

Anti-racism policy

This is a mandated policy under the operational policy framework. Any edits to this policy must follow the process outlined on the [creating, updating and deleting operational policies](#) page.

1. Overview

This policy outlines the department's position on anti-racism and sets out the expectations, roles and responsibilities for everyone interacting within public education settings – including schools, preschools, early childhood services and corporate workplaces – to prevent, address and respond to racism.

It reflects the department's commitment to a public education system free from racism, where every student, employee and community member feels culturally safe, valued and respected, and where diversity is welcomed as a strength that drives equity, excellence and belonging.

This policy was developed on the lands of the Kaurna people, the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the Adelaide region. The department acknowledges that their spiritual connection, cultural heritage and relationship with Country remain as important to living Kaurna people today as they have always been. The department acknowledges and respects the Aboriginal Traditional Owners and Custodians of the lands and waters across South Australia. The department pays respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their continuing connection to Country and Place. We, particularly recognise and thank those whose experiences, perspectives and contributions have informed the development of this policy, and recognise the cultural authority they bring.

The department recognises that the unique experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples requires an understanding and acknowledgment of the enduring impacts of invasion, colonisation, unceded sovereignty and the denial of rights to self-determination.

The department also recognises that Culturally and Racially Marginalised communities, including migrants and refugees, have experienced and continue to experience systemic racism, exclusion and unequal treatment in Australia, shaped by historical and contemporary policies, attitudes and power structures.

2. Scope

The Department for Education rejects racism in all its forms. No child, student, employee, volunteer, parent, carer or community member should experience racism within public education settings.

This policy applies to all individuals interacting within public education settings, each of whom has a responsibility to actively contribute to preventing and addressing racism.

This policy aligns with the [South Australian Public Sector Anti-Racism Strategy & Action Plan](#), and international and national human rights legislation, such as the United Nations [Universal Declaration of Human Rights \(1948\)](#) | [OHCHR](#) and the [National Anti-Racism Framework](#) | [Australian Human Rights Commission](#)



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3. Details

3.1. What is racism?

Racism is the process by which systems and policies, actions and attitudes create inequitable opportunities, unfair outcomes and deny access to resources for people based on race, ethnicity, language, culture, ancestry and/or colour. It refers to the systems, policies, actions and attitudes that create unequal opportunities and outcomes for people based on race.

Racism is more than just prejudice in thought or action. It occurs when this prejudice – whether individual or institutional – is accompanied by the power to discriminate against, oppress or limit the rights, freedom and dignity of others. Racism is a historical construct in Australia, which continues to have a lasting impact in today's societal context, based on settler colonialism.

While we acknowledge that cultural safety, awareness and responsiveness are key aspects of the anti-racism journey and practice, they are not the same concepts. Racism feeds on:

- unconscious bias (learned, unintentional stereotypes about certain groups of people that are deeply ingrained in our beliefs and can affect our behaviour)
- white privilege (implicit societal advantage attributed to dominant social groups)
- unequal power distribution.

3.1.1. Types of racism

Racism can take many forms, as outlined below. While some behaviours are sometimes described as 'low-level', all forms of racism cause harm and must be addressed.

Interpersonal racism

Racist acts such as exclusion, abuse or stereotyping that occur during interactions between individuals e.g. harassment, humiliation, or violence.

Internalised racism

When a negatively racialised person incorporates racist attitudes, beliefs, or ideologies into their view of the world and/or themselves.

Systemic racism

When cultural norms, laws, ideologies, policies and practices of a society, organisation or institution result in inequitable treatment, opportunities, and outcomes. It manifests in specific institutions, such as education, via institutional racism.

Overt racism

Overt racism is also known as explicit racism. It includes, but is not exclusive of, taunts, name-calling or physical abuse.

Covert racism

Covert racism is also known as implicit racism. It includes, but is not exclusive of, social isolation and microaggressions.

3.1.2. Anti-racism

Anti-racism describes the process of actively opposing racism, challenging racist ideas and stereotypes, and addressing systemic change through constant questioning, self-reflection and accountability.

3.2. Purpose and approach

Every person who engages with the department has the right to learn, work and participate in an environment free of racism.

The policy sets out the department's position on anti-racism and establishes the expectations for everyone interacting with public education settings in rejecting and addressing racism in all its forms. It outlines the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders to support shared accountability for creating culturally responsive, inclusive and equitable environments across the education system.

The department recognises that racism can occur at individual, interpersonal and systemic levels, and that it can manifest within institutions, including education systems, through policies, practices, processes and structures that directly or indirectly disadvantage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and Culturally and Racially Marginalised peoples. The department is committed to identifying, preventing and addressing racism wherever it occurs, including examining and transforming the systems, structures and practices that may contribute to inequitable outcomes. This requires ongoing reflection, learning, accountability and action at all levels of the organisation.

This policy is supported by procedures and guidelines to address racism that provide direction for workforce, students and community members.

3.2.1. Policy development and co-design

The development of this policy and supporting procedures has been informed by a range of voices, perspectives and evidence. The policy was co-designed with the department's first Anti-Racism Lived Experience Advisory Group. It also draws on insights from the Commissioner for Children and Young People's *Everyday Racism* work, research undertaken by the University of Adelaide, the Office of the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment's Anti-Racism Strategy, the experience and practice of Parafield Gardens High School, and contributions from and a cross-departmental steering group, professional associations and stakeholders across the education system.

This policy centres the lived experiences, voices and perspectives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and Culturally and Racially Marginalised peoples, co-designed with the department's first Anti-Racism Lived Experience Advisory Group. This will help to ensure the department's approach will support meaningful and lasting change for those most impacted by racism. The department recognises that addressing racism requires ongoing partnership and will continue to work with people with lived experience, internal and external stakeholders and community groups to strengthen its approach and support continuous improvement across the public education system.

4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1. Senior Executive Group

Provide enterprise-wide leadership and accountability for the implementation of the Anti-Racism Policy, including setting strategic direction, overseeing system-wide performance, and ensuring a coordinated approach across workforce, learners and communities.

The Senior Executive Group is responsible for:

- acting as the accountable oversight body for anti-racism
- providing assurance that appropriate governance, reporting and response mechanisms are in place and operating effectively
- making decisions on strategic priorities, resource allocation and system responses to emerging issues
- maintaining visibility of racism trends and data to inform continuous improvement and prevention strategies
- ensuring shared accountability across all divisions, with clear alignment to designated leadership for each stage of implementation (workforce, learners and communities)
- supporting an iterative governance approach, enabling the department to adapt and strengthen its response over time.

4.2. Executive Director, People and Culture

The Executive Director, People and Culture is responsible for monitoring the implementation of this policy and ensuring it is reviewed regularly to maintain its relevance and accuracy, and for approving all updates.

4.3. Site leaders, executives and managers

Leaders are expected to lead and model the department's commitment to eliminating racism. They must actively promote diversity, respect and inclusion, and foster a positive and culturally safe workplace and learning climate.

Leaders are responsible for setting clear expectations, building capability and accountability within their teams, and supporting employee, child and student wellbeing and professional and personal growth.

They are ultimately accountable for addressing racism in their context, complying with legal obligations, and ensuring policies and procedures are followed. This includes taking timely and appropriate action when racism occurs, participating in relevant training, and modelling consistent anti-racist leadership in practice.

Failure to meet these responsibilities, including failing to respond appropriately to racism, may result in action in accordance with relevant policies, employment obligations and legislative requirements.

[\[link to workforce procedure\]](#)

4.4. All employees

All employees are responsible for contributing to a workplace and learning environment free from racism. Employees must ensure their own behaviour is respectful, inclusive and free from racism, including discrimination, and act in ways that are actively anti-racist.

Employees are required to understand what racism is, recognise it when it occurs, and call it out or report it using the appropriate procedures. Participation in relevant training and applying this learning in practice is expected.

Failure to meet these responsibilities, including engaging in or failing to appropriately address racist behaviour, may result in action in accordance with relevant policies, employment obligations and legislative requirements. [\[link to workforce procedure\]](#)

4.5. Students

All students are expected to behave respectfully towards department employees, peers, and the broader school community, in line with the [behaviour support policy](#). Racist behaviour by students is not acceptable and will be responded to in accordance with relevant policies.

4.6. Volunteers

All volunteers are expected to behave respectfully towards employees, peers, students and the broader school community, in line with the [Volunteer policy \(PDF 197KB\)](#). Racist behaviour by volunteers is not acceptable and will result in action in accordance with relevant policies and guidelines. Volunteers should be aware that consequences, including termination of volunteer arrangements, may apply where racist behaviour occurs.

4.7. Parents, families and community members

All parents, families and community members are expected to behave respectfully towards department employees, students and the broader school community. Racist behaviour is not acceptable. Where racist behaviour occurs, appropriate action may be taken in line with relevant legislation, site policies and access arrangements.

5. Key terms

5.1. Aboriginal peoples

In South Australia, we acknowledge the Traditional Owners/Custodians of the lands that the Government of South Australia works on.

Throughout the development of the policy, we have been intentional in our use of language, recognising that context is important, consistent with both the First Nations Voice Act 2023 and the Children and Young People (Safety and Support) Act 2025.

Where the policy refers to the histories, cultures, connection to Country, lands and waters in South Australia, it respectfully refers to Aboriginal peoples to recognise local context.

5.2. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

Throughout the development of the policy, we have been intentional in our use of language, recognising that context is important, consistent with both the First Nations Voice Act 2023 and the Children and Young People (Safety and Support) Act 2025.

Where the policy addresses impacts of colonisation and racism it intentionally and respectfully refers to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across Australia. Recognising the lived experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples living and working in South Australia, who have connections with Country and Place outside of South Australia.

5.3. Culturally and Racially Marginalised peoples

This term is used to refer to people who are not racialised as white, and who face marginalisation because of their skin colour, ethnicity, including culture. This is the preferred term for the Anti-Racism Policy and procedure and is to be used in full, not abbreviated.

5.4. Other relevant terminology

A list of terminology to support the Anti-Racism Policy and procedure can be found at [\(insert link when complete\)](#).

6. Supporting information

- [Blueprint for Aboriginal outcomes in public education \(PDF 6 MB\)](#)
- [Culturally Responsive Framework \(PDF 10 MB\)](#)

6.1. Related legislation

- [Racial Discrimination Act 1975 \(Cth\)](#)
- [Equal Opportunity Act 1984 \(SA\)](#)
- [Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 \(Cth\)](#)
- [Racial Hatred Act 1995 \(Cth\)](#)
- [Racial Vilification Act 1996 \(SA\)](#)
- [Fair Work Act 2009 \(Cth\)](#)
- [Public Sector Act 2009 \(SA\)](#)
- [Work Health and Safety Act 2012 \(SA\)](#)

6.2. Related policies

- [Aboriginal Education Strategy 2019 to 2029 \(PDF 3 MB\)](#)

- [Aboriginal Workforce Plan 2021-2031 \(PDF 518KB\)](#)
- [Behaviour Support Policy \(PDF 603KB\)](#)[Culturally Responsive Framework \(PDF 10 MB\)](#)
- [Department for Education Workforce Strategy](#)
- [Department Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan 2023-2026 \(PDF 9,984KB\)](#)
- [OCPSE Anti-Racism Strategy 2023-2028 \(PDF 1MB\)](#)
- [OCPSE Code of Ethics \(PDF 124KB\)](#)
- [Work health and safety policy \(PDF 557KB\)](#)

7. Record history

Published date:

7.1. Approvals

OP number: [XXX \(OP will provide this number\)](#)

File number: [xx/xxxx](#)

Status: [draft/approved](#)

Version: [X.X](#)

Policy Officer: [Position \(in title case\), business unit](#)

Policy sponsor: [Position \(in title case\), business unit](#)

Responsible Executive Director: [Position \(in title case\), division](#)

Approved by: [Position \(in title case\), business unit or division](#)

Approved date: [day, month, year](#)

Next review date: [day, month, year \(must be 3 years from the approved date\)](#)

7.2. Revision record

[\(List the revision record in order of most recent updates at the top\)](#)

Version: [X.X](#)

Approved by: [Position \(in title case\), business unit or division](#)

Approved date: [day, month, year](#)

Review date: [day, month, year](#)

Amendment(s): [Include a brief summary of the changes you have made in the edit.](#)

8. Contact

Workforce Strategy, People and Culture

Email: education:anti-racism@sa.gov.au