



PREVENTING & ADDRESSING RACISM

IN SCHOOLS POLICY 2026 – 2030



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact the Watsonia Heights Primary School Office on (03) 9435 4617.

AIM

For Watsonia Heights Primary School to strengthen their culture and practice to prevent and address racism, religious intolerance and racial and religious vilification.

PRINCIPLES

The core principles of this policy and the Department of Education's Preventing & Addressing Racism in Schools Policy are in line with Child Safe Standard 1 and 5, whereby all Victorian government schools must actively prevent and respond to racism, and report incidents to the department.

This policy covers 3 key actions:

- preventing racism: schools must maintain culturally safe and inclusive environments
- responding to racism: schools must have clear, timely, safe and inclusive processes to respond to incidents of racism
- reporting racism: schools must report incidents of racism in EduSafe Plus, as per the [Managing and Reporting School Incidents \(Including Emergencies\) policy](#).

Watsonia Heights Primary School must publish a link to this policy on their website, alongside advice on how to report incidents of racism to the school and through the Report Racism hotline.

For further information regarding the Department of Education's Preventing & Addressing Racism in Schools, please visit <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/preventing-addressing-racism-schools/policy> .

Application of this policy

This policy applies to all Victorian government school staff, external practitioners, contractors and volunteers working with students. This is a statewide policy. Schools are not required to have a local policy in addition to this policy. The scope of this policy is primarily focused on the obligations of schools to provide culturally safe learning environments for their students. For staff who have experienced racism, refer to the [Equal Opportunity – Employees policy](#).

Racism is not tolerated in Victorian government schools

Racism is not tolerated in Victorian government schools. Racism has significant detrimental impacts on mental health, learning and engagement, and contributes to disadvantage and isolation of young people. Refer to [Key terminology and examples of forms of racism](#) on the guidance tab for an explanation of racism and other key terminology used in this policy.

First Nations students

To comply with Child Safe Standard 1, as well as to support Marrung and the findings of the [Strengthening Aboriginal Self-Determination in Education report \(PDF\)\(opens in a new window\)](#), all government schools must establish a culturally safe environment, free from racism, for First Nations students, families, carers and communities.

Racism experienced by First Nations students, families, carers and communities comes in a range of forms, including (but not limited to), denial of self-determination, unconscious bias, stereotyping, and derogatory language, leading to lower expectations and reduced opportunities for First Nations students. Racism is often exacerbated by cultural bias and lack of understanding about the ongoing impacts of colonisation and injustices such as the forced removal of First Nations children from their families (known as the Stolen Generations), and this can perpetuate exclusion and culturally unsafe practices in schools.

Students who experience higher levels of racism or religious intolerance

Data shows that First Nations students, students from African and Pasifika backgrounds and students from refugee backgrounds experience racism at higher rates than their peers. Students of faith, including Jewish and Muslim students, can experience religious intolerance such as antisemitism and Islamophobia. Refer to the [Resources tab](#) for targeted guidance and programs to assist in preventing racism that can be experienced by these cohorts.

Preventing racism

Creating a culturally safe and inclusive environment

Child Safe Standard 1 requires schools to:

- provide a culturally safe, nurturing and inclusive environment for First Nations children and young people, where the 3 elements of cultural safety are implemented:
 - understanding identity
 - respecting culture
 - eliminating racism and abuse
- adopt measures to ensure racism is identified, confronted and not tolerated
- develop and implement supportive and culturally safe processes for addressing racism.

Schools must be culturally safe for current and prospective First Nations students, families, carers and communities.

Child Safe Standard 5 requires schools to:

- create environments where all children and young people feel welcome, their diversity is valued, and their needs are identified and are being met
- provide a safe, nurturing and inclusive environment for students from culturally, linguistically and religiously diverse backgrounds.

Students need to see and feel that their identity is reflected, understood and respected in their school.

Refer to [Preventing racism](#) on the guidance tab for strategies on how to provide a culturally safe and inclusive environment.

Building staff capability to prevent and respond to racism and ensure cultural safety

Child Safe Standard 1 requires schools to make sure that staff and volunteers understand the diverse circumstances of students and how to provide support to vulnerable students.

Schools can support this standard by providing opportunities for staff to undertake training on cultural competency, cultural safety, unconscious bias, or inclusive education practices (for example, [Community Understanding and Safety Training\(opens in a new window\)](#)). Refer to the [Resources tab](#) for more professional learning options.

Promoting cultural diversity and inclusion in teaching and learning

The Victorian Curriculum F–10 Version 2.0 will assist in strengthening understanding of cultural diversity and inclusion. [Intercultural Capability\(opens in a new window\)](#) and other cross-curriculum priorities, including [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures\(opens in a new window\)](#) and [Asia and Australia's Engagement with Asia\(opens in a new window\)](#), must be taught in all Victorian government schools. [Holocaust Education](#), part of the [History curriculum\(opens in a new window\)](#), must also be taught in all Victorian government secondary schools.

Under the [Teaching and Learning Resources – Selecting Appropriate Materials policy](#), schools must avoid using culturally insensitive imagery. Schools should also find ways to identify and address unconscious bias in images or language and try to ensure that teaching and learning materials and resources reflect the diversity of their school community.

For further information regarding preventing racism, please refer to [Preventing racism](#) on the guidance tab for more detail and the [Resources tab](#) on teaching and learning.

Responding to racism

The [Managing and Reporting School Incidents \(Including Emergencies\) policy](#) requires schools to manage and respond to all reported incidents of racism that occur in school. Schools may be required to offer support and implement safety measures for students affected by racism incidents occurring outside of school, if those incidents are impacting students at school.

To implement timely, proportionate, safe, and inclusive responses, schools should:

- reassure the student (or parent) that the school believes their report and that it will be taken seriously
- consider the impact on the student, which may be different than the intent of the student who engaged in racism
- identify family or community members that the student trusts and who may be able to support the response process. This is particularly important for First Nations students to promote self-determination
- use educative and restorative approaches with the aim of restoring the relationships between the students, families, carers, staff and communities involved
- ensure affected students and their families or carers are informed of the school response, in line with privacy requirements.

For further information regarding responding to racism, please refer to [Responding to and reporting racism](#) on the guidance tab for more detail on responding to incidents of racism, including step-by-step response guides and templates.

Reporting racism

Reporting racist incidents in EduSafe Plus or to the Incident Support and Operations Centre

Under the [Managing and Reporting School Incidents \(Including Emergencies\) policy](#) schools must report incidents of racism, religious intolerance, and racial and religious vilification in EduSafe Plus, or by calling the Incident Support and Operations Centre (ISOC) on [1800 126 126](#).

Regional and central staff will support schools as required, following an EduSafe Plus report depending on the nature and severity of the incident. Schools must ensure that everyone involved in the incident is informed of the school's response to the incident, while maintaining privacy requirements.

COMMUNICATION

Watsonia Heights Primary School must communicate this policy within their school community and encourage students, families and carers to report incidents of racism by placing a link to it on their website including:

- advice on what to do if racism has been experienced or witnessed at school including how to report incidents of racism to school; and
- how to report incidents of racism via the Report Racism Hotline.

RELATED POLICIES

If you require further information regarding preventing and addressing racism in schools, please refer to the Watsonia Heights Primary School's website for the following related school policies:

- Bullying Prevention Policy
- Child Safety Code of Conduct Policy
- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Statement of Values and School Philosophy
- Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy

For further information regarding related Department of Education’s policies, please visit <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/preventing-addressing-racism-schools/policy> .

In addition to these policies, Watsonia Heights Primary School also operates a School-wide Positive Support (SWPBS) program across the school. SWPBS is a globally recognised, evidence-based framework that helps schools create safe, positive, and inclusive environments where students and staff can thrive. SWPBS helps schools build consistent, whole-school systems that promote positive behaviour, wellbeing, and inclusion — creating the right conditions for effective teaching, learning, and leadership across the school.

For further information regarding SWPBS, please visit: <https://www.vic.gov.au/school-wide-positive-behaviour-support> .

RELEVANT LEGISLATION

Legislation relevant to preventing and address racism in schools includes:

- [Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 \(Vic\)\(opens in a new window\)](#)
- [Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 \(Vic\)\(opens in a new window\)](#)
- [Equal Opportunity Act 2010 \(Vic\)\(opens in a new window\)](#)
- [Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001 \(Vic\)\(opens in a new window\)](#)
- [Racial Discrimination Act 1975 \(Cth\)](#)

To access this legislation, please visit <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/preventing-addressing-racism-schools/policy> .

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	August 2026
Approved by	Tony Ryan, Principal on 10 August 2026
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