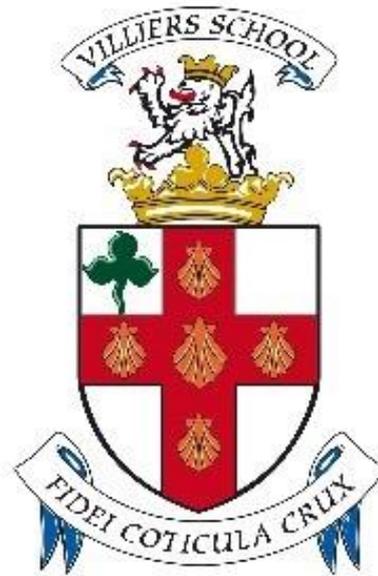


Villiers School

**ANTI-RACISM POLICY**



**September 2022**

## **1. Rationale:**

Villiers School (“the School”) is a community of staff, students, and parents (including guardians) that aims to provide the highest possible standard of education for all our students in a stable, non-threatening environment.

Racism is prejudice, discrimination, or antagonism by an individual, community, or institution against a person or people on the basis of their membership of a particular racial or ethnic group, typically one that is a minority or marginalised. Acts of racism are known to cause physical and/or psychological damage and to negatively affect the quality of the teaching and learning provided. All members of the School have a role in supporting an ethos of anti-racism and a zero tolerance for racism.

It is the responsibility of every member of the School community to respect the right of others to learn in an atmosphere free from discrimination towards themselves or their belongings and to assist in the prevention of racist speech, discrimination and/or harassment. To this end it is imperative that every member of the School community recognises that racism will not be tolerated.

In our School we define a racist incident as being discriminated against, or being targeted, on the basis of colour, race, ethnicity, nationality, culture, language or religion and /or belief through actions and/or words. Racist incidents need not be directed towards an individual, and can include racist, sweeping statements within the school environment.

## **2. Scope:**

The School Anti-Racism Policy (“the Policy”) applies in the following contexts:

- 2.1. The relationships between students and other students.
- 2.2. The relationships between students and staff members.

## **3. Application:**

The Policy applies to the following:

- When students are on the School grounds.
- When students are travelling to and from School.
- When students are on School tours and trips.
- When students are engaged in extracurricular activities organised by the School.

- The School reserves the right, in exceptional circumstances, to apply the Policy in respect of hate speech, discrimination and/or harassment that occurs at any other time when there is a clear connection with the School. This can also include alleged behaviour that is likely to have a significant negative reflection on the School's ethos. This could include but is not limited to discriminatory language or racist attacks by any member of the school community using social media outlets or other forms of messaging services.

#### **4. Principles**

The Board of Management recognises the very serious nature of racism and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of students and staff and is therefore fully committed to the following key principles of best practice in preventing and tackling racist behaviour:

- A positive school culture and climate which is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity. This positive culture encourages students to disclose and discuss incidents of racism in a non-threatening environment and promotes respectful relationships across the school community;
- Effective leadership;
- A school-wide approach;
- A shared understanding of what racism is, and its impact;
- Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that build empathy, respect and understanding in students; and explicitly address the issues of discrimination and hate speech, including in particular, gaslighting and micro-aggressions.
- Effective supervision and monitoring of students;
- Supports and training for staff;
- Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of racist behaviour or incidents (including use of established intervention strategies);
- On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-racism policy.

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

- To support and give meaning to our school ethos of inclusion, equality, diversity and partnership and to ensure effective protection and redress against discrimination a structured policy framework.
- To ensure a safe and welcoming environment for all, in which racist speech and behaviour are continually challenged.
- To dismantle stereotypical views which have an underlying racist bias.
- To empower our School community to identify and engage with racist or discriminatory behaviour.
- To develop staff awareness of implicit racism.
- To ensure the completion of anti-bias training for staff to aid them in directly intervening with incidents of racism. Staff will be provided with the tools and management support to create a more effective and coordinated response to racist incidents.
- To further the eradication of racism in society.

## **6. Definition of a racist incident**

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

The following types of behaviour are included in the definition of racist behaviour but the definition is not limited to:

- Discriminatory hate speech or 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 graffiti.
- Written abuse of a racist nature including racist comments made by emailing, text messaging and/or posting on any social media forum.
- Damage to property motivated by racism.
- Incitement of others to act in a racist manner.
- Exclusion motivated by racism.
- Provocative behaviour such as wearing racist badges, insignia or clothing.

### **7. Procedures for Dealing with Incidents of Racism- The Four “R”s Technique**

All reports of racism to a member of staff will be noted, investigated and dealt with by the member of staff and the Head of School and/or Deputy Head of School. In this way, all members of the school community will be encouraged to “tell” about racist incidents within school. Class Teachers, Tutors, Year Heads, Deputy Head of School and Head of School will engage as per the predetermined structures.

A restorative approach means that the primary aim in any investigation, in the first instance and as far as is practicable, is to resolve issues and restore relationships. It aims to identify and clarify how the behaviour of one individual can have a huge impact on another. A restorative approach will also clarify how a situation can best be resolved. A student who engages in racist behaviour after a restorative intervention does so in the knowledge that they have ignored the efforts of the School to help them on this occasion to change their behaviour.

There are four “Rs” when it comes to dealing with incidents of racism.

### **REPORT**

An incident of racism must be reported. There is a chain of command that this goes through. This is as follows:

1. A student or parent/guardian may report an incident to the relevant teacher or staff member. This incident may be directly affecting them or be a witnessed incident.
2. The alleged victim should be listened to and may be asked to write an account of the incident. A racism report must be filled out. The incident is best investigated outside the classroom in a calm manner and with appropriate privacy. Incidents may also be reported to the Head of School.

## **RESPONSE**

Each incident that is reported must be assessed thoroughly, no matter the severity. If an investigation uncovers no evidence of actual racist behaviour then the issue may be dealt with in the context of promoting better behaviour.

1. Where there is a report of a racist incident in school or within the school environs, the Head of School and the member of staff/school community involved, will meet with all parties to establish what happened and address the issues accordingly. This includes staff meetings and keeping a record of the frequency of these incidents to measure the effectiveness of the policies.
2. The person responsible for the racist incident must be aware of the effect the incident has had and if deemed necessary be appropriately sanctioned. Repeat offenses should be sanctioned in accordance with the Code of Behaviour. Actions taken could result in suspension and / or expulsion. For other members of the school community, this could result in barring from the school grounds or school buildings.
3. Support for the person experiencing the racist incident such as, but not limited to, classroom discussion, one to one teacher/pastoral support team member/counsellor/relevant staff member-student support and peer support groups.
4. Parents of the students involved will be informed of the issue and the actions taken.

## **REASSESS**

1. The school should return to re-evaluate the effectiveness how the incident was dealt with, to check on the student of said incident but also that the student who was the aggressor has understood why the school has responded to the behaviour.
2. In cases where the relevant staff member considers that the racist behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately resolved within 20 school days after they have determined that racist behaviour has occurred, it must be recorded by the relevant staff member.
3. Where a parent or guardian is not satisfied that the School has dealt with a racism case in accordance with these procedures, the parent or guardian must be referred, as appropriate, to the School's complaints procedures.
4. If the incident is extreme or leading to more extreme behaviour the School should consult with the community liaison garda representative and consider whether to formally report the incident to them.
5. There should also be an annual review of the policy to ensure it is at its most effective and to consider amendment for best practice.

## **REPEAT**

The more often and openly the school discusses racism in all its forms, the easier it is to call it out in the community and create a safe environment for all to thrive in. Every incident is not a crisis, but rather an opportunity for a teachable moment as well as a support to those affected by racism. Having these conversations increases awareness and widens students' and staff's horizons as to privilege and lack thereof in a wider world context. Racism is local and lived, it can be inflicted by strangers but also by those we see on a day to day basis. The only way to tackle racism is head on with open, frank discussion.

### **8. Signs and Symptoms of Racism:**

As racism is not always easy to spot, teachers, staff members and parents and guardians should be vigilant in watching for signs and symptoms that may indicate that a student is being subjected to racial targeting or is engaging in racist activity.

Signs and symptoms may include, but are not limited to:

- Deterioration in academic performance.
- Possessions missing or damaged.
- Refusal to talk to a parent or guardian about what is troubling them. When explained the rationale may not make sense to those told but it is very real for the student.
- Reluctance to go to school.
- Generalised anxiety/ difficulties sleeping/ loss of appetite.

### **9. Strategies for the Prevention of Racism in the School**

Villiers School embraces the following, which have been identified as effective strategies for the prevention of racism in schools:

- A zero tolerance approach towards racism in the school community.
- An equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) working group in school, giving voices to students from different ethnic and other backgrounds, and linking into the student council.
- Teachers having access to resources to guide them in creating a welcoming learning environment for students for whom English is a second language, and in communicating with their parents and guardians.
- Authentic and organic interactions with anti-racism, engaging with anti-racism initiatives, but not as a tokenistic gesture, rather as the culmination of the schools year round work.
- Discouraging being a bystander when it comes to racism. Silence in itself is a statement. The student that lets racism pass by without question is as much to blame as this behaviour condones racist behaviour.

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- Inviting speakers from many ethnic backgrounds and disciplines and experiences to provide diverse role models and alternatives to what may be around students on a daily basis.
- Anti-bias training for the school wide community.
- Parents and guardians 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 student may be subject to racism, or is subjecting another student to racism.
- Library reading material and textbooks represent appropriate lived experiences of students and adults from different national and cultural backgrounds. Similarly, films and documentaries being watched have that same reflection and including material that investigates false beliefs.

### **10. Roles and Responsibilities:**

#### Board of Management

The Board of Management must take leadership in terms of the drafting of the Anti-Racism Policy. The Board must clearly outline the consequences of racist behaviour within the Policy and be prepared to take the necessary and sometimes difficult steps regarding the sanctioning of offenders of racist incidents.

#### Head of School

The Head of School must take direct leadership of the issue of racism within the school. They must set the standard for the teachers and administration.. The Head of School must communicate the serious and unacceptable nature of racist incidents to parents, guardians, staff and pupils alike. The Head of School must ensure that policies are carried out and that this is done with due diligence to those affected. The Head of School must communicate emerging issues such as racism to the Board of Management or any other relevant authority. The Head of School must know who the local garda community liaison officer is.

#### Staff Members

Staff members are obliged to ensure that no student under their supervision or care is subjected to racism. Staff members must keep track of and notify the relevant authority of any racist incidents and complete racist incident forms where appropriate. Staff members must seek to support persons who have experienced racist incidents appropriately with compassion and mindfulness- empathy rather than denial, open questions rather than doubting ones. Staff members must also take part in and engage with anti-bias and anti-racism training organised or facilitated by the school. Staff members must not, at any time, engage in stereotyping, ridiculing or encouraging racist discourse within the school, including within the classroom. Staff members must be aware that they set the tone and must always challenge discriminatory language.

#### Students

This policy is an adaptation of Emer O'Neill & Emmet Thomas' 2021 Anti-Racism Policy

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Students must be made aware of their obligation and responsibility to ensure that no person in the school community is subjected to racist incidents. Students must report such incidents to the nearest teacher or member of staff. Students must not engage in any racist activity. This is not limited to the school grounds. Outside school and online, students are as responsible for their behaviour as they would be on school grounds.

### Parents

Parents and guardians must be familiar with the school's anti-racism policy and duly accept the interventions, including sanctions as determined by the school. Parents and guardians should be encouraged to partake in activities which encourage the appreciation for equality, diversity and inclusion and cross cultural relationships.

This Policy is supported by:

The Yellow Flag Programme

INAR- The Irish Network Against Racism

Black and Irish

North Wicklow Educate Together Secondary School