



Anti Racism Contact Officer (ARCO) PROCEDURES

THIRLMERE PUBLIC SCHOOL



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Racism Definition

Racism is a contested term and can refer to beliefs, behaviours and systems. The Australian Human Rights Commission has defined it and its various forms as follows:

'Racism takes many forms and can happen in many places. It includes prejudice, discrimination or hatred directed at someone because of their colour, ethnicity or national origin.'

Forms of racism include: 'jokes or comments that cause offence or hurt, sometimes unintentionally, name-calling or verbal abuse, harassment or intimidation, or commentary in the media or online that inflames hostility towards certain groups. At its most serious, racism can result in acts of physical abuse and violence. Racism can directly or indirectly exclude people from accessing services or participating in employment, education, sport and social activities. It can also occur at a systemic or institutional level through policies, conditions or practices that disadvantage certain groups. It often manifests through unconscious bias or prejudice. On a structural level, racism serves to perpetuate inequalities in access to power, resources and opportunities across racial and ethnic groups. The belief that a particular race or ethnicity is inferior or superior to others is sometimes used to justify such inequalities.'

Nominated School ARCO	David Gardiner (Classroom Teacher)
Date of Training	2024

Rationale

The role of the ARCO

The Anti-Racism Contact Officer (ARCO) plays an important role in assisting the principal to implement 3 major aspects of the Anti-Racism Policy:

- promoting anti-racism education
- supporting the handling of complaints about racism relating to students, staff and members of the school community
- collecting data about complaints and incidents of racism.

The ARCO assists in promoting anti-racism education and supporting the management of complaints of racism involving students by:

- providing advice on incorporating whole-school anti-racism education strategies in school planning
- facilitating professional learning to build awareness of the impact of racism on student learning, wellbeing and social cohesion
- assisting teachers to access resources which build awareness and understanding of the impacts of racism
- promoting upstander responses to incidents of racism for staff and students
- addressing complaints and incidents of racism involving students through approaches such as restorative practice, which promote respectful behaviours.



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The ARCO supports the handling of complaints by:

- providing advice to students, staff and community members on making a complaint and the complaints handling process as it relates to complaints about racism
- managing or supporting the management of complaints of racism made by students against other students in accordance with the Behaviour Code for Students, the School Behaviour Support and Management Plan and wellbeing procedures
- providing information and support to staff, students and community members who wish to make a complaint of racism, in cases where the complaint involves staff or a community member
- assisting the complainant during the complaints handling process
- providing advice related to the impact of racism to the principal and/or nominated complaints manager.

The ARCO assists the principal to gather data about the prevalence of racism and analyse significant statistical trends in relation to complaints and incidents of racism by:

- maintaining records of complaints and outcomes, allegations and incidents of racism
- identifying which datasets regarding racism should be collected, what data should be reported and to whom, and how data can be used to improve the school's response to racism.

Anti-Racism Contact Officers (ARCOs) are advocates for anti-racism education. They have two distinct roles. They can be support persons for staff and school community members who make complaints of racism and impartial facilitators in the complaints handling process for complaints of racism made by students about students.

ARCOs are not required to manage the resolution of complaints of racism made by or about staff or community members. These complaints are managed using the School Community and Consumer Complaint Procedure and the Staff Complaint Procedure.

If a matter is initially referred to the ARCO by staff or a community member, the ARCO will speak with the complainant and assess the appropriate avenue for seeking a resolution. If the complaint of racism is made by or about an Aboriginal student, teacher or community member, the ARCO should consult with an Aboriginal Education Officer or an Aboriginal Community Liaison Officer. If the complaint is made by or about a community member from a language background other than English, the ARCO can consider whether there are language or cultural considerations that should be addressed in the complaint resolution process. In some cases it may be appropriate to use an interpreter to facilitate communication with families. Information about the complaint process and support persons and advocates has been translated into community languages.

The flowchart below can assist the ARCO to determine how to best manage or refer a complaint.



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