

Toolkit for Schools

Race Equality Charter

As signatories to the Race Equality Charter schools have already made a public statement of their commitment to challenging racism and racial harassment; promoting race equality and cultural diversity and fostering good race relations in their school, this toolkit aims to help schools turn that commitment into action.

The Race Equality Charter Toolkit has been developed by the Bath and North East Somerset Race Equality and Hate Crime Task Force Partnership and provides practical guidance for schools to support them with the effective implementation of the Race Equality Charter.

Each of the 12 Charter Commitments has a corresponding Toolkit section below to help you start thinking about and developing your practice across all the individual areas in the Race Equality Charter.

The Toolkit contains different sections which provide: definitions of key concepts; highlights of important issues; local examples of good practice drawn from schools and other partners across Bath and North East Somerset; practical guidance and examples to inform school policy and practice; and ideas for further reading

Start Using the Toolkit:

- **Create** an inclusive, anti-racist school environment, where everyone feels they belong, and race equality and cultural diversity are actively promoted

An **Inclusive Environment** is one where people feel safe, respected and confident in being who they truly are. In an inclusive community, people share a sense of belonging with each other, value their respective differences and build positive and strong relationships to create a cohesive community.

Being **Anti-Racist** means actively reviewing, recognising and changing existing institutional policies and practices that reproduce and perpetuate racial inequality, challenging individual racist behaviour and attitudes and implementing a whole school approach to policy and practice that promotes race equality, eliminates discrimination, celebrates cultural diversity and fosters good race relations.

The Importance of Belonging

A sense of **Belonging** in school can be defined as “*the extent to which students feel personally accepted, respected, included and supported by others*”. School belonging accounts for a substantial portion of variance in school motivation, the expectancy of success, and the value students attribute to their learning. For Black and Minority Ethnic students a sense of belonging to the school is an essential element of motivation in their learning.

Local Example - Findings from Research in Bath Secondary Schools

Research carried out with girls from minority ethnic backgrounds in Bath Secondary Schools reported a sense of belonging for children and young people from ethnic minority backgrounds comes from a complex web of experiences that are closely tied to their emotional and physical safety. They feel the pressure to fit in and social expectations to a higher degree than their white peers. At times this pressure can lead to unsafe and unhealthy thought patterns (e.g., chemically straightening hair or researching about skin bleaching). This pressure can often be underpinned by harmful experiences they have witnessed or experienced in the school and local community and fear of it happening again. It is important to note that the psychological effect of racism is not reserved for direct lived experiences and what we see and hear on social media and on TV can be just as damaging to a child's psyche and sense of safety. The rise in far-right protests in the recent months for instance, is likely to have impacted this even further.

The research also highlighted that some young people from ethnic minority backgrounds feel that their belonging must be ‘earned’ and therefore their belonging is conditional to the acceptance they feel within the school community. A lack of conversation and acknowledgment from schools about race related issues routinely came up as a reason for why many young people felt isolated and did not feel that they could ask staff for help. Silence on such topics and impartiality, therefore, were not neutral responses for children and young people from ethnic minority backgrounds and had direct consequences to how safe and supported they felt at school. Therefore, it is imperative that schools practise and promote an unconditional sense of belonging, where children are accepted for their unique strengths and needs and are recognised and acknowledged for their identities.

Examples of good practice to get you started in creating and sustaining an inclusive school environment where everyone feels they belong:

You have a dedicated individual or group leading on inclusion work rooted in anti-racism. Resources and time are allocated to this role, and the work is recognised within an individual's workload.

Your senior leadership team is literate on matters of race specifically in relation to issues of equality and inclusion. Governors, decision makers and leaders understand the importance of race equality and cultural diversity and champion these through their actions.

You proactively encourage interaction and participation from all sections of your school community, including parents and students, and involve them in a meaningful manner when making decisions.

You celebrate and respect diversity in visible (school website, displays, the curriculum, festivals) and non-visible ways (language, teaching style).

Developing a more inclusive, decolonised curriculum where children and young people can explore the diverse contributions to knowledge from different experiences, perspectives and cultures.

Embedding regular opportunities to reflect, discuss and develop an understanding in children and young people about societal issues whilst actively promoting school values that reflect anti-racist practise.

Creating a sense of belonging by providing opportunities to build long term relationships between B&ME students and staff (especially in secondary schools) through tutor time etc so that young people have safe adults they can approach to discuss issues.

Improving belonging through access to safe places, play and extra-curricular activities, especially for B&ME young people in secondary schools, to have natural opportunities for connection and friendship through shared interests (e.g. access to music and art spaces during lunchtime and participation in after school clubs).

Further Reading

National Education Union, guidance on creating a sense of belonging in schools

<https://neu.org.uk/advice/classroom/behaviour-schools/creating-sense-place-and-belonging-schools>

- **Challenging** all racist incidents, bullying and harassment, taking them seriously and dealing with them effectively in a supportive, meaningful and empowering manner

The Importance of Dealing Effectively with Racist Incidents

Racial harassment and prejudice related bullying can have a negative and wide ranging impact on the mental health, social and emotional wellbeing, behaviour and education of Black and Minority Ethnic children and young people. As a place of education, with a responsibility for safeguarding, schools need to ensure that all incidents of racism, racist bullying and harassment are challenged and dealt with in a meaningful and empowering way, so that unacceptable behaviour is addressed and the adverse impact on your students is eliminated.

Local Research – School Students Experience of Hate Crime and Prejudice Related Bullying

The Bath and North East Somerset Race Equality and Hate Crime Task Force Partnership surveyed 1,700 B&NES secondary school students on their experiences of Hate Crime and Prejudice Related Bullying and published a report in 2020 outlining the impact on young people; the kind of support that worked best; and recommendations for school policy and practice.

Students highlighted the impact that hate crime, discrimination and prejudice related incidents can have on their mental health and education. The research found that these kinds of incidents have a detrimental effect on the social and emotional wellbeing of students, leading to anxiety, depression, loss of confidence, low self esteem, isolation and social withdrawal, and in some cases, had led to suicidal feelings, self harm and the development of eating disorders. Young people also reported the negative impact of their experience on their education, for example feeling unsafe in school, and not wanting or refusing to go to school, lower attendance, having to move school and not being able to concentrate in class or contribute to lessons.

In relation to reporting and support 40% of students did not report the incident or tell anyone about their experience. Their reasons for this included being scared to report; feeling that reporting wouldn't help; having a lack of trust in staff support; and believing that peers would view them negatively. However, 60% of the students who received support described it as good or very good. The most successful support described by young people involved adults actively working to address the situation quickly and directly. Furthermore, good support appeared to be both supportive and non-judgemental and established an effective dialogue between the parties involved.

The report highlighted the actions students felt schools should take to improve their practice in relation to dealing with incidents, these included: Don't ignore incidents; respond quickly; treat incidents seriously; provide specific support to address the impact on young people's mental health; develop a better understanding of how to deal with incidents; use better sanctions and take effective action; give young people effective strategies for dealing with incidents; increase awareness of the impact of hate crime and prejudice based bullying on young people.

The report concluded with recommendations for next steps, these included providing professional development for staff in relation to recognising and responding effectively to prejudice based bullying and understanding its impact, the developing of effective support mechanisms for young people in schools so they can access support both in school and through partner services, promoting a zero tolerance culture in relation to hate crime and prejudice based bullying so that students see it is dealt with effectively and are confident about reporting it. Finally, the report recommended setting up a partnership between schools, the local authority and support services to better identify and respond to what is happening in schools in relation to hate crime and prejudice related bullying and promote good policy and practice to address it effectively together.

Examples of good practice:

The school has a specific policy and procedures which clearly sets out what are racist incidents, bullying and harassment and how you respond appropriately and support students.

Foster a safe and open culture where incidents and concerns can be raised or reported without victimisation or other negative consequences.

Build and increase trust and confidence in your reporting process by communicating and demonstrating a proactive attitude and a willingness to listen and act.

Your policy also aims to support students' wellbeing and education as well as understand what is causing racist behaviour and attitudes.

Ensure all staff when responding to incidents listen to the reporting student, believe them and empathise, rather than immediately questioning or challenging.

Carry out repeated check-ins with all students that have either been victimised or are responsible for the incident.

Provide training for staff to ensure that everyone understands the school policy and are able and confident to carry out its procedures.

You recognise when incidents are indicative of a wider pattern of prejudice or targeting within your setting. If this is the case, a whole school education approach is taken.

Support and safeguard staff from black and minority ethnic backgrounds who have or may have experienced racist incidents from students, colleagues or parents/carers.

The school works closely with the Local Authority, services and organisations who can provide support for students and schools in relation to racist incidents and racism.

You inform and remind all staff that racist incidents must be reported on the schools safeguarding platform.

Report incidents of racist and discriminatory nature to the Local Authority via the SEIRF process and keep an internal record on the number and nature of such incidents as well as of any actions taken to resolve them.

Students are made aware of and can report racist incidents themselves directly through the Local Authority's online RID reporting service.

Further Reading

Scottish Govt guidance on developing procedures to deal with racist incidents

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/addressing-racism-racist-incidents-schools/pages/3/>

- **Ensuring** our recruitment procedures follow the law and guidance on race equality and allow us to employ and develop an ethnically diverse workforce that is representative of the communities we serve

Recent research by the National Foundation for Educational Research (2024) reported “*clear ethnic disparities in the teaching workforce in England at all levels from initial teacher training to headship*”. The research went on to highlight the importance of an ethnically diverse teacher workforce, stating “*A diverse teaching workforce can familiarise pupils...with people from different backgrounds and prepare them for life in an increasingly diverse world...reduce racial prejudice and improve social cohesion*”, and that “*Having role models from diverse cultural backgrounds can be reassuring and inspiring for all pupils and for pupils of colour in particular, showing they belong and encouraging them to work hard and achieve their ambitions*”. The report concluded by suggesting “*schools play their part in improving ethnic diversity amongst teachers and leaders*” and recommended a number of ways to achieve this, most importantly that “*an anti-racist school culture is a key enabler of progression. Therefore, action should focus on ensuring a positive working environment for teachers and leaders from diverse ethnic backgrounds*”.

Local Example of Good practice – Primary Headteacher, Bath & North East Somerset

“Ensure your vision to create sense of belonging where all are supported to be their best is a lived experience for your staff team: through noticing and giving feedback on strengths; offering development opportunities that build on strengths (e.g. NPQs, subject leadership roles etc); and having diversity and equality at the core of your vision and values, underpinning all that you do.”

Examples of good practice

Purpose: These practices will help school leadership understand current efforts, identify best practices, and shape future strategies to reduce inequalities in recruitment, employment, retention, and career development.

In relation to Recruitment:

The school regularly carries out diversity audits to identify racial disparities in its workforce and recruitment processes.

Job descriptions and advertisements are written and checked to ensure they are inclusive and free from biased language.

Ensure interview panels are diverse to promote inclusivity and reduce unconscious bias during recruitment.

The school contacts and engages with local and regional community organisations and networks to advertise roles and attract diverse candidates.

Where ethnic disparities exist in the school workforce the school consider using targeted recruitment campaigns to attract candidates from underrepresented groups.

In relation to **Employment:**

Mentorship programmes are established and used to support Black and Minority Ethnic staff.

Regular training is provided on race equality and cultural diversity for all staff.

Employee resource groups exist for Black and Minority Ethnic staff to provide support and networking opportunities.

Review and update school policies to ensure they promote a positive working environment and anti-racist school culture based on inclusivity and equity.

Use anonymous feedback mechanisms for staff to report issues and suggest improvements.

In relation to **Retention and Development:**

Career advice, support and personalised development plans are in place for Black and Minority Ethnic staff.

The school ensures that leadership training programmes are offered to prepare Black and Minority Ethnic staff for advancement.

Implement recognition programmes and rewards that celebrate the achievements of Black and Minority Ethnic staff.

Monitor retention rates, career progression and leadership roles by ethnicity and develop strategies to address any disparities and diversify teaching and leadership teams

Provide Black and Minority Ethnic staff with equitable access to professional development opportunities, workshops, conferences, and courses.

Further Reading

A report by the National Foundation for Educational Research on 'The barriers and promising approaches to support recruitment, retention and progression of people of colour within the teaching workforce'

<https://www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/ethnic-diversity-in-the-teaching-workforce-evidence-review/>

National Education Union research on B&ME teachers experiences in schools and overcoming the barriers to career progression

<https://neu.org.uk/sites/default/files/2023-02/Barriers%20Report.pdf>

- **Teaching** a curriculum that represents the ethnic diversity of our society and aims to raise the aspirations and attainment of all students by providing an education which includes the heritage, perspectives and contributions of all ethnic groups, challenges personal and institutional racism, and enables students to develop a strong sense of identity and belonging

A key aim of the latest **Curriculum and Assessment Review** commissioned by the Government was to *deliver “a curriculum that reflects the issues and diversities of our society, ensuring all children and young people are represented”* and its final report highlights the importance of ensuring that *“the curriculum (and related material) is inclusive so that all young people can see themselves represented. This should also help them to broaden their horizons and better understand the perspectives of others”*. The review recommends that *“The national curriculum is for all our children and young people. As such, it should reflect our diverse society and the contributions of people of all backgrounds to our knowledge and culture”*. It goes on to recommend the Government *“reviews and updates all Programmes of Study - and, where appropriate, the corresponding GCSE Subject Content - to include stronger representation of the diversity that makes up our modern society, allowing more children to see themselves in the curriculum”*.

Local Example – Case Study, Norton Hill Primary – Race Equality Charter Beacon School

Much of the school’s work has been focused on diversifying the curriculum whilst meeting National Curriculum expectations. It has achieved this by developing a curriculum that includes representation from a vast range of ethnically diverse individuals, perspectives and books across all subject areas. Literary texts include ‘Coming to England’ by Floella Benjamin, allowing students to explore the history, perspectives and contributions of the Windrush Generation. In Science, students study the contribution of black scientists, like Flemmie Pansy Kittrell, ensuring children see a diverse representation of people in such roles and moving away from a Eurocentric portrayal of knowledge. The school also chooses to include Black and Minority Ethnic individuals whose influential voices are used to promote discussion, celebration and a sense of belonging e.g. Malala Yousafzai, Benjamin Zephaniah, Amanda Gorman, Martin Luther King Jr, Michelle Obama and Marcus Rashford.

By continuously crafting their curriculum to include diverse experiences, the Headteacher summarises the positive impact this has had to *“open up more opportunities for discussion around topics like race, heritage and identity. Approaching these topics head on has worked hugely in our favour as we can openly address misconceptions. By exploring the text ‘Coming to England’ by Floella Benjamin, we can unpick her experience at school and understand the emotional effects of racism through dialogue, role-play and “role on the wall” activities which has led to a deeper sense of compassion and understanding. When we then lead a whole-school assembly on Black History Month or Racism, the children are incredibly clued up on what this looks like and how we ought to challenge it.”*

Norton Hill Primary also takes a proactive approach to ensure children develop a deeper understanding of racism and its impact, and as a result has very few racist incidents to challenge. The school promotes the values of tolerance and respect for others and provides educational opportunities for students to explore and understand the importance of identifying and combatting discrimination through school assemblies, PSHE sessions, curriculum discussions and confronting issues head on. The school recognises the importance of this approach and is equipped to challenge any incidents that arise in school because of current news coverage and social media content.

Examples of good practice

Audit the school curriculum across all subject areas to ensure it is culturally diverse and includes Black and Minority Ethnic contributions to knowledge and culture.

Include ethnically diverse authors, scientists, artists, geographers, mathematicians and historical figures as part of the school curriculum.

Present multiple perspectives, especially in subjects like History, English, Religious Education, Citizenship and PSHE, to enable students to understand the viewpoints and experiences of people from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

The school's website, textbooks, learning resources, displays, presentations include a diverse representation of all ethnicities.

Ensure cultural diversity is fully integrated across the school curriculum and embedded within subject content, not just tokenistic add-ons or temporary celebrations during Black History Month.

Create space within the curriculum to explore and celebrate histories, stories, role models and contributions from the local Black and Minority Ethnic communities.

Ensure trips, assemblies, visiting speakers and cultural events reflect the ethnic diversity of society.

Provide learning opportunities within the curriculum to explore and discuss racism, prejudice and discrimination, ways of challenging them and promoting understanding, respect and equity.

Check for and address any patterns of inequality in progress or uptake in all subject areas by ethnicity to ensure those subjects are inclusive, relevant and representative for all ethnic groups.

Ensure staff are encouraged, trained and given the flexibility and opportunity to diversify, innovate and adapt the curriculum for diversity.

Engage parents, individuals and local community groups from a diverse range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds to shape enrichment and extra-curricular activities.

Consult with students, including those from Black and Minority Ethnic backgrounds, to evaluate how inclusive and representative the curriculum is to them.

Further Reading "Building A World Class Curriculum for All"

[Curriculum and Assessment Review final report: Building a world-class curriculum for all](#)

- **Managing** the behaviour of all pupils fairly and equally and adopting good practice strategies to address any differences in sanctions or exclusions between ethnic groups

The Issue of School Exclusion

A recent research report by the Runnymede Trust, "History on a Loop" argues that *"the disproportionate use of school exclusions against pupils from minoritised ethnic groups, exposes the deep-rooted racial inequalities that persist within our education system. These exclusions often reflect not the behaviour of individual pupils but the failure of education institutions to recognise and respond to unmet needs, structural disadvantage, and the ongoing impact of racism"*.

However, the report also states that *"this moment also presents an opportunity for change towards a more equitable and supportive education system: one that recognises the specific needs of Black and racially minoritised communities, addresses the root causes of exclusion and promotes racially just practices in every classroom"*.

Local Good Practice Case Study – Secondary School, Bath and North East Somerset

In response to national data showing that pupils from some Black and Minority Ethnic backgrounds are disproportionately excluded, the school examined its own data for any patterns of racial inequality in relation to suspensions and exclusions, to see what they could learn and help inform policy and practice. Previously they had analysed their data in relation to Black and Minority Ethnic pupils as a whole, but now reviewed the data broken down by individual ethnic groups to identify differences between ethnic groups more effectively, particularly given disproportionately high exclusion rates for specific ethnic groups such as Black Caribbean boys.

The school's research led to the development of their suspension and exclusion processes to ensure that exclusion is only used as a last resort and that factors linked to ethnicity are taken into account alongside other appropriate characteristics such as SEND or other potential drivers of disadvantage, when considering whether to exclude a pupil. To inform this decision-making process the school developed a suspension 'checklist', which includes a section on the protected characteristic of race, and this useful tool has also been shared with other schools.

Undertaking regular exclusion data reviews has also led the school to review additional data by ethnicity, including pupil attendance and attainment and progress at GCSE and A Level.

The aim has been to identify any trends and to consider what barriers may exist for pupils from different ethnic groups. Being able to triangulate data from all three areas and looking at common themes has helped the school consider any barriers that may exist for Black and Minority Ethnic pupils and how they can take action to overcome them, for example, by piloting changes to the transition process to strengthen engagement between families and school more effectively from year 7.

Following its data reviews the school recognised that in an area with a predominantly white demographic means it can be harder for some pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds to feel a sense of belonging and they have used their data alongside feedback from individual staff, students and parents to identify key issues. Now they are looking at what changes they can make to practice in order to develop a greater sense of belonging for all pupils at the school.

Examples of good practice

Recognition by school leadership and governors of the issue of racial disparity in exclusions and a commitment to take action to address it.

Monitor all exclusions, managed moves, suspensions, sanctions and behaviour data by ethnicity and act quickly to address any disproportionality.

Review and ensure behaviour, anti-bullying and inclusion policies and practice are free from racial bias and aim to reduce and prevent disproportionality.

Provide early targeted support for Black and Minority Ethnic students based on their individual needs around ethnicity e.g. mentors who reflect the student's identity.

Investigate fully the context surrounding the exclusion and rule out the possibility of any element of racism or race related issues being a factor before making the decision to exclude.

Create student centred reintegration plans with families and support agencies that address any issues or concerns related to ethnicity, identity or racism.

Identify early any SEND needs and provide culturally sensitive assessment and support.

Pay particular attention to supporting Black and Minority Ethnic students during the primary secondary transition to address any issues around racism, belonging and identity as they arise.

Proactively build timely and strong relationships with parents/carers.

Provide staff training on unconscious bias, cultural awareness, stereotyping, adultification, trauma informed practice, behaviour management including de-escalation and conflict resolution.

Create partnerships with the Youth Justice Service, police, and relevant local authority teams to understand and address the link between exclusion and entry into the criminal justice system.

Signpost parents/carers of students at risk of exclusion or excluded from school to appropriate local and national information advice and advocacy services.

School governors considering exclusions are ethnically diverse, understand and examine the issues and data surrounding exclusion and ethnicity and challenge the school accordingly.

Publish regular exclusion reports for senior leaders and governors with actions to address any disproportionality in relation to ethnicity.

Further Reading This Runnymede Trust Report looks at school exclusion and ethnicity and provides a positive way forward for schools [History on loop: the sustained impact of school exclusions on Black communities](#)

- **Championing** race equality through school leadership and governance and ensuring planning, policies and procedures effectively promote race equality and challenge racism

Once schools have signed up to the Charter how they implement it is up to individual schools, and they can set their own priorities and actions to achieve this. All Signatories to the Race Equality Charter will be offered ongoing support and guidance to provide schools with information, advice, examples of good practice and resources to help them implement the Charter effectively, but ultimately the success of this work requires a strong commitment and positive action from school leaders and governors to ensure that the Race Equality Charter is shared widely with the whole school community and is embedded in school planning, policy and practice.

Local Example – Case Study, Fosse Way School – Race Equality Charter Beacon School

Following the school's commitment to promoting race equality by signing up to the Charter the school has taken steps to champion its race equality work through school leadership. The Deputy Headteacher took on the title and role of Race Equality Lead and one of the school's first actions to build on its commitment was the development of a Race Equality Pledge, which was co-created by students to ensure authenticity and student voice. This pledge was shared with all key stakeholders and is revisited regularly to keep it meaningful and relevant.

To promote the school's position on race equality and enhance transparency and accessibility, they created a dedicated Race Equality page on the school website. This page includes a video explaining what race equality means within the school's context and also clarifies some of the vocabulary used in the Charter, recognising that certain terms may be unfamiliar or challenging for some stakeholders. Championing the school's approach to race equality in this way aims to foster understanding and encourage engagement from the entire school community.

The impact of effective leadership on school policy and practice is evident in how the school has responded to racist incidents. As Race Equality Lead the Deputy Head takes a proactive and collaborative approach to dealing with racism, working closely with students and families and specialist organisations like SARI to provide advice and support. This has also led to a review of school policy with a new Racist Incidents Policy being developed in partnership with SARI.

In addition, the school is championing race equality work through working directly with students and parents. Establishing a Student Equalities Group to provide a platform for student voice, promote inclusion, and help shape future initiatives; and inviting parents and carers into school to discuss the race equality work taking place to gather views, build trust and ensure that the school's approach reflects the voices of the wider community.

Race Equality is now embedded within leadership responsibilities and the actions taken by the Deputy Head demonstrate a sustained and strategic commitment to championing race equality through school leadership, planning, policy, and practice.

Examples of good practice

Allocate specific roles and responsibilities to members of the senior leadership team and governing body to implement the Race Equality Charter.

Ensure the school has a Race Equality Policy that encompasses all areas of the Charter to challenge racism, promote race equality, cultural diversity and foster good race relations.

Embed the commitments of the Race Equality Charter into the School's plans for development and improvement.

Monitor data by ethnicity across all areas of the school rigorously, identify and report trends and take actions to address them.

Engage, communicate and consult with staff, pupils and parents in shaping the school's work around race equality and cultural diversity.

Support staff with encouragement, time, training, resources and recognition to carry out work related to helping implement the Race Equality Charter effectively.

Review school policies and practice in line with the Race Equality Charter and make changes as necessary.

Publicise, promote and communicate openly and consistently about the school's commitment to the Race Equality Charter and its work to implement it.

Produce an annual governor's report on work in relation to the Race Equality Charter highlighting progress, key issues and any patterns of disproportionality in relation to ethnicity to be addressed.

Further Reading The National Education Union has a useful section on School Leadership in its Framework for Developing an Anti-Racist Approach in Schools

[Anti-racism charter | National Education Union](#)