

POLICY FOR PREVENTION OF RACIAL HARASSMENT

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Introduction

Beaumont is an all-inclusive school. Equality, including race equality, is embedded in the School Aims and the principles of the school. All pupils will experience a school environment where cultural, linguistic and ethnic differences are respected and valued, and the principles of equal opportunity are actively seen to be at work.

Beaumont is committed to dealing effectively with incidents of racial harassment. No person should be subject to or expected to tolerate racial harassment. Although policies 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.

The following policies relate to whole school life, where preventing racial harassment is one part, and must be read in conjunction with this policy

Behaviour Policy

Behaviour at Beaumont: the use of physical intervention to control or restrain pupils

Anti-bullying Strategy

SEN

Child Protection

Disclosure of pupil records

Home School Agreement

Equal Opportunities

Parental Complaints Procedure

Staff Discipline and Grievance Procedure

Recruitment

Equal Employment Opportunities

Conduct of Pupil Exclusion Committee

Policy for Promoting Race Equality

Specific points that are in addition to the operational aspects of the above policies are defined in the Section 'Implementation of the Policy', The remaining sections of this document demonstrate the existing ethos of the School with regard to race equality and provide guidance for staff to respond to incidents of racial harassment.

Definition

Beaumont defines a racist incident as that proposed by the Macpherson Report (1999) and stated in the Home Office Code of Practice on Recording and Reporting Racial Incidents (April 2000):

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

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This means that any incident which is perceived as racist will be investigated and recorded according to the procedures associated with 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.

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.

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 from 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- behind general 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

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 students. For example, a failure to respond may be seen as condoning racist behaviour. All members of the school community, including staff, students 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 students who have experienced racism may have developed appropriate strategies to deal with this. Intervention should, where possible, support these strategies and not disempower students/staff who have suffered harassment. A balance will be struck between supporting students/staff and protecting them.

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All incidents of racial harassment will 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.

Some instances of racial harassment will constitute crimes and must be reported to the police in accordance with the 'Protection from Harassment Act' (1997) and the 'Crime and Disorder Act' (1998). 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 there may be duress or where not to respond would be detrimental to school ethos and the community.

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 students 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 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.

Implementation of the Policy

Beaumont will:

1. Appoint a designated staff member to oversee incidents relating to racial harassment
2. Record and monitor all incidents and responses in order to help review the effectiveness in dealing with racism. The record will include date, numbers of the perpetrators and victims, nature of the incident and action taken in response).
3. Monitor the number and type of incidents every term and report in the Headteacher's annual report to Governors, for discussion and action where appropriate.
4. Provide records to the LEA on request.

Guidance for Staff

Procedures

Staff encountering, or being made aware of an incident of racial harassment, will fill in an incident report, clearly indicating that racial harassment is involved. The member of staff who is initially involved will deal with the incident according to the 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 appropriate Assistant Headteacher, who will continue with the procedures. The designated staff member may be involved at all stages as appropriate. The member of staff initially involved will

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always make it clear to the students concerned that the incident involves racial harassment and is therefore an extremely serious matter.

The member of staff dealing with the incident will:

- Listen to the victim's account, allowing the pupil to express their feelings of the incident,
- Advise the victim what action has been or will be taken,
- Decide if the victim is able to return to class while the incident is investigated,
- Gather evidence from the people involved or witnesses to 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 feed back what action 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 staff member 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 questions may assist understanding a situation and help in responding.

- 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 perpetrator behaved like this before?
- Does the perpetrator understand the degree of seriousness of the incident?
- Was there provocation? (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 (this section may be moved to the Behaviour Policy)

When discussing an incident with a perpetrator staff should:

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

Possible responses/sanctions may include:

- Isolating the perpetrator from other students, 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.

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.