



# Promoting Equality & Tackling Racism

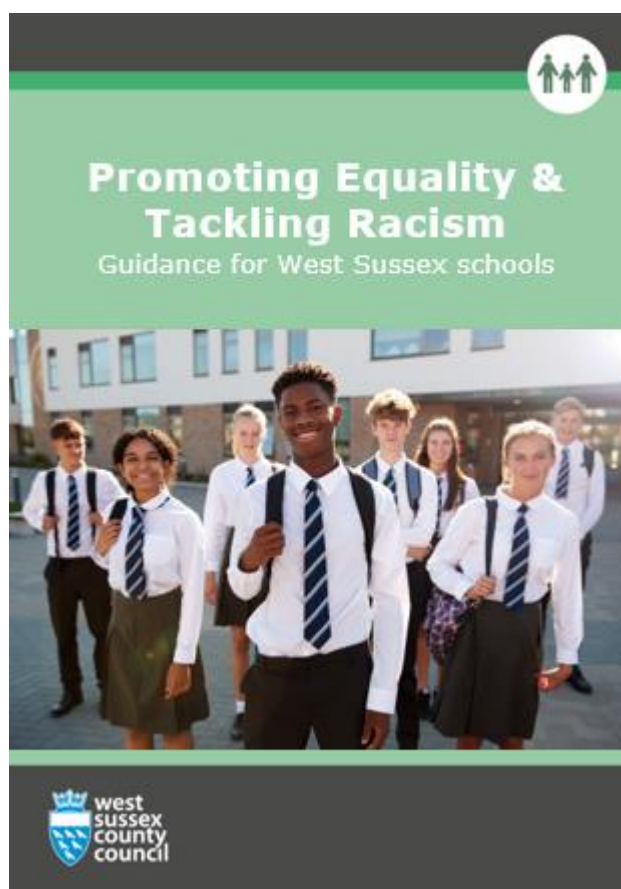
Guidance for West Sussex schools  
**SUMMARY OF MAIN DOCUMENT**



**This summary provides an overview of the full guidance document, 'Promoting Equality & Tackling Racism – Guidance for West Sussex Schools'.**

The issues discussed in the guidance document are rooted in long-established inequalities and subtle, nuanced issues. The exploration of these issues, and the recommended approaches to overcoming them, are therefore necessarily covered in depth.

This summary is not intended to offer an alternative to this deeper thinking, nor a shortcut to longer-term development work. Rather it is intended to give a flavour of the proposed whole school approach and an overview of the structure of the document itself.



To download the full guidance document, please visit the [West Sussex Tools for Schools](#) website.

# How the guidance document is structured

The full guidance aims to support schools in West Sussex to implement best practice in promoting equality and tackling racism. It encourages this to be done through a whole school approach which demonstrates a commitment to creating settings where each individual is treated with dignity and respect.

The document is organised into **three** sections:

- **Rationale & remit of the guidance:** the local and legal context for this approach
- **Achieving a whole-school approach to anti-racism:** eight key areas to consider
- **Appendices:** supporting documents, tools and signposting

**Firstly**, it sets out the intention behind producing the guidance, looks at the legal duties and frameworks which underpin the whole school approach and also introduces the local context for West Sussex schools.

## **The local and legal context for this approach:**

### **What and who is this guidance for?**

### **What does this guidance provide?**

### **Road map for progress towards equality**

*An example of a suggested route towards developing an effective whole-school culture of equality.*

### **Legislative framework**

*Outlines how this guidance seeks to support schools to implement relevant legislation and meet responsibilities relating to ethnic equality:*

- *Equality Act 2010*
- *'Prevent' Duty and Fundamental British Values*
- *Spiritual, Moral, Social & Cultural Education (SMSC)*
- *Statutory Relationships, Sex & Health Education 2020*
- *Bullying legislation and guidance*
- *Ofsted Education Inspection Framework*

### **Diversity in West Sussex**

*Outlines the demographic landscape in West Sussex schools, including languages spoken and the ethnic diversity of pupils and staff.*

**Next**, the guidance illustrates the eight key areas which West Sussex County Council feel must be addressed in order to develop a truly whole-school approach:



It is essential that schools consider how they intend to develop their approach on each of these eight key issues in order to tackle racism in all of its forms and embed an ethos of inclusion and equality in a meaningful and sustained way. We understand that for this work to be sustainable it must happen in a way that is practical to each school. It is better to start something small and support growth, than to avoid starting at all.

**Finally**, there are a series of appendices which provide further detailed information and practical tools, as well as signposting to a wide range of resources. These can support the breadth of work that schools will need to undertake in order to establish and embed truly inclusive and anti-racist practice.

#### **Supporting documents, tools and signposting...**

**Appendix 1 - Race Equality Checklist for Schools**

**Appendix 2 - Hate Incidents: Definitions & guidance**

**Appendix 3 - Suggested reading lists for children**

**Appendix 4 - Example diversity walk template**

**Appendix 5 - Useful links for resources and further research**

**Appendix 6 - Terminology: words used to describe individuals and groups**

**Appendix 7 - Further reading for staff**

# 1. Developing racial literacy amongst senior leaders, governors and all staff

Developing **racial literacy** and understanding the concept of **institutional racism** is central if schools are to robustly consider how to ensure equality for pupils and staff from minority ethnic backgrounds.

Some governors and teachers have limited **knowledge, confidence and experience** in educating pupils from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds. As a result, classroom interventions may be stereotypical or tokenistic, lacking any real impetus to encourage pupils to engage with concepts of **lived experience** of diversity.

## Racial literacy

“The cultivation of racial literacy should be seen as an ongoing process of learning and unlearning. Rather than as a tick-box ‘skill’ that one might acquire and retain with little effort, teachers should understand racial literacy as a constant journey, and they should be given the time, support and resources to pursue that journey. It should be part of continued professional development within schools and should be encouraged at all levels”

Runnymede Trust - Race and Racism in English Secondary Schools, 2020 report

*This section of the guidance looks at:*

- What we mean by ‘Developing staff racial literacy’.
- The context of **anti-racist education** within a diverse society.
- Why a **whole school ethos** is essential for tackling racism.
- **Key questions** for senior leaders.
- Considerations around **recruitment** and **governance**.

This section also looks at the importance of cultivating a shared staff familiarity with the **terminology and language** when discussing ethnicity and racism. The guidance includes a list of useful definitions to support staff conversations, as well as an additional appendix looking at the appropriate (and inappropriate) words used to describe specific individuals and groups.

In order to effectively **audit existing practice** and then engage meaningfully with the other seven key areas outlined within this guidance, steps must be taken to develop and sustain racial literacy among all staff. This must include senior leaders and governors.

## 2. Participation and involvement of children, parents and wider community

Schools create **inclusive processes and practices** where the varying needs of individuals and groups are identified and met. **Equality for all cannot be achieved by treating everyone the same.**

In order to do this work effectively, leaders must engage with stakeholders from **a range of perspectives** and take steps to understand and incorporate their lived experiences into all planning and development.

*This section of the guidance looks at:*

### **Involving children and young people**

Pupils need to be actively involved in order for whole-school policies on equality to be truly effective.

**Best Practice examples include:**

- We create opportunities for pupils to see topics from different perspectives and to engage in constructive exploration of these perspectives.
- We are sensitive to the possibilities that a pupil from a minority ethnic background may feel isolated in a predominately White British class.

### **Involving parents and carers**

Working in **partnership with parents and carers** is crucial if you are to embed equality in schools.

**Best Practice examples include:**

- We will involve parents and carers in the development and review of the school's equality policy.
- We invite parents into school to talk about their profession, achievements or career to help challenge stereotypes (schools often invite parents in to share their cooking but overlook the professional opportunities and knowledge that parents can offer).

### **Working with the wider community**

Wider community contacts can support schools in matters related to **faith, culture and ethnicity**. For example, offering advice, information or contacts and **providing additional support networks** for students facing racism and racial harassment.

**Best Practice examples include:**

- We will be proactive in recruiting community volunteers to ensure the school's volunteer profile reflects the ethnic profile of the school population and the community.

### 3. Developing racial literacy for all children

There is ample evidence spanning decades that children as young as three begin to learn the markers of racial categories and racial hierarchy (Apfelbaum, Sullivan, and Wilton, 2020; Brown, 2005). Yet the widespread view that children, particularly young children, are racially 'innocent' persists.

"View racial literacy the same way you view literacy of reading, writing and numeracy. People who lack these basic literacies do struggle in later life and in work. Without some racial literacy being taught to young people, they too are at a disadvantage in how they engage with people from different cultural backgrounds.

Aishnine Benjamin - Educator with The Black Curriculum and Head of Equality, Inclusion and Culture at the British Medical Association

The development of racial literacy for all children in a school will necessarily be a long-term project. It will be a cumulative and ongoing process led by school leaders and maintained by all staff.

#### **This section of the guidance looks at:**

- What is a **racially literate** child?
- Exploring **similarities and differences**
- Pupil voice - **empowering children** to develop skills of racial literacy
- Progression of themes & concepts relating to racial equality & diversity, with **examples for each key stage** from West Sussex Education for Safeguarding (E4S)



## 4. Decolonising and diversifying the curriculum

An integral part of the overall process of teaching and learning across the curriculum should be [recognising and exploring cultural diversity and global history](#), including the UK's role in global history, colonialism, patterns of migration and race equality. This applies to **all subjects, not just the history curriculum.**

[Questions to consider](#) when interrogating all areas of the curriculum include:

- Who are the experts that feature in lessons? Who do pupils see in books, in videos and as classroom visitors?
- Are images and stories up to date, or dated and stereotypical?
- Do the toys in younger classes reflect the diversity in your community and in wider society? (e.g. Are there toy food and utensils from a range of cultures in role play areas?)
- Whose voices and perspectives are missing from the record?
- Whose culture has capital?

**This section of the guidance also looks at:**

- Diversifying your [library and texts](#) used in lessons
- A focus on [decolonising and diversifying the History Curriculum](#), including examples at each key stage of opportunities to teach about Britain's history of migration, its role in colonisation and the transatlantic slave trade.
- The importance of encouraging pupils to ask questions about [sources and resources](#).
- How could similar approaches be applied in [all subjects](#)?
- What do students have to say?

“It is not just about putting people of colour in the curriculum. It is about including them. It is about making it diverse but not just about their trauma or their pain. We have positive things that we want to talk about as well.”

West Sussex pupil, 2021



# 5. Promoting a positive sense of identity and belonging

## Identity

Identity is the **sense of self** which arises from our family background, our cultural allegiances and myriad other factors that are dictated largely by our circumstances but also by the life choices we have made. A stronger connection to these identities has been linked to supporting wellbeing, increased self-esteem and self-efficacy, as well as higher educational attainment

By starting from the pupils' own experiences, teachers can encourage them to engage with **their own identities** rather than setting up a framework of 'us' and 'them'. From this initial position, further steps can then be taken from which pupils can embark **on exploring the experiences and identities of other people**.

## Belonging

A **sense of belonging** is a fundamental human need and a major source of human motivation. It is about fitting in or feeling like you are a valued and accepted part of a group be it friends, family or other groups.

Who feels a sense of belonging and who does not can be influenced by a school's ethos, curriculum and resources, as well as unconscious prejudices.

"Through the belittling or denial of a person's identity one can destroy perhaps the most important aspect of a person's personality - his sense of identity and who he is. Without this he will get nowhere."

Bernard Coard (2021)

### This section of the guidance looks at:

- Building a positive sense of identity, from early years to adolescence, with reference to a range of research.
- Why creating a sense of belonging in school is so important.
- Tips and teaching approaches that foster a sense of belonging.

"Asking about people's **ethnic background** is much more polite than asking **where someone is from**. Although most of the time, "Where are you from?" is a harmless, curious question, it can suggest that people of colour aren't really *from* the UK."

Member of the West Sussex Youth Cabinet, 2021

## 6. Identifying & addressing racist incidents & issues

Schools should recognise that **racist incidents or bullying behaviours are underpinned by negative assumptions, stereotypes or misinformation**. These are then directed against an individual or group, based on difference (real or perceived). Schools should commit to take action to **prevent, challenge and eliminate** any such behaviour.

The response to racism must be understood as an educational issue. There should be some form of reaction or response from the school to every incident that is seen, overheard or reported. It is also important to recognise and act on racism when it comes from staff, parents or carers, as well as from pupils.



### **This section of the guidance looks at:**

- Addressing and responding to racist incidents and racist bullying
- What are the **barriers** to school staff dealing effectively with such incidents?
- What are the **implications of not dealing effectively** with such incidents?

“Not many teachers know what to do when somebody experiences racism. It can be difficult to know what to say and what is appropriate. When people in my school have gone to teachers to ask for help, they have either been asked to apologise for their own identity or teachers have dismissed it as solely a bullying issue, rather than realising that there is a depth to it.”

West Sussex pupil, 2021

Ultimately, the rationale underlying the reaction to racism is to work towards **building and maintaining a culture of respect** within the school.

## 7. Auditing and monitoring policies

There are a wide range of policies where particular consideration should be given to the ways in which their **design and implementation** may impact on individuals differently on the basis of their ethnic identity and/or religion.

Schools should commit to **monitor and regularly review** all school policies from the perspective of pupils, staff and parents from different ethnic backgrounds.

### **This section of the guidance looks at:**

- Questions to consider when reviewing school policies.
- Suggested policy areas to start this work.
- Best practice for embedding a **monitor and review cycle** for all policies.
- The Halo Collective - one example of people working to raise awareness of **hair discrimination** that can go unnoticed within school policies.
- Using **data** to challenge stereotypes and identify areas for intervention.



To be most effective, it is recommended that senior leaders **engage with a range of stakeholders** from different ethnic backgrounds to consider which policies should be reviewed in this way, within the context of the specific setting.

## 8. Recruitment, retention and support for staff from minority ethnic backgrounds

In seeking to create a fully inclusive school environment, it is important to consider the extent to which the staff team is representative of the diversity of pupils on roll. This may influence the experience of pupils and the extent to which they feel represented by their teachers, as well as the relationship between school and families and the perception from the wider community where the school is located.



### **This section of the guidance looks at:**

- Links to policies and advice on **fair recruitment** practices.
- Creating a school culture which encourages the **retention and support** of staff from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- Practical suggestions for ensuring **career development** routes are open to all staff, including those from groups which are under-represented in the workforce.