

HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Agenda Item No.

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CABINET

MONDAY 29 JANUARY 2001 AT 10.00 AM

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

MONDAY 29 JANUARY 2001 AT 2.15 PM

REVISION OF THE EDUCATION POLICY AND GUIDELINES “DEALING WITH RACIAL HARASSMENT” – A GUIDE FOR SCHOOLS

Report of the Director of Education

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Executive Member: Keith Emsall

1 Purpose of the report

To seek agreement to the new revised guidelines

2. Background

- 2.1 The County Guidelines 'Dealing with Racial Harassment. A Guide for Schools' were launched in April 1996. The guidelines had been developed through extensive consultation procedures involving schools and minority ethnic communities and agreed by Education Committee.
- 2.2 Surveys conducted since the launch of the policy and guidelines suggest that approximately 70% of schools have specific policies on dealing with racism. In support of the guidelines since 1996 over 1000 teachers from nearly 400 schools have been trained and casework support has been given for over 50 incidents in schools. A recent survey circulated to schools to support the LEA new bullying policy established that over the last school year schools recorded 445 incidents of racial harassment.
- 2.3 Since publication of the LEA guidelines the following developments have taken place which lead to the need to revise the Guidelines:
- New Legislation on Racial Harassment.
 - The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report and its recommendations.
 - Publication of the DfEE circular 'Social Inclusion, Pupil Support' which contains new guidelines for schools and LEAs.
 - Publication of Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) Race Equality Standards for Schools.
 - New Audit Commission requirements to report on Indicators for Dealing with Racial Incidents.

2.4 Consultation has taken place with schools and community groups to revise the guidelines.

3 Cabinet and Select Committee Proposals

3.1 The Cabinet on 18 September 2000, proposed:-

- That the revisions to the guidelines on dealing with incidents of racial harassment in schools proposed in the report be approved.
- That there be a review in 12 months time of the results of this change.

3.2 The Children, Schools and Families Select Committee on 18 October 2000 agreed with Cabinet that the revisions be approved. Select Committee also suggested that greater emphasis be placed in the guidelines on the need for incidents to be reported to school governors. The guidelines have been revised to make clear the importance of the role of school governors in receiving reports of incidents and in the annual reporting cycle.

3.3 The Cabinet on 23 October added that they would like to receive a report from the Pupil Achievement and School Improvement Panel and the Group Spokesmen including their comments on the final draft for their meeting on January 29th.

4.1 Comments from the Pupil Achievement and School Improvement Panel (PASIP) and from Group Spokesmen

4.1 At their meeting on 6 December 2000 the PASIP discussed the final draft of the guidelines and made the following recommendations:

- (i) That Section A pg.3 be amended to clarify the relationship between the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry definition of a racist incident and the further advice drawing on the definition in the previous guidelines. It was suggested that the format used in the Batchwood School policy appendix was clearer.

This amendment has been made.

- (ii) The request was made that the guidelines provided on preventative strategies be further developed.

The draft has been thus amended (Section B4 pg. 15) including reference to the forthcoming publication of LEA guidance for schools on the development of multi-cultural and anti-racist approaches to the curriculum.

4.1 The final draft was also sent to Group Spokesman who reported that they were content with the contents.

4.1 A copy of the final guidelines amended following the comments from Select Committee and PASIP is attached as an appendix to this report.

5. Conclusion

3.1 The Authority guidelines on Racial Harassment have been consistently praised by external bodies, including HMI, as high quality and effective in providing support for schools. Recent developments in legislation and policy make it appropriate that the guidelines are revised to ensure their continued effectiveness.

3.2 Support for schools in implementing the new guidelines will be provided within existing resources.