



## **Anti-Racism Policy**

### **Introduction**

In Ireland, equality legislation is based on *'The Employment Equality Acts'*, and *'The Equal Status Acts'* which prohibit discrimination on nine grounds. These are gender, family status, marital status, sexual orientation, religion, age, race, disability and membership of the traveller community. This anti-racism policy aims to promote the celebration of difference and to facilitate effective protection and redress against racial discrimination within our school. We are sending a clear message that racism will not be tolerated in our school and, in doing so, fulfil our legal obligation to the pupils, staff and parents of our school.

Saplings Special School for Children with Autism and Complex Needs, Kill, (hereafter Saplings Kill) is a non-denominational school which welcomes pupils from all faiths and none. The ethos of Saplings Kill is firmly based on inclusion, equality and helping everyone to reach their potential in education. Saplings Kill also has a strong multi-ethnic enrolment – the school seeks at all times to value, recognise and respect the religious, ethnic and cultural diversity reflected in the school community.

In Saplings Kill we expect all children, and all members of the school community, to find our school a safe and welcoming place, where everyone can achieve success, irrespective of their nationality or ethnic background. It is not possible to accomplish this if any child, or member of the school community, faces prejudice or hostility because of differences of colour, race, ethnicity, nationality, culture, religion/belief or language.

### **Definition of Racism**

The U.N. convention on the elimination of all forms of racial discrimination defines racism as, *“any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent or national or ethnic origin.”*

According to the NCCA 2005 document, *‘Intercultural Education in the Primary School’*, an attitude or belief is racist if it implies that some groups are superior or inferior to others based on their ‘race’, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin.

In our school we define a racist incident as being discriminated, or being targeted, on the basis of colour, race, ethnicity, nationality, culture, religion/belief or language.

### **Aims of the Anti-Racism Policy**

- To support and give meaning to our school ethos of inclusion, equality and partnership.
- To celebrate difference whether it is of a person’s colour, race, ethnicity, nationality, culture, religion/belief or language.
- To ensure effective protection and redress against discrimination in Saplings Kill through a structured policy framework.
- To make our school a safe and welcoming place for all its members by providing an environment in which racist assumptions, attitudes and behaviour are continually challenged.
- To give children and adults confidence that racism can, and must, be eradicated.
- As a school community, to challenge stereotypical comments which have an underlying racist bias.
- To empower children to name and confront all forms of prejudicial and exclusionary behaviour, when it arises.
- To develop staff awareness of implicit racism within the school, community and society and address issues of using correct terminology, customs, language etc.
- To enable staff to directly intervene with incidents of racism by developing strategies to provide a more effective and coordinated response to them.

## **Identifying Racist Incidents**

A racist incident is behaviour or language that makes a person *'feel unwelcome or marginalised because of their colour, culture, religion, or national origin'* (Richardson, 2004).

It is important to note that intentionality is irrelevant.

### **Categories of racist behaviour:**

- Derogatory name-calling, insults, racist jokes and language.
- Verbal abuse and threats of a racist nature.
- Physical assaults of a racist nature.
- Ridicule based on differences of colour, race, ethnicity, nationality, culture, religion or language.
- Refusal to co-operate with others because of any of the above differences.
- Stereotyping on the basis of colour, race, ethnicity, nationality, culture, religion/belief or language.
- Racist comments.
- Racist graffiti.
- Written abuse of a racist nature including racist comments made by emailing or text messaging, or on any social media forums such as facebook or twitter.
- Damage to property motivated by racism.
- Incitement of others to act in a racist manner.
- Provocative behaviour such as wearing racist badges, insignia or clothing.
- Bringing racist materials such as leaflets, photographs or magazines into the school.

## **Strategies for the Prevention of Racism**

At the centre of a whole school response to racism is the creation of a nurturing and supportive school climate, which focuses on respect for every individual. In Saplings Kill there is a strong sense of cooperation between the chairperson, staff, pupils and parents and each has a clear role in the prevention of racism:

- The school endeavours to build a school community based on inclusion, equality and partnership
- The school promotes an atmosphere of friendship, respect and tolerance through the Social Personal and Health Education Programme, Stay Safe Programme and Circle Time.
- As a school community in Saplings Kill there is a zero tolerance approach towards racism.
- Teachers have access to 'The Toolkit for Diversity in the Primary School' to guide them in creating a welcoming classroom for pupils for whom English is a second language, and in communicating with their parents.
- Teachers respond sensitively to pupils who disclose incidents of racism.
- All disclosed incidents of racism are investigated.
- Parents contribute to and support the schools Anti-Racism policy by encouraging positive attitudes and behaviour both at home and at school and by being vigilant for signs and symptoms that their child is subject to racism or is subjecting another child to racism.

### **Procedures for Dealing with Incidents of Racism**

All reports of racism to a member of staff will be noted, investigated and dealt with by the member of staff and the principal. In this way, all members of the school community will be encouraged to "tell" about racist incidents within school.

These general procedures will be followed:

- If a parent or guardian reports a racist incident to a member of staff, the parent/guardian will be asked to complete a racist incident report form. The incident will be investigated by the member of staff, and by the principal.
- If a child reports a racist incident to a member of staff, the member of staff (whether a teaching or non-teaching member of staff), will investigate and complete a racist incident report form. Incidents will also be reported to the principal.

- A member of staff should report a racist incident directed towards them, by another party, to the principal. The member of staff will complete a racist incident report form and the incident will be investigated by the principal.

An incident may be in the form of:

- Physical assault of a racist nature
- Derogatory name calling, insults and racist jokes
- Racist graffiti
- Wearing racist badges and insignia
- Bringing racist material to school
- Verbal Abuse of a racist nature
- Incitement of others to behave in a racist way
- Racist comments in the course of discussion during class or within the school grounds
- Ridicule of an individual for cultural differences e.g. food, music, dress, stereotypes etc.
- Refusal to cooperate with others because of their colour, race, ethnicity, nationality, culture, religion/belief or language.
- Written abuse of a racist nature including racist comments made by emailing or text message, or on any social media forums such as facebook or twitter.

- Where there is a report of a racist incident in school or within the school environs, the principal and the member of staff/school community involved, will meet with all parties to establish what happened and address the issues accordingly.

- In accordance with the Code of Behaviour, and Grievance Procedures, actions will be taken which could result in suspension, expulsion or dismissal. For other members of the school community, this could result in barring from the school grounds or school buildings.

## **Monitoring**

A record will be kept of all racist incidents occurring in or pertaining to the school, by means of racist incident report forms. These records will give details of the offence, the parties involved, action taken and sanction imposed. Incidents which occur on the yard can also be logged in the Behaviour Log Book.

These records will be reviewed each term and will be used to monitor the frequency and nature of racist incidents and to measure the effectiveness of the methods used by our school in responding to them. Based on this information we may adapt the methods we use.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

It is primarily the role of the school to investigate and act upon a racist incident and to record and report further incidents. All incidents of racism occurring in school or pertaining to the school will be reported to the principal and recorded in conjunction with the parties involved.

Following a racist incident, it is the role of the school and the principal to monitor future behaviour and to provide help and support for the victim. It is expected that parents/guardians and all members of the school community, will cooperate and work together with the school on a continuous basis to help eliminate any racist behaviour.

#### **Ratification:**

This revised policy was reviewed and ratified by the Board of Management in January 2019. It is envisaged that this policy will be reviewed in 2022, or should the need arise.

Ratified by Board of Management on: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed (chairperson): \_\_\_\_\_