the requirement of the school's disciplinary or grievance procedure as appropriate in order to ensure fairness.

The disciplinary procedure should be used where there is evidence to suggest that an employee may be guilty of misconduct. The Authority's disciplinary rules, which are recommended to governing bodies, include the following clauses.

- ◆ that "unlawful or unacceptable discrimination which is contrary to the school's adopted policy against other employees, pupils or members of the public" may be considered to be misconduct.
- ◆ that "racial or sexual harassment of other employees, pupils or members of the public in the course of employment" may be considered to be gross misconduct (i.e. leading to possible dismissal).

In circumstances where the allegation is dealt with and resolved informally, it is important that the school considers carefully the need for counselling, support and, as necessary, informal warning about future conduct.

The grievance procedure may be invoked by an employee who wishes to make a complaint against a fellow employee. Such a complaint may be about a failure to deal adequately with an allegation of racial harassment.

It needs to be recognised that a decision to carry out an investigation does not necessarily mean that disciplinary action will follow – each case needs to be judged on the strength of the available evidence – but there must be a fair investigation in accordance with procedural requirements.

Staff who are employed by an HCC approved contractor are subject to a code of conduct which explicitly rules out racial harassment in the following terms.

Contractors are required to:

“Prohibit the use of offensive language or behaviour, including that which is offensive on grounds of race, gender or disability”.

Where an investigation reveals evidence that such staff have racially harassed a member of the school community or visitor to the school, then a complaint should be made to the supervisor on site, in the first instance, or to the appropriate contract manager who is responsible for taking action. Failure to respond adequately to such a complaint may result in the removal of the contractor from the approved list of contractors.

Where staff, whether directly employed or not, allege that they are a recipient of racial harassment by an employee, or pupil, the investigation and any subsequent action must follow the requirements of the school’s procedure for staff discipline, staff grievance or pupil discipline.

During an investigation, any resulting action, and the period immediately following such action, the school will need to counsel and support the victim of the alleged harassment.

A1.3 Volunteers and Visitors

Schools should bring to the attention of volunteers who work in the school on a regular basis, the school’s policies. This will include a policy on racial harassment. It would be good practice for schools to give visitors a copy of the school brochure which should include a summary of school policy.

Where a volunteer or visitor is the subject of allegations of racial harassment, either as perpetrator or recipient, the school must ensure:

- ◆ that such allegations are investigated fairly and fully.
- ◆ that appropriate action is taken which adheres to the principle that racial harassment is unacceptable.

A1.4 Governors

Governors have the responsibility for drawing up and approving all school policies, including those for behaviour and for dealing with racial harassment. The DfEE circular ‘Social Inclusion Pupil Support’ (July 1999) requires that all school behaviour policies must make it clear that racial harassment will not be tolerated and say how staff and pupils should deal with it.

In carrying out this responsibility governing bodies will wish to ensure an awareness of legal and procedural requirements in this area. (See D1 Support for Schools)

Under DfEE guidelines (op.cit.) governing bodies have a responsibility to monitor the number and nature of racist incidents in the school and the action taken to deal with them. It would be helpful if a designated governor or committee worked closely with the member of staff responsible for the regular monitoring of incidents. Governing bodies should inform the LEA on an annual basis of the pattern and frequency of racist incidents and of action taken. (See B3 Monitoring and Reporting)

Governors may be involved in allegations of racial harassment either as perpetrators or recipients. Such allegations must be investigated fully and fairly by the school.

A2 Government Policy

A2.1 Government Policy

Schools, their governing bodies and the Local Authority have responsibilities under the Race Relations Act (1976) not to discriminate against a person directly or indirectly.

Section 71 of the Race Relations Act states:

“Without prejudice to their obligation to comply with any other provision of this Act, it shall be the duty of every local authority to make appropriate arrangements with a view to securing that their various functions are carried out with due regard to the need:-

- (a) to eliminate unlawful racial discrimination; and
- (b) to promote equality of opportunity, and good relations between persons of different racial groups.”

Where racial harassment of pupils in a school is occurring, there is neither equal opportunity for the harassed pupils nor good relations between persons of different racial groups.

While Section 71 of the Act places general duties on schools and the Authority, Section 17 makes it unlawful for bodies in charge of educational institutions to discriminate in the way they afford a pupil access to any benefits, facilities or services or by subjecting the pupil to any other detriment. This includes failure to take reasonable steps to prevent racial harassment from occurring or to deal with racial harassment effectively when it does occur.

The Race Relations (Amendment) Bill (Dec 1999) extends the responsibility of schools by placing a positive duty on them, as on all public authorities, to promote racial equality and to have due regard to the elimination of racial discrimination. This will include such measures as policy and practice review and monitoring of employment and service delivery.

The Human Rights Act (2000) extends protection against discrimination to religious and Traveller groups, previously not covered by the Race Relations Act.

In June 1995, the Authority received details of a case taken under the 1976 Race Relations Act against a Local Education Authority and a school's governing body regarding the failure of the school to take effective action in dealing with an incident of racial harassment. The case led to an ex gratia payment to the complainant and a legally binding agreement with the LEA that:

- ◆ Schools and governors would be briefed and trained on race discrimination and awareness issues.
- ◆ Guidelines would be issued to schools, including guidance on responsibilities under the Race Relations Act.

These guidelines seek to ensure that schools and governing bodies have been advised properly regarding their duties and responsibilities over such matters and that support is available to schools when such incidents occur.

The Protection from Harassment Act (1997) makes it an offence to commit more than once acts that 'amount to harassment' of another person and which the perpetrator knows, or ought to know, amount to harassment. The Crime and Disorder Act (Oct. 1998) introduces new racially aggravated offences of assault, grievous bodily harm, harassment and criminal damage. An offence is racially aggravated if:

- at the time it is committed, or just before or after, the offender demonstrates hostility towards the victim based on the victim's membership of a racial group,
- the offence is motivated by hostility based on membership of a racial group.

The Inquiry Report into the murder of Stephen Lawrence, while concerned primarily with the police, places a substantial emphasis on the role of education in preventing and dealing with racism.

Recommendation 68 of the report states:

“That Local Education Authorities and school governors have the duty to create and implement strategies in their schools to prevent and address racism. Such strategies to include;

- that schools record all racist incidents
- that all recorded incidents are reported to the pupils' parents/guardians, school governors and LEAs ...”

The DfEE in the circular 'Social Inclusion Pupil Support' (July 1999) advises that:

“All schools’ behaviour policies must make it clear that racial harassment will not be tolerated and say how staff and pupils should deal with it. The school should record all racial incidents, and parents and governors should be informed of such incidents and the action taken to deal with them. Governing bodies should inform LEAs annually of the pattern and frequency of any incidents. Pupils who have suffered racial harassment, at or outside school, may need support”.

The CRE has published and distributed to all schools guidelines and standards for the promotion of Racial Equality in schools, including how to deal with Racial Harassment. ('Learning for All : Standards, for Racial Equality in Schools', 2000). This includes a self-evaluation tool which schools can use to evaluate their own practice. (See Appendix 1)

A3 OFSTED Requirements

The OFSTED Framework for the Inspection of Schools requires school inspectors to evaluate equal opportunities in schools. In this context, inspectors will observe pupil behaviour. It is explicit in the framework that high levels of racial tension and harassment may be seen as an indicator of a failing school. Inspectors will look for evidence that:

- ◆ schools have developed policies on equal opportunities (this will include racial harassment and the curriculum),
- ◆ the policy is understood and implemented by all members of the school community,
- ◆ the policy is monitored and reviewed.

A4 Community Concern

This section has been written by parents and others from the minority ethnic communities in Hertfordshire.

Racial Harassment is a 'real' experience for black and minority ethnic children and schools need to acknowledge that racism does occur and that immediate action should be taken to combat this. Some schools fail to acknowledge that there is racial harassment taking place on their premises. It is essential that schools admit to the problem if solutions are to be found.

Minority ethnic parents and communities welcome the revision of these guidelines in the light of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry. While recognising the efforts many schools have made in implementing policies and procedures for dealing with racial harassment, parents feel a sense of disappointment that some schools have yet to fully implement anti-racist strategies. This is despite the death of Stephen Lawrence, the ensuing Inquiry and recommendations. Parents and communities wish to be assured that their children are genuinely safe.

Communities and parents wish to see the development of greater openness in dealing with incidents and the sharing of information. The thorough recording of incidents involving pupils and/or teachers and an evaluation of the outcomes of schools procedures in dealing with incidents from the school's and victims perspective is essential to developing good practice.

The aim of the school should be to teach the value of diversity and respect for cultural differences. Black and minority ethnic children need to feel that their culture and ethnic origin are valued by the school. Issues of racism and equality should be explored within the National Curriculum in a range of personal, community and global contexts. This will involve acknowledging and harnessing the knowledge and experiences of the local communities within the curriculum and mainstreaming the diversity of lifestyles, values and cultural norms as appropriate to what is being studied.

The community wishes to see

- OFSTED and the LEA actively involved in monitoring schools' responses to ethnic diversity, including racial harassment.
- the LEA supporting the further development of Race Equality Councils and other community organisations and forums in developing support networks for parents.
- the development of advocacy support to build confidence, empower and enable parents to pursue their concerns.

The communities would wish to see school policies and procedures developed such that:

- Parents, pupils and communities are empowered and enabled through dialogue and partnership in the process.
- A strategy is developed which includes prevention and clear procedures with timescales for dealing with incidents.
- There is a capacity to recognise, understand and act on incidents within a defined timescale
- There is detailed reporting and monitoring of actions and outcomes which feeds into established local monitoring mechanisms.

B THE SCHOOL RESPONSE

B1 Principles

The following principles should inform schools' policies on racial harassment and response to individual incidents:

- ◆ All incidents should be responded to immediately and appropriately. Some aspects of the response will need to be dealt with at a later stage, for example, contact with parents.
- ◆ School staff should understand that their reactions to such incidents will influence the attitudes of pupils. For example, a failure to respond will be seen as condoning racist behaviour.
- ◆ All members of the school community, including staff, pupils and parents have a right not to experience racism at school whether or not this is directed at them.
- ◆ It is important that school staff acknowledge that pupils and staff who have experienced racism may have developed strategies to deal with this. Intervention should, where possible, support and empower pupils/staff who have suffered harassment. A balance should be struck between supporting pupils/staff and protecting them. For example, the school's response should be discussed with and explained to the pupils and parents or staff involved.
- ◆ It may be the victim's preference that incidents should not be investigated or dealt with. In such cases the possible consequences should be explained and the victim encouraged to reconsider their position. Schools must respond fully where not to respond would be detrimental to the school ethos and community, including where the incident may constitute a crime. (See B2 Responses) If the victim's preference not to investigate is supported the school will still need to consider the implication of the incident for the school and its community.
- ◆ School staff should feel that dealing with these issues is a learning experience and that there is no one way of dealing with incidents.
- ◆ All incidents of racial harassment should be treated as serious disciplinary matters. As with any other serious disciplinary matter the way it is dealt with should be appropriate to the incident itself. For example, a deliberate racist attack (verbal or physical) should be dealt with on the same basis as any other serious attack involving discipline of the offender, support for the pupil/member of staff who has been attacked and counselling for both parties. Where the incident is judged to be unintentional then the emphasis would be on counselling and support for both parties.
- ◆ Consistency in dealing with incidents is essential if pupils and staff are to be clear about the schools commitment to dealing with racism.

- ◆ All incidents must be recorded, including the date, the names and ethnicity of the perpetrators and victims, the nature of the incident, and action taken in response.
- ◆ Pupils who have experienced racism and their parents should be kept fully informed at each stage of the process.
- ◆ Schools should ensure that there is a strong prevention strategy in place involving policies, procedures, training for all staff, curriculum work and links with other agencies. An ethos in which pupils are encouraged and enabled to report behaviour that is of concern, including bullying and harassment will be a significant part of such a strategy.

B2 Responses

- i) The school must make clear that racist behaviour is unacceptable. This will occur through school literature, through what is said at meetings and other school events and through the curriculum.
- ii) The school should have a clear detailed procedure for dealing with incidents – this should be made known to the whole school community. This should include ensuring that:
 - ◆ the school's opposition to such behaviour is clearly demonstrated.
 - ◆ the reasons are explained.
 - ◆ steps are taken to ensure, as far as possible, that such behaviour is not repeated. This will include counselling and sanctions where appropriate. Any sanctions should be appropriate to the way the school deals with other serious disciplinary incidents.
 - ◆ that the child or adult who has suffered harassment is supported. In the case of a child this will include support for parents.
 - ◆ that the nature of an incident involving pupils is made known to other staff and to governors through agreed channels.
 - ◆ the possible impact of an incident on the wider school community is considered and responded to.

- ◆ schools should always advise the police of any criminal activity, this includes racist incidents that are categorised as crimes, for example physical violence, damage to property, theft and sustained or repeated harassment. (See B3 Monitoring and Reporting) Hertfordshire’s police encourage the reporting to them of all racist incidents. Each policing area has a specialist Racial Incidents Officer or Local Community Safety Unit with fully trained police officers who work on a regular basis with their partnership agencies and groups to seek an appropriate resolution to any incident. Hertfordshire’s police welcome enquiries or calls for assistance from schools on any racist incident regardless of whether it is a crime or not.
- ◆ Parents should be informed whether the police have been contacted by the school and of their right to contact the police in relation to any incident of racial harassment.

The CRE’s ‘Learning for All: Standards, for Racial Equality in Schools’ (2000) includes a self evaluation tool for schools on their responses to incidents of racial harassment which is reproduced in Appendix 1.

B3 Monitoring and Reporting

Schools are required to record and monitor all incidents of racial harassment. The Home Office Code of Practice (April 2000) states, “Racist incidents are not recorded only to provide statistics at a national level, nor even to provide statistics at a local level, although these are obviously useful outcomes of recording. But recording incidents also allows the victim to be offered support and enables intelligence to be gathered, which will help appropriate preventative measures to be put in place and information to be collected that may help in dealing with the perpetrator/s, and focus resources on areas of need.”

Schools should designate a member of staff to take responsibility for regular monitoring and review of recorded incidents. This staff member should attend training updates as notified by the local authority to ensure a full understanding of legal and procedural changes. (See D1 Support for Schools)

The DfEE in the circular ‘Social Inclusion Pupil Support’ (July 1999) advises that:

“The school should record all racial incidents, and parents and governors should be informed of such incidents and the action taken to deal with them. Governing bodies should inform LEAs annually of the pattern and frequency of any incidents. Pupils who have suffered racial harassment, at or outside school, may need support”.

Procedures for the reporting of racial incidents to governing bodies should be established in all schools. A designated governor or committee who works closely with the staff member responsible for overall monitoring would also assist this process.

The Local Authority will be informed annually by the Audit Commission of the precise categories under which statistics will be compiled for the financial year. These categories are currently (2000/01) as follows:

- ◆ **the number of racial incidents recorded by the authority per 100,000 population** (racial incidents are any incidents regarded as such by the victim or anyone else). The indicator applies to all an authority's services including schools and to employment by the authority.
- ◆ **The percentage of racial incidents that resulted in further action.** Further action must be recorded in writing and would entail such things as:
 - ◆ detailed investigations, e.g. interviews with alleged perpetrator(s)
 - ◆ referral to the police or other body (Commission for Racial Equality, Citizens Advice Bureau, etc.)
 - ◆ mediation
 - ◆ warning to the perpetrator, which if oral must be recorded at the time
 - ◆ relocation of the victim
 - ◆ removal of graffiti

The Local Authority will collect information annually from schools to the requirements set out by the Audit Commission. In designing this monitoring, particular attention will be paid to:

- ◆ minimising bureaucratic demands on schools;
- ◆ providing advice to schools on how the data can be used to review and improve existing policy and practice.

Monitoring will enable governing bodies and the Authority to review the effectiveness of their policies. In schools monitoring will also assist in identifying individual or group patterns of racist behaviour. Schools should develop a mechanism to keep records of all incidents and responses, including those reported by parents, in order to review their own effectiveness in dealing with racism (See Appendix 2 for sample reporting format). Where records of incidents involve named individuals, these should be placed on file as would other records of serious misconduct.

Schools may expect that effective strategies will lead in the short/medium term to a rise in the reporting of incidents. Target setting to increase reporting and reduce repeat offences, and evaluation to establish the effectiveness of support for victims, is recommended.

Schools are strongly advised to report to the Authority **without delay** racist incidents which involve any of the following:

- ◆ physical violence or serious damage to property

- ◆ repeated or orchestrated harassment
- ◆ links with extremist groups, including distributing of racist literature
- ◆ racist graffiti
- ◆ exclusion related to a racist incident

Where there is clear criminal conduct such incidents should also be reported to the local police's Racial Incidents Officer or Community Safety Unit.

On receipt of any such a report, the Authority will support schools in responding effectively to the incident and in ensuring that legal responsibilities have been met through:

- ◆ contacts with other agencies, including the police, where appropriate
- ◆ contacts with parents and the community
- ◆ advice on dealing with the incident and its consequences, including legal advice, where appropriate
- ◆ policy development and training

The support will be entirely confidential to the school and will continue to be funded by the Education Department.

Reports should be sent to: Jan Hardy, Head of MECSS
 MECSS Unit, Wheathampstead Education Centre
 Herts AL4 8PY
 01582 830202

B4 Prevention Strategies

The following approaches and co-ordinated activities will contribute to an effective prevention strategy.

- ◆ Clear and confident communication across the whole school community of the ethos and policies relating to racial equality and dealing with racial harassment.
- ◆ An approach to policy development that involves the whole school community, including parents, pupils and communities.
- ◆ Pupil involvement in a range of anti-bullying activities, for example the development of behaviour codes, circle time, negotiation and conflict resolution, peer mentoring (see Appendix 4 Townsend School's 'Respect for All' policy)

- ◆ An ethos in which pupils are encouraged and enabled to report behaviour that is of concern, including bullying and harassment will be vital.
- ◆ Delivery of a curriculum which teaches the value of diversity and the nature of racism, as detailed in the Inclusion statement of the National Curriculum.
- ◆ Regular and varied sampling of relationships and attitudes across the school which informs the school's review of the success of school policy and practice, for example monitoring of playground language, pupil surveys and staff and pupil interviews (See Appendix 4 Bushey Meads School's pupil research)

The LEA is preparing further guidance for schools on developing a multi-cultural and anti-racist curriculum. An audit of school standards in race equality can be found in the CRE 's 'Learning For All' which has been sent to all schools.

C AN ACTION CHECKLIST FOR SCHOOLS

- ◆ Arrange for whole staff training to ensure that staff are prepared and able to implement the policy. Such training is available from the Minority Ethnic Curriculum Support Service.
- ◆ Review and revise the existing school policy and procedures to encompass changes set out in these guidelines. This will include a clear statement of responsibilities and principles and a set of procedures to be followed when incidents occur. Involve staff, governors, parents and pupils. Support for this process can be provided by the Minority Ethnic Curriculum Support Service. (See Appendix 3 for examples of policies and procedures)
- ◆ As part of a preventative strategy, discuss and agree how the principles of race equality and equal opportunities will be taught within and across the curriculum.
- ◆ Agree a strategy to inform governors, parents, all school staff and other members of the school community of the school's policy, ensuring that all new members of the school community will be made fully aware.
- ◆ Agree and establish a system of monitoring to record all incidents and action taken. Agree how the results of such monitoring will be used, for example reports to staff meetings and governors for consideration, and (see Section B3) for forwarding to County. (See Appendix 2 for a sample recording format)
- ◆ Allocate a designated member of staff to undertake regular monitoring responsibilities and a governor or committee to liaise closely with the designated member of staff.
- ◆ Agree a medium/long term training plan, including induction for new staff and governors and update training for key staff at regular intervals, including those who make first contact with victims.

D SUPPORT FOR SCHOOLS AND FAMILIES

D1 Support for Schools

The Authority will continue to offer support to schools in developing their policies and practice in response to racial harassment. Broad and targeted in-service courses will be offered to schools and governors and, in addition, school-based in-service and advice can be arranged on request for school staff and governors.

In agreement with schools, MECSS advisory staff will work in conjunction with School Development Advisers to assist schools in responding to specific incidents of racial harassment. Such support could include incident analysis, advice on procedures for investigation or response, advice on support for victims of racial harassment and, where appropriate, liaising between school and parents and/or attending meetings with parents as an informed facilitator.

The Local Authority recognises its statutory responsibilities under race relations legislation to support schools in dealing with incidents of racial harassment. This will include funding for the support described above.

MECSS advisory staff can also offer support to schools on detailed prevention strategies including the provision of a curriculum for ethnic and cultural diversity. Such support may be on a traded basis.

MECSS will continue, through its centres, to support parents in their relationships with schools.

The Authority will respond to reports of racial harassment as set out in the section on 'Monitoring and Reporting' above.

D2 Support for Families

Where it is requested, MECSS can offer support to parents of children who are experiencing racial harassment. This support will include:

- ◆ informing parents of the Local Authority's policy,
- ◆ liaising between home and school,
- ◆ attending meetings as an informed facilitator,
- ◆ advising parents where they can gain further advice and assistance.

E LINKS WITH OTHER AGENCIES

A multi-agency approach to responding to racial incidents has been adopted across Hertfordshire. This involves a wide range of agencies sharing information in order to ensure that a full picture can be gained of racist incidents across an area to facilitate effective prevention strategies and to ensure the provision of appropriate support to victims. In any area such work may be undertaken by Community Safety Panels or Multi-agency Groups for Racial Harassment. These multi-agency groups will include representation from the Police, the Local Authority and cultural and community support groups. Schools are encouraged to take an active role in supporting the work of such multi-agency groups. It would be helpful for schools to discuss issues and concerns and to share intelligence on any trends with other agencies.

In addition schools may wish to access the involvement or support of agencies such as the Youth Service, Victim Support and the Citizens Advice Bureau.

Schools are encouraged to network with other schools in their area to share relevant information resulting from monitoring analysis and good practice in prevention strategies. Such opportunities could be facilitated by the Minority Ethnic Curriculum Support Service.

F OTHER USEFUL SOURCES

Learning in Terror

A survey of racial harassment in schools and colleges.
Commission for Racial Equality 1988

Murder in the Playground

The Report of the MacDonald Inquiry into racism and racial violence in Manchester schools
(The Burnage Report)
I MacDonald. Longsight 1989

Racism in Children's Lives

A study of Mainly-White Primary Schools.
Barry Troyna and Richard Hatcher
Routledge 1992

The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry

Report of an Inquiry by Sir William MacPherson of Cluny
The Stationery Office 1999

Code of Practice on reporting and recording racist incidents

In response to recommendation 15 of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report
Home Office 2000

Learning for All.

Standards of Racial Equality for Schools
Commission for Racial Equality 2000
(Please note: this has been circulated to all schools by CRE)

Social Inclusion: Pupil Support

Circular No. 10/99
Department for Education and Employment 1999

G APPENDICES

G1 Appendix 1: Extract from
‘Learning for All. Standards for Racial Equality in Schools’
Commission for Racial Equality 2000

RACISM, RACIAL DISCRIMINATION AND RACIAL HARASSMENT

4. Clear procedures are in place to ensure that racist incidents, racial discrimination and racial harassment are dealt with promptly, firmly and consistently.

- ◆ All staff deal with incidents involving racism (including prejudice and stereotyping), racial harassment, and racist name calling whenever they occur.
- ◆ Pupils are encouraged to report all incidents involving racism, racial discrimination and racial harassment.
- ◆ A named teacher has overall responsibility for dealing with such incidents. The teacher’s role is widely publicised.
- ◆ All racist incidents and complaints of racial discrimination and racial harassment against staff and against pupils are formally recorded.
- ◆ All reported incidents and complaints are investigated within a specified time period.
- ◆ Procedures indicate how specific types of racist incidents should be addressed.
Procedures cover:
 - ◆ pupils
 - ◆ parents
 - ◆ all staff
 - ◆ visitors to the school
 - ◆ governors
- ◆ Active steps are taken to protect staff from racist bullying or harassment by pupils or parents (see Appendix 2, vicarious liability)
- ◆ Action is taken to prevent incidents from recurring.
- ◆ All incidents and their resolution are regularly reported to the governing body.
- ◆ The governing body reports all incidents, along with the action taken, to the LEA.
- ◆ Parents and other members of the school community are kept informed of any action taken to deal with racist incidents.
- ◆ Racist incident and complaints of racial discrimination and racial harassment are monitored and the effectiveness of the scan taken to address incidents is assessed.

5. Immediate action is taken to remove racist graffiti from all school property.

- ◆ The school has clear procedures for reporting racist graffiti.
- ◆ All members of the school community are aware of the policy and reporting procedures.
- ◆ Racist graffiti on school property is removed within 24 hours of its being reported.
- ◆ Those responsible for racist graffiti are disciplined.

6. All staff are trained to deal effectively with racist incidents, racism, racial harassment, prejudice and stereotyping.

- ◆ Staff induction covers the school's policy and procedures for dealing with incidents;
 - ◆ staff in predominantly white schools are alerted to the possibility of racism, racial harassment, prejudice and stereotyping.
- ◆ All staff are trained on how to implement the school's racial harassment policy and procedures.
- ◆ All contract staff, including supply teachers, are informed of the school's racial equality and racial harassment policies and receive training on the school's procedures of dealing with racist incidents, racial discrimination and racial harassment.
- ◆ Anti-harassment training is provided for all teaching and support staff;
 - ◆ training is regular and on-going
 - ◆ good practice and effective strategies for dealing with racist incidents are shared between staff and schools.
 - ◆ all staff who are involved in supporting victims and perpetrators are given appropriate training.
- ◆ Staff effectiveness in dealing with racist incidents, racial harassment, prejudice and stereotyping is monitored and evaluated.

7. A sensitive and structured system to support is available to victims of racism, racial discrimination, racist incidents and racial harassment.

- ◆ All members of the school community, including pupils, teachers, support staff and parents, are able to obtain appropriate support if they are subjected to racism or racial harassment.

- ◆ A designated member of staff co-ordinates the support that is offered to victims.
- ◆ All staff are trained and able to provide support to victims.
- ◆ Parents of pupils who are victims are always informed of incidents and of the action taken to deal with the incidents.
- ◆ Action is taken to prevent the victim from being subjected to further incidents;
 - ◆ perpetrators are removed from situations which might upset or antagonise the victim.
- ◆ A variety of strategies are in place to support victims of racial harassment. These include:
 - ◆ asking the victim what support they need
 - ◆ giving victims the option of getting support from outside the school
 - ◆ establishing peer support schemes to help victims
 - ◆ providing mentors who can support victims
 - ◆ using the curriculum to encourage pupils who witness racist behaviour to report it.

8. The school has clear procedures for dealing with perpetrators of racist incidents.

- ◆ The procedures for dealing with racist incidents are described in the Home School Agreement.
- ◆ Parents of pupils who are responsible for racist conduct play an active role in dealing with it.
- ◆ Perpetrators are disciplined.
- ◆ Perpetrators are encouraged to participate in activities aimed at challenging and changing racist behaviour.

9. Active links are established with external organisations dealing with racist incidents and racial harassment.

- ◆ The school supports local multi-agency policies and strategies to address racial harassment;
 - ◆ the school is a member of a local anti-harassment network (where one exists).
- ◆ The school works closely with external agencies to deal with racist incidents that affect the school community, whether they take place inside or outside the school.

- ◆ The school keeps the LEA informed of all racist incidents, including racist name calling.

G2 Appendix 2: Sample of a School Integrated Bullying and Harassment Form

SAMPLE SCHOOL BULLYING/HARASSMENT MONITORING/REPORT FORM

For each incident please complete one form and return to the **designated teacher** for collation and monitoring.

1. Focus of Bullying/Harassment

Please tick all elements which apply in your understanding of the incident(s):

	Definitely applies	Possibly applies
Ability/Disability		
Age		
Appearance		
Class/Background/Socio economic		
Geographical area of home		
Gender		
Maturity		
Ethnicity*		
Religion*		
Sexuality		
Size		

*See County Guidelines on Dealing with Racial Harassment

2. Manifestation of Bullying/Harassment

Perception of individual: feelings of being bullied/harassed	
Isolation/ignoring	
Teasing	
Verbal abuse or name calling (specify below)	
Expressions of prejudice/stereotype	
Threatened physical assault	
Actual physical assault	
Targeted graffiti or hurtful note writing	
Other:	

3. Those involved:

Targets (including ethnicity)	Offenders (including ethnicity)

4. Description of incident(s)

Please give a precise account including places, date, times and any witnesses. Attach any further information (e.g. pupils' accounts, witness accounts, notes of meetings)

5. Action taken:

Please record all steps (incl. meetings, letters, investigations, sanctions)

6. Summary of those notified and/or involved

<i>(Delete italic options where applicable)</i>	✓	Any details (e.g. dates)
Head Teacher		
Chair of Governors		
Form tutor/class teacher		
Head of Year		
'Target' parents informed school by <i>letter/telephone/in person</i>		
'Target' parents notified by <i>letter/telephone/in person</i>		
'Target' parents invited to the school		
'Offender' parents informed school by <i>letter/telephone/in person</i>		
'Offender' parents notified by <i>letter/telephone/in person</i>		
'Offender' parents invited to the school		
County Hall (see County Guidelines on Bullying and Racial Harassment)		
Police		
Others (specify):		

8. Reporting member of staff:

Name _____ Date _____

G3 Appendix 3: Examples of school policies

G3.1 Margaret Wix Primary School

MARGARET WIX PRIMARY SCHOOL ANTI-RACISM POLICY

1. Definitions

The definition of a racist incident:

“A racist incident is any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person.”

(Taken from ‘The Stephen Lawrence Enquiry – The McPherson Report, 1999.’)

The definition of institutional racism:

The collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people.

(Taken from ‘The Stephen Lawrence Enquiry – The McPherson Report, 1999.’)

- ◆ All forms of racist behaviour should and must be dealt with as a serious matter.
- ◆ Lack of intent does not excuse behaviour. Unintentional harassment should also be dealt with as a serious matter.
- ◆ A ‘victim’ does not have to be present or targeted for an incident of racist behaviour to have occurred.
- ◆ Harassment includes ‘subtle’ behaviour such as isolation, ignoring, teasing and negative body language.

All incidents of racist behaviour should be challenged, including that of adults, not to respond may be seen to condone the behaviour and may result in serious incidents of retaliation.

2. Our Aims:

- ◆ To make school a safe and welcoming place for all its members.
- ◆ To instil in pupils a positive awareness of the value of all pupils
- ◆ To establish within the school an atmosphere of respect, which reduces prejudices and raises self-esteem.
- ◆ To ensure all pupils, irrespective of their ethnic origin, achieve the level of success and self respect which they deserve, whilst retaining their cultural identity.
- ◆ To provide an environment in which racist assumptions are constantly challenged.
- ◆ To provide a curriculum which encourages the valuing of cultural diversity and prevents racism, in order to reflect better the needs of a diverse society and which emphasises the positive aspects of all cultures.
- ◆ To give children the knowledge that racism can and must be eradicated.
- ◆ To teach children that they have a responsibility, as citizens of our society, to eradicate racism.

3. In-School Practices and Organisation to Achieve our Aims:

1. Classroom organisation – non-segregation on ethnic grounds, including when specific language support is being provided. Displays and teaching materials used should reflect, as far as is possible, positive images of other cultures.
2. Links with parents.
3. Links with the community – speakers to come in and talk to pupils.
4. Main signs and labels (minimum of public areas) in different languages.
5. Assemblies to (a) promote and encourage positive attitudes to cultural diversity and (b) to emphasise unacceptable nature of racist behaviour.
6. Opportunities to celebrate religious holidays and festivals from the six major world religions.
7. Teachers providing good role models.
8. Language support across the curriculum.
9. Teachers' awareness of how their practices should reflect the needs of the bi-lingual learners.
10. PSE/ circle time lessons to provide a forum for discussion and the development of skills and attitudes consistent with our aims, preparing children for a life in a multi-cultural community..
11. Specific teaching against racism. Teachers should exploit such opportunities as they arise.
12. A variety and a choice of meals offered by the school cook to ensure all needs are catered for. (See also the school's 'Teaching and Learning Policy'.)

4. The Scope of Racist Behaviour

The following incidents *to/could be regarded as racist:

1. Subtle
isolation, ignoring,
negative body language.
2. Verbal abuse
name calling, teasing.
Comments about family members
offensive humour
inciting others, gangs
vicious threats
3. Violence
jostling
intimidation
punching/kicking
fighting
4. Abuse of personal property
5. Graffiti (This must be removed immediately it is found)
6. Racist materials e.g. badges and notes. These should be confiscated immediately and returned to the child's parent. In doing so, it is important to explain to the parent, the school's stance on this type of behaviour.

This list is not exhaustive, it must be remembered that any behaviour which is perceived as being racist should be treated as such.

5. Responding to Racist Incidents.

Members of staff should apply the policy consistently.

The perception of the person who has experienced harassment should be given priority.

All racist incidents must be taken seriously and dealt with immediately, using the following procedures.

The children should be initially spoken to individually. On some occasions, at a later stage, it may be appropriate to sit all concerned round the table for a discussion of what happened and for each to share their feelings.

5.1. The Victim:

Give the victim an immediate, sensitive and supportive response to the incident.

Take their complaint seriously.

Person initially dealing with incident.

- ◆ Allow a full expression of feelings.
- ◆ Find out what happened, at least in general terms.
- ◆ Agree with the individual(s) what will happen next and /or when you will next talk to them.
- ◆ Refer onwards.

Head (or Key Stage Manager in head's absence.)

- ◆ Inform the parents of the child/ren involved.
- ◆ Keep the victim informed throughout the process.
- ◆ Ensure that they know that you have dealt with the incident seriously.
- ◆ Report back to parents on the outcome of the investigation.
- ◆ Consider what further support /counselling may be needed and can be afforded beyond the specific incident.

5.2. The Offender / Perpetrator:

Person initially dealing with incident.

- ◆ Find out what happened, at least in general terms.
- ◆ Make known to them the complaint and ask for their response.
- ◆ Agree with the individual(s) what will happen next and /or when you will next talk to them.
- ◆ Speak to all those who may have witnessed the incident and ask them to give an account of what they personally saw and heard.
- ◆ Refer onwards.

Head

Interview all those involved

File 'Racist Incident Report Form.'

Record incident in 'Racist Incident Log-book,' housed in the confidential file in the headteacher's office. This book has pre-numbered pages.

If it is clear that the complaint is upheld (including where it was unintentional):

- ◆ Define the unacceptable behaviour and explain to the perpetrator why it is unacceptable.
- ◆ State clearly what change in behaviour you expect. Check the perpetrator understands what you have explained.
- ◆ Agree what the child is going to do, to help re-dress the situation.
- ◆ Inform the parents of the child/ren involved.
- ◆ If appropriate /necessary notify the parents in writing of the school's expectations and possible consequences if the behaviour is repeated.

No child will be deemed 'guilty' on the uncorroborated word of another child. However, all incidents must still be recorded and the report sent to the headteacher.

5.3. The broader school community

Ensure that the seriousness and unacceptability of any incident is communicated to all who have knowledge of it.

Ensure that the children more broadly involved in incidents, e.g. bystanders or witness, are actively involved in understanding:

- ◆ what has happened
 - ◆ their responsibility
 - ◆ their feelings
- about the incident.

This is often best dealt with through circle time. Remember, when issues of this nature are being dealt with by a class, individual's names are not used. It is the **behaviour** which we are rejecting **not the child**.

6. Unintentional Racist Comments

Definition

Curious comments, questions or observations made or asked by a child which were not meant to be hurtful, but may be perceived to be racist by another person.

Action

Discuss issue with all parties involved.

Discuss with parents of both parties.

Inform the headteacher.

File 'Racist Incident Report Form.'

Record incident in 'Racist Incident Log-book,' housed in the confidential file in the headteacher's office. This book has pre-numbered pages.

The head will monitor the number and type of incidents every term and report in the Headteachers' termly report to Governors, for discussion and action when appropriate.

The records will be provided to the LEA on request.

G3.2 Batchwood School, Secondary EBD

BATCHWOOD SCHOOL POLICY ON DEALING WITH RACIAL HARASSMENT

Introduction

We are committed to dealing effectively with incidents of racial harassment. No person at Batchwood School should be subject to or expected to tolerate racial harassment. Although policies on behaviour and bullying already exist in the school, this policy recognises that racial harassment poses particular challenges. The policy acknowledges that there are important principles to take into account and that staff will deal most effectively with incidents when there are clear procedures to be followed.

Definition

Batchwood School has adopted the definition of a racist incident proposed by the MacPherson Report (1999) which was published following the Stephen Lawrence enquiry.

A racist incident is any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person.

This means that any incident which is perceived as racist will be investigated and recorded according to the procedures outlined in this policy. In seeking to establish whether racial harassment has taken place, the member of staff investigating the incident will seek to establish whether any act or expression has occurred which causes harm or offence, directed by a member of one racial or ethnic group to others, where the motivation or effect is to create racial dislike or hatred.

It is important to remember that racial harassment takes many forms. Incidents may include:

- threatened or actual physical assault
- verbal abuse
- expressions of prejudice calculated to offend others, or influence the behaviour of others
- racist graffiti
- distributing racist literature
- wearing of badges or symbols belonging to known racist organisations
- name calling
- teasing in relation to language, religion or cultural background
- inappropriate humour.

It is important to recognise that:

- racial harassment may be one aspect of an incident which also has other dimensions
- staff may need to deal with comments made by parents or other adults as well as by children
- incidents may involve group as well as individual behaviour

- such incidents are often part of more complex interactions which may take place in school - for example, an argument about friendships may lead to racist insults
- racist incidents are not always explicit - for example, a pupil may be called 'smelly' and behind such insults may lie a racist element
- racist behaviour can occur without a target or victim being present - e.g. telling racist jokes
- acts or expressions may include negative body language - for example, the refusal of a child from one ethnic group to sit next to, or work with, a child from another.
- racist behaviour can cause offence to those who witness it
- racial harassment is not based on intentionality. Whether or not the perpetrator intended to harass, or understands the racial content of what s/he has done, the effects of the harassment must be dealt with. The perspective of the child/adult who has been harassed should be given particular attention.

Principles

The following principles underpin the school's approach in dealing with racial harassment:

- All incidents should be responded to immediately and appropriately. Some aspects of the response may need to be dealt with at a later stage, for example, contact with parents.
- School staff should understand that their reaction to such incidents will influence the attitude of pupils. For example, a failure to respond may be seen as condoning racist behaviour.
- All members of the school community, including staff, pupils and parents have a right not to experience racism at school whether or not this is directed at them.
- It is important that the school staff acknowledge that pupils who have experienced racism may have developed appropriate strategies to deal with this. Intervention should, where possible support these strategies and not disempower pupils/staff who have suffered harassment. A balance should be struck between supporting pupils/staff and protecting them.
- All incidents of racial harassment should be treated as serious disciplinary matters. As with other serious disciplinary matters the way it is dealt with should be appropriate to the incident itself. For example, a deliberate racist attack (verbal or physical) should be treated as any other serious attack involving discipline of the offender and support for both parties. Where the incident is judged to be unintentional then the emphasis would be on support and education rather than on sanction.
- Consistency in dealing with incidents is essential if pupils and staff are to be clear about the school's commitment to dealing with racism.
- Some instances of racial harassment will constitute crimes and must be reported to the police in accordance with the 'Protection from Harassment Act' (1999) and the 'Crime and Disorder Act' (1999). Further clarification will be appended when it becomes available.
- It may be the victim's expressed preference that incidents should not be investigated. In such cases the consequences should be explained fully, but the victim's preference should be upheld, except where a crime has, or may have been committed or where not to respond would be detrimental to school ethos and the community.

Procedures

The school will appoint a designated teacher to oversee incidents relating to racial harassment. Staff encountering, or being made aware of, an incident of racial harassment should fill in a severe misbehaviour slip, clearly indicating that racial harassment is involved. The member of staff who is initially involved will deal with the incident according to the following procedures, unless other commitments make this impossible. If this is the case, the member of staff initially involved should follow the procedures as far as they are able and then pass it over to the designated teacher, if available, or another member of the SMT, who will continue with the procedures. The member of staff initially involved will always make it clear to the pupils concerned that the incident involves racial harassment and is therefore an extremely serious matter.

The member of staff dealing with the incident will:

- sit down with the victim and listen to his/her account of the incident, allowing the pupil to fully express his/her feelings relating to the incident
- agree with the victim what steps will be taken and when the victim will be given feedback about what has happened as a result of this
- make a decision as to whether the pupil is able to return to class or needs to remain with a member of staff while the incident is investigated
- gather evidence from the people who have been mentioned as being involved or witnessing the incident
- inform the parents/carers of the victim and of any pupils who have been involved in the racial harassment as soon as possible. Inform parents/carers that you will get back and tell them action which has been taken as a result of the incident
- draw up a list of actions to be taken to deal with the perpetrators
- inform the victim and parents/carers how the incident is being dealt with and check that they are satisfied that it has been dealt with effectively
- talk to the victim about how they feel and ask whether they require further support.

The designated person will then consider and implement the agreed action points.

The order in which the above procedure is followed should be flexible and will be guided by the principle that support to the victim is paramount.

Determining Responses

The following key questions may provide a framework for understanding a situation and therefore help in determining a detailed response.

- Is it an isolated incident or is it part of a wider problem?
- What circumstances gave rise to the incident?
- Was group reinforcement involved or can the incident be attributed solely to individual behaviour?
- Has the offender behaved like this before?
- Does the offender understand the degree of seriousness of the incident?

- Was there any provocation? (N.B. If there is, this does not make a racist response any more acceptable)
- Exactly what was said and done (as distinct from effects, reasons or intentions)?
- What were the effects, reasons or intentions of what was said and done?

Dealing with Perpetrators

When discussing an incident with a perpetrator staff should:

- define the behaviour which was racist/offensive and explain why it was unacceptable. Check out the perpetrator's understanding.
- state clearly what change of behaviour you expect. Check out the perpetrator's understanding.
- Tell the perpetrator's that parents/carers will be informed.

Other sanctions may be applied, depending upon the severity of the incident and whether it is an isolated incident or forms part of a repeated pattern of offences by the perpetrator.

Possible responses may include:

- isolating the perpetrator from other pupils, including at break and lunch times
- requiring the perpetrator to make a verbal or written apology
- arranging a meeting with parents/carers to discuss the incident
- fixed term or permanent exclusion from school.

Prevention

We believe that responding to incidents of racial harassment in a way which supports the victim and ensures that perpetrators are effectively dealt with will have a powerful influence on preventing such incidents. In addition we are committed to preventing racial harassment by promoting a climate in which pupils are encouraged to report behaviour which is of concern including bullying and harassment. This will be done through the curriculum, individual and group tutorials, school meetings, circle time and individual counselling sessions. In addition, recording and monitoring procedures will allow information to be gathered which will help appropriate preventative measures to be put into place.

Staff Training

The school is committed to supporting staff with training on dealing effectively with incidents relating to racial harassment.

Monitoring and Recording

Batchwood School recognises the importance of recording and monitoring all incidents and responses in order to help us to review our effectiveness in dealing with racism. We will treat all incidents of racial harassment as serious incidents and a racial harassment monitoring form will be completed by the member of staff who concluded the incident. It will be placed in a file kept specifically for this purpose. This record will include, the date, the names of the

perpetrators and victims, the nature of the incident and action taken in response. The school will immediately report to the Authority racist incidents which involve any of the following:

- physical violence
- repeated or orchestrated harassment
- links with outside agencies (e.g. extremist groups)
- exclusions related to a racist incident.

The headteacher will also inform the LEA and governors annually of the pattern and frequency of incidents and will indicate under set categories the action which has been taken, as detailed in the Audit Commission Equality Performance Indicators.

G4 Appendix 4: Examples of Good Practice in Hertfordshire Schools

RESPECT FOR ALL POLICY TOWNSEND C of E SECONDARY SCHOOL

Townsend School has a well established 'Respect for All' policy which underpins all relationships across the school. Initially put together by pupils, added to by staff and agreed by all, the policy is a collective initiative. It has also led onto detailed policies on bullying and dealing with sexism.

RESPECT FOR ALL

At Townsend, we believe that every person is equally important and that no one has the right to harass, insult or cause offence to any other person for any reason.

We particularly reject the way that some people abuse others,
because they are richer or poorer, older or younger,
because they are small or tall, thin or fat,
because of the colour of their skin,
because they are male or female,
because they are a teacher or a pupil,
because of their religion,
because of disability or personal problems,
because of their looks or what they wear,
because of their likes or dislikes,
because they are popular or unpopular,
because of their ability or lack of ability,
because of nationality or accent.

We are all individuals with differences, but we are all members of Townsend and can learn from each other.

RESEARCH INTO STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES OF RACISM BUSHEY MEADS SCHOOL

In 1999 Bushey Meads school undertook research into the experiences of minority ethnic students as a starting point to a range of anti-racist initiatives. Gaining an insight into students' perceptions was viewed as one of many starting points.

How was the research conducted?

The sample was not predetermined in any way. The initial proposal was to interview about half a dozen students to get an impression of their experiences. However, the project seemed to pick up momentum so that twenty three students were interviewed in all. Interviews lasted for about thirty minutes. Three of the interviews were 'one to one', the other in a variety of multiples – the latest group comprised five students. The research remains impressionistic and makes no claims over and above recording student perceptions. The sample describe

themselves variously as British, Black British, Anglo-Indian, Asian, Hindu, Pakistani, European, Jewish, English, Indian.

Research Stages

Stage 1: Setting up the process

A sample of students from across the key stages and from various minority ethnic groups were approached and asked if they would be willing to be interviewed by a named staff member for a booklet to be used by teachers in the school. Some other students approached the interviewer and asked to be interviewed and have been included in the sample.

Sample students received a letter via register asking them:

1. to indicate how they would prefer to be interviewed
 - ◆ alone
 - ◆ with a named friend/s in a small group
 - ◆ don't mind

1. for the interview, to indicate which single period of a lesson on their timetable would cause the least disruption to their learning.

The interviewer asked relevant colleagues to excuse the sample students for one single period and requested permission from parents for students to be interviewed. Students were sent, via their register, notification of the time and place of interview and asked to bring signed permission slips.

Stage 2: Non-directive interviews take place

The interview structure:

1. Student/s were reminded of the purpose of the interview and asked to confirm that they still wished to go ahead.

2. Permission to tape record the interview was sought in order to allow:
 - a) smooth flow of conversation and exchanges.
 - b) transparency and accountability
 - c) accurate transcription.

1. Interviewer asked 3 key questions of all interviewees:
 - a) Tell me about what it is like to be a student from minority group in this school?
 - b) Do you think there are any special or particular reasons, perhaps to do with your personality to explain why you have suffered/coped so well/hardly been affected?
 - c) What do you think the school can do to change the situation?Supplementary questions were asked to explore responses in more depth.

Stage 3: Writing it up

The taped interviews were transcribed into a series of individual or group accounts editing non-essential dialogue.

Students/groups were asked to read the transcripts in order to:

- a) confirm the contents and accuracy. Students could omit, add or alter points
- b) confirm they were happy for their account to be used for specific and limited purposes

Students chose pseudonyms.

Stage 4: Publication

All students who participated saw the final draft booklet and were given an opportunity to comment. The booklet was distributed to all teaching staff. An INSET session was organised analysing the outcomes of the research, reflecting on its messages and setting it into a broader context.

Stage 5: Further research

The aim was to provide empowering experience for the same group of pupils in which they could express who they really are and discuss their own experience of their culture and identity. This resulted in a booklet called 'See Me' which informed the whole school community.

EXTRACTS FROM THE INTERVIEWS

Experiences of Racism

- *It's not only a couple of people...if you just accidentally bump into someone the first thing that comes into their head is, "Oh you stupid Paki", not "stupid idiot" or "Don't do that again".*
- *A lot of name-calling and a lot of staring*
- *Making up names – "four by two"*
- *Targeting personal remarks*
- *"Oh she's got a tea towel on her head"*
- *Mocking*
- *They think they rule the school basically. Yeah, just 'cos there's more white people*
- *...just 'cos we're a minority they boss us about*
- *"Get out of our seat"*
- *"Go back to your own country"*
- *"You shouldn't be in this country"*
- *"Indian people should have to pay higher taxes"*
- *Everyone in the room, except for a couple of people, said "Oh you're not British". I was shocked...they didn't feel I was British because I was of colour.*
- *The white people don't treat you the same...They just locate your colouring, your skin colour, and they just think they're not the same as us*

- *They think because you're Jewish you're a different person, that like...there's something wrong with you.*
- *Even if I try a little communication, they just ignore me or send me a dirty comment. They're just rude basically.*
- *I feel like I've been stereotyped...like they expect certain things of me, like I wouldn't understand their kind of music...and that I think I'm hard, 'cos I'm coloured.*
- *I went to athletics and they were saying to me, "Oh do you have any 'greens' and stuff?", "You're smoking greens" and just shouting it out on the bus to try to humiliate me.*
- *You know how they think every Asian person owns a shop*
- *They don't know the difference between Hindus and Muslims...we're all "Pakis".*
- *A lot of people have got this image of like a suppressed Asian girl.*
- *I'm not into the Asian thing. The only thing is my colour and ... a lot of people are surprised.*
- *But all of this racism comes from out of school. It's the culture that's been built up out of stereotypes*
- *They're like, "Oh, it's just a joke", but they have to realise...*
- *Racism's not just about the colour of your skin; it's the whole thing about your culture, your religion, everything; it's all entwined together.*
- *I don't think that people think before they say it. It's a laugh, they don't understand what's actually happening – understand how much it's actually hurting people.*

The impact of racism on individuals

- *I mean how more personal can you get? You are being degraded because of who you are and it's not something you can change. But especially for the younger kids...it really is the most awful thing.*
- *Sometimes I feel very isolated, very 'on your own'. You've got no-one, no-one really understands.*
- *...it just stayed in my head, and I just leave it.*
- *Something should happen really fast... 'cos I can't tolerate any more of this*
- *We haven't got any [white] friends*
- *We don't want to be victims. We start to play things down that should be addressed as an issue because we don't want to be seen as a victim.*
- *I just feel that every time I walk past a big group of white kids...I think, 'Will they say something, or won't they?'*
- *When I sit on the bus I'm always thinking, 'This is going to happen tomorrow...I'm going to be called those names again'.*
- *I'm not very religious, but you still have to hide things, because you get nervous about what people are going to think.*
- *It's been happening to me since Year 7 and it's still happening to me. I'm scared to walk home sometimes...and when I come in the mornings I'm scared as well.*
- *I've never once been in that social room. I'd never go there.*
- *I mean I avoid the common room now anyway. I don't feel comfortable in there because I go in, everyone looks.*