Dealing with Racist Incidents Policy

Written by	Reviewed and Ratified by Governors	Shared with Staff	Last Updated	Review Cycle	Next Review due
Duncan Wakefield Deputy Headteacher	October 2026	September 2026 – INSET day	September 2026	Annually	September 2026

1.0 Statement of Intent

1.1 All members of the school community (staff, pupils, parents and visitors) have a right not to experience racism at school, whether or not this is directed at them. At Shefford Lower School we value all children and seek to ensure that they learn that challenging hurtful behaviour and discrimination is an important part of being a member of a community Racism is evident in wider society and therefore inevitably will occasionally occur within schools.

1.2 At Shefford Lower School we are proactive in creating a learning community characterised by empathy, understanding and harmony across ethnic, national and religious heritages, where diversity is nurtured, valued and celebrated. We achieve this through the curriculum, Values Education (including the promotion of British Values) and our own example to children. Leaders promote the values of integrity, respect, trust, fairness, transparency, and honesty.

We recognise that:

- We are committed to equality of opportunity for all;
- Racist incidents have far reaching consequences for any victim of a racist incident and for young children;
- The person who the abuse was aimed at might not be aware of the incident. Therefore, the subject of the racist incident may be the person who has witnessed it and they will be counselled and supported accordingly;
- All learners are entitled to a multicultural and anti-racist education, irrespective of the presence or absence of learners who are from ethnic minorities;
- There must be active monitoring and evaluation of policies and practice;
- There is a need for public accountability in reporting on racist incidents, follow up action and outcomes.

Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- DfE (2026) 'Keeping children safe in education 2026'
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Data Protection Act 2018
- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Data (Use and Access) Act 2025
- Race Relations Act 1976
- Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000

2.0 Context

2.1 It is unlawful to discriminate directly or indirectly on grounds of colour, race, nationality and ethnic or national origin.

2.2 Every School has a statutory duty to promote race equality. This arises from the Race Relations Act 1976, Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, Education and Inspections Act 2006 and the Equality Act 2006.

2.3 A key legal duty is to record and monitor all racist incidents and ensure appropriate action is taken following each recorded incident. This means that policies and practices which are not in themselves racist, but which have a discriminatory effect on particular ethnic groups, are open to challenge in the courts.

3.0 Aims

3.1 Pupils, staff, parents/carers and visitors are aware that racial harassment, bullying, abuse, graffiti and other racist behaviour, in any part of the school, and by pupils outside of school hours or off site, will be not be tolerated and will be challenged.

3.2 Pupils are empowered to report racist incidents within a framework that recognises the right of the child to be heard.

3.3 The right of the child to involve an adult external to the school to express her/his perceptions is recognised.

3.4 All staff are familiar with, and able to implement, the procedures for dealing with and recording racist incidents.

3.5 All staff are vigilant with regard to behaviour among pupils, and will look out for, and respond appropriately to, incidents and reported incidents of bullying, harassment or racism.

3.6 Pupils and parents/carers are involved in agreeing principles and procedures for dealing with racist incidents, including bullying and harassment, and are expected to play their part in dealing with such incidents.

3.7 Racial discrimination is eliminated from, and racial equality is promoted in, employment.

3.8 Policy is determined and data are provided to the Governing Body on all racist incidents.

3.9 The school's curriculum is explicit in challenging racism, in an appropriate manner for children's stage of development.

4.0 **Definition**

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

5.0 Safeguarding Context

5.1 At Shefford Lower School we recognise that racist incidents can constitute a safeguarding concern and may cause significant harm to children's wellbeing, mental health, and ability to learn.

5.2 Where a racist incident meets the threshold for a safeguarding concern, it will be managed in accordance with our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and procedures, with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) taking the lead role.

5.3 The DSL will be involved in all racist incidents that involve:

- Physical violence or threats of violence
- Persistent or severe harassment or intimidation
- Incidents that cause significant distress or harm to a child
- Incidents involving vulnerable children (including children with SEND, looked-after children, or children known to social services)
- Incidents that may indicate wider safeguarding concerns about a child (either as victim or perpetrator)
- Online racist incidents that may constitute cyberbullying or online abuse

5.4 The Designated Senior Person responsible for managing racist incidents (Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher) will work closely with the DSL to ensure:

- All safeguarding concerns are appropriately identified and responded to
- Information is shared appropriately with relevant agencies where necessary
- Support is coordinated for both victims and perpetrators
- Parents/carers are informed in line with safeguarding procedures

5.5 Where a racist incident does not meet the safeguarding threshold, the Designated Senior Person will manage the incident in accordance with this policy, but will consult with the DSL if there is any uncertainty.

5.6 All staff have a responsibility to recognise that racist incidents may be indicators of other safeguarding concerns and should report any concerns to the DSL in accordance with our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

6.0 Online Racist Incidents and Digital Safety

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6.1 Shefford Lower School recognises that racist incidents can occur through digital means, including social media, messaging apps, online gaming platforms, and other digital communication tools.

6.2 Online racist incidents are treated with the same seriousness as face-to-face incidents and will be responded to using the procedures set out in this policy.

6.3 Online racist incidents may include:

- Racist messages, comments, or posts on social media platforms
- Racist content shared through messaging apps (e.g., WhatsApp, Snapchat)
- Racist behaviour during online gaming or in virtual environments
- Sharing racist images, memes, or videos
- Creating or sharing AI-generated content that is racist in nature
- Using technology to spread racist material or incite racist behaviour
- Cyberbullying with a racist element

6.4 Where online racist incidents occur:

- The incident will be recorded on CPOMs/ARBOR in the same way as other racist incidents
- Screenshots or other evidence will be preserved where possible and appropriate
- The DSL will be consulted to determine whether the incident constitutes an online safety concern requiring safeguarding intervention
- Parents/carers will be informed and asked to support the school's approach
- Where incidents occur outside school hours or off-site, the school will still respond in accordance with this policy where it involves our pupils and impacts on the school community

6.5 The school will educate pupils about online racist behaviour through:

- PSHE curriculum and computing lessons
- Assembly themes addressing respect, diversity, and online behaviour
- Age-appropriate discussions about the permanence and impact of online content
- Teaching pupils how to report online racist incidents safely

6.6 The school maintains filtering and monitoring systems to help identify and prevent online racist incidents occurring on school devices and networks. These systems are reviewed annually in line with KCSIE 2026 requirements.

6.7 Staff will receive training on:

- Recognising online racist incidents
- Responding appropriately to reports of online racist behaviour
- Understanding the safeguarding implications of online racist incidents
- Supporting pupils who have experienced online racism

7. School practices

7.1 School practices will include:

- A nominated, designated senior person responsible for managing racist incidents. At Shefford Lower School this is the Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher;
- Commitment to taking immediate action where a racist incident takes place;
- Provision of appropriate support for the person who has been the subject of a racist incident;
- Appropriate intervention with the person who has initiated the incident;
- Making clear where a racist incident has occurred, that this is unacceptable;
- Encouraging pupils and staff to explore their own perceptions in the light of the values and principles set out above;
- Being careful when dealing with racist incidents that involve retaliation, to ensure that appropriate action is taken both with the person who has initiated the incident and the person who has retaliated in response to it;
- Discussing racist incidents with parents/carers and encouraging them to reinforce the school's anti-racist practices at home;
- Providing training on the school's racial equality and racial harassment policies and procedures;

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- Identifying a named senior member of staff to oversee the recording and monitoring of racist incidents;
- Ensuring that supply and temporary staff are aware of and implement the school's policy.

7.2 Racist incidents can cover a range of occurrences, from violence with a racist motivation to use of language which causes offence but arises from ignorance or thoughtlessness rather than from any overtly racist motivation. However, a pupil's life chances can be undermined by behaviour which is racist in nature, even if there is no racist intent.

7.3 The person responsible for the incident should be provided with the opportunity to learn from it. In some instances, for example where racist behaviour arises out of ignorance, then counselling from a member of staff might be appropriate (for example, a teacher taking a pupil aside to discuss what has happened and the harm that might have resulted or time with the school's family support worker).

7.4 In all instances, the parents/carers, both of the person responsible for the incident and of the person subject to the incident will be informed. The person who has been the subject of a racist incident will be appropriately supported.

7.5 In some circumstances it may be necessary to refer a racist incident to the Police. This will normally only be necessary where there is violence or aggression leading to physical harm and/or intimidation and we would expect this to relate to incidents involving adults rather than children. The advice of the Police Community Support Officer may be sought.

See Appendix 1 for a list of behaviours with a potential racial motive.

See Appendix 2 for a flowchart that sets out a sequence for responding to racist incidents.

8.0 Recording Racist Incidents

8.1 All racist incidents, as determined by the definition agreed in section 2.1, will be recorded on the school's information management system (CPOMs/ARBOR) within 24 hours of the incident being reported or witnessed.

8.2 Records will include:

- Date, time, and location of the incident
- Details of those involved (victim, perpetrator, witnesses)
- Nature of the incident and whether it occurred online or in person
- Action taken, including any safeguarding referrals
- Support provided to the victim
- Intervention with the perpetrator
- Parental involvement
- Outcomes and follow-up actions

8.3 All records are stored securely in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018, UK GDPR, and the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025. Access to records is restricted to relevant staff members on a need-to-know basis.

8.4 Records are retained in line with our Data Retention Policy and Information and Records Management Society (IRMS) toolkit guidance.

8.5 A report (including a nil report) must be made each term at a full governing body meeting, with data disaggregated to identify any patterns or trends.

8.6 Aggregated anonymised data will be provided to the Local Authority as requested.

9.0 Dealing with racist incidents

9.1 Staff – complaints against staff will be dealt with in line with either the school's complaints policy, whistleblowing policy or disciplinary procedures accordingly.

9.2 Governors – governors are expected to uphold the school's values, ethical leadership values and ethos and to show respect for all people. If an allegation is made about a governor, the Chair of Governors will organise an investigation. If a governor is responsible for a racist incident the governing body will determine the action to be taken. Where a Governor is

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subject to a racist incident, the Governing Body will provide appropriate support and will decide on the nature of the investigation and the action to be taken following the investigation.

9.3 Incidents involving school governors will be recorded in the same manner as those involving children, staff or other adults at school.

9.4 Action taken by the Governing Body should be consistent with the values, principles, policies and practice set out in this policy.

9.5 Visitors (including parents/carers) – where a visitor (who might also be a parent/carer of a child at the school) is responsible for a racist incident, this will be reported to the Headteacher who will take the following actions:

- Inform the visitor that the school does not tolerate racist behaviour
- Invite the visitor to leave the premises
- If the visitor is employed by an organisation, inform the visitor that the organisation will be informed of the racist incident
- Inform the organisation accordingly
- Contact the Police if necessary
- Ensure counselling/ follow-up for any victim

9.6 The Bedfordshire Race and Equality Council (BREC) has a website offering advice on a number of equality issues and also on reporting hate crime through StopHateUk.

9.7 Parents/Carers – parents/carers of pupils who are the subject of racist incidents will be informed of those incidents and of the action taken to deal with them. Parents/carers of pupils who are responsible for racist incidents will be invited to play an active role in dealing with the situation.

10. Roles and Responsibilities

Designated Senior Person

10.1 The Headteacher is the designated senior person for dealing with racist incidents. In the absence/unavailability of the DSP the Deputy Head Teacher will act in her place. The designated person is responsible for recording and monitoring racial incidents to ensure that:

- All racist incidents and complaints of racial discrimination and racial harassment against staff are recorded and investigated within one week
- Active steps are taken to protect staff from racist bullying or harassment by pupils, parents/carers, visitors and other staff
- Where appropriate, racist incidents are dealt with through the school's disciplinary procedures
- All staff have access to the school's Grievance Procedures in the event of being subject to racist incidents, including racial discrimination and racial harassment
- Staff induction covers the school's policy and procedures for dealing with racist incidents
- All staff are trained on how to implement the school's racial harassment policy and procedures
- Good practice and effective strategies for dealing with racist incidents are shared between staff
- Racists incidents are monitored and analysed and reported to the Governing Body

Staff

10.2 School staff including, where appropriate, contract and supply staff, are expected to:

- Take responsibility for implementing the school's Equality and Racist Incidents policies
- Foster a positive atmosphere of mutual respect and trust among pupils from all ethnic groups
- Ensure that play and leisure areas provide a positive environment for pupils from all ethnic groups
- Deal effectively with incidents whenever they occur, whether in person or online
- Recognise that racist incidents may constitute safeguarding concerns and report appropriately to the DSL
- Read and understand Part One of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026
- Understand how racist incidents relate to child-on-child abuse and the continuum of harmful behaviour
- Ensure the curriculum and wider school is inclusive of opportunities to educate and celebrate equality and foster a positive environment for all ethnic groups

Governing Body

10.3 The Governing Body has overall responsibility for ensuring that:

- There is a policy for reporting racist incidents
- A DSP who is a senior member of the school is appointed

11.0 Racist Incidents and Child-on-Child Abuse

11.1 The school recognises that racist incidents between pupils may constitute child-on-child abuse, particularly where they involve:

- Physical violence
- Harassment or intimidation
- Persistent bullying with a racist element
- Sexual harassment or violence with a racist element
- Online abuse or cyberbullying

11.2 KCSIE 2026 establishes a continuum of harmful behaviour, and racist incidents will be understood within this framework. The school will:

- Assess the severity and context of each incident
- Consider the impact on the victim
- Take a proportionate response that addresses the behaviour while supporting both victim and perpetrator
- Recognise that children who perpetrate racist incidents may themselves be experiencing harm or abuse

11.3 Where racist incidents constitute child-on-child abuse, they will be managed in accordance with our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, with the DSL taking the lead role.

11.4 The school will ensure that:

- Victims are supported and protected
- Perpetrators receive appropriate intervention and support
- A risk assessment is completed where necessary
- Parents/carers are involved appropriately
- External agencies are consulted where necessary

12.0 Monitoring, Reporting and Evaluation

12.1 When a racist incident takes place, this must be recorded using CPOMs.

12.2 Careful record keeping of racist incidents will enable the school to identify patterns of behaviour whereby individuals or groups can be shown to be regular victims or perpetrators of racist incidents.

12.3 The examination of these records on a regular basis by Designated Senior Person will provide the school with a picture of the frequency and nature of racist incidents and give some indication as to how effectively the school is combating such behaviour.

12.4 The Head Teacher will make a termly report to the Governing Body on the number of racists incidents recorded, and an annual report to the Governing Body disaggregated in line with the categories provided on the Racist Incident Forms. The Governing Body will use this, and other supporting information, to review the school's policy and practice on dealing with racist incidents.

12.5 Parents/Carers will be informed of the school's policy and practice on dealing with racist incidents.

12.6 The school will provide aggregated information to the LA in the form it is requested.

12.7 This policy will be reviewed in full by the Governing Body annually.

13.0 Links to Other Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with the:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Equality Policy
- SEND Policy

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- Behaviour Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Volunteers Policy
- Whistle Blowing Policy

14.0 Monitoring and review

The implementation of this policy is monitored by the SENDCo, Senior Leadership Team, Headteacher Deputy Headteacher and Governors. This policy will be reviewed in full by the Governing Body annually.

14.1 All staff, including those who do not work directly with children, will:

- Read and understand this policy
- Read and understand Part One of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026
- Receive training on recognising and responding to racist incidents, including online incidents
- Understand how racist incidents relate to safeguarding and child-on-child abuse
- Receive updates when this policy is revised

14.2 The DSL and Designated Senior Person will receive additional training on:

- Managing complex racist incidents
- Understanding the safeguarding implications of racist incidents
- Supporting vulnerable children who experience or perpetrate racist incidents
- Working with external agencies where necessary

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Appendix 1
BEHAVIOURS WITH A POTENTIALLY RACIAL MOTIVE EITHER IN REAL TIME OR THE VIRTUAL WORLD

1. Physical assault;
2. Racist graffiti;
3. Derogatory name calling;
4. Racist insults;
5. Racist jokes;
6. Comments which are offensive on grounds of colour, race, ethnic and national origin, nationality and citizenship;
7. Drawings which are offensive on grounds of colour, race, ethnic and national origin, nationality and citizenship;
8. Bringing to school, material which is racist, including leaflets, comics or magazines;
9. Wearing racist tattoos, badges or insignia;
10. Extortion;
11. Intimidation;
12. Using threatening words;
13. Using taunts;
14. Using ridicule;
15. Theft;
16. Damage to personal property;
17. Incitement of others to behave in a racist manner;
18. Verbal abuse.

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Appendix 2
SUMMARY PROCEDURE FOR DEALING WITH RACIST INCIDENTS

Racist incident witnessed or reported (eg by person subject to the incident, friend, bystander, parent/carer)

- Determine the facts of the incident
- Take immediate action to support person subject to the incident;
- Make arrangements to inform parent/carer of person subject to the incident.

Consider whether further investigation is required.

YES

Interview people involved in, or witnessing, incident.

Determine action to be pursued with
- person responsible for incident
- parent/carer of person responsible for incident (if appropriate)
- person subject to the incident (including further support)
- others

NO

Decide appropriate action to be taken with respect to the person responsible for the incident. Inform parent/carer.

Record incident and the action taken.

Invite person subject to the incident and parent/carer to state whether they are satisfied with how the racist incident was handled.

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