Educate Together
Academy Trust

Anti-Racist Framework

Introduction

Inequalities still exist within our system in relation to race, racism and the legacy of empire. It is imperative that action is taken to address these inequalities so that we can build a society that is equal and equitable for all, regardless of background. Education is key to achieving this. We have the power as educators to help make significant changes.

Decolonising education and our practices within education mean we must continually scrutinise our current practices in light of race inequalities and build our school system so that all pupil, staff and stakeholders are treated fairly and represented appropriately within our system. We must ably meet the needs of all our pupils, regardless of background.

This requires a conscious, reflective and honest approach.

Leaders, teachers and school staff want to address these issues. This framework is in place to enable them to do so, and to allow us to hold ourselves to account for such action.

What is anti-racism?

Anti-racism is the work of actively opposing racism by advocating for changes that promote racial equality.

Why do we need an anti-racist approach?

- Race and racism are not well understood – 'race' is a social construct, but race is mistakenly and widely used to denote difference.
- Racism is very real and yet often we deny it affects us, our behaviours or our school/ college – whereas it affects every single student.
- The majority of the people around the globe are not white and yet ideas about white superiority are still deeply influential and prevalent.
- Teachers and staff from minoritized ethnic groups face a range of discriminations, including in recruitment, career and pay progression rates and also in relation to issues such as appraisal and job evaluations.
- We have seen increasing awareness of differences within our society as well as polarising views in some sectors of society
- Schools can change pupils' lives which is why it is important that all schools have an inclusive and supportive approach.
- Young people's ideas about race must be explored and discussed within educational contexts
- Education is a crucial place where we can challenge the 'normalisation' of many forms of racism, including Islamophobia and antisemitism and discrimination against Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people.
- Training and other interventions will not be effective unless there is a culture of open discussions about race and racism, where staff and young people are acknowledged as key to developing solutions.

(Amended from the NEU framework for developing an anti-racist approach 2021/22)

Aims

- Trust community understands our approach to anti-racism
- School communities understand our approach to anti-racism
- Stakeholders, including those from ethnic minority backgrounds, feel like they belong to our community
- Anti-racism and other anti-discriminatory practices become embedded in our practice (not an add on)
- Curriculum accurately reflects positive contributions of those from different backgrounds and challenges and redresses the understanding of white superiority as the norm
- Challenge the construct of societal norms in relation to unintended racist practices
- Be aware of, and redress, our organisational racist practices

Questions we should keep asking ourselves…

What does it mean to be anti-racist?

What does an anti-racist school feel like?

What does it mean to our children to attend an anti-racist school?

What does it mean to our staff to work in an anti-racist organisation?

What does it mean to our families to be an anti-racist organisation?

What does it mean to be a Governor/Trustee of an anti-racist organisation?

Five areas of focus…

By committing to working collaboratively, we will share best practice and relevant information relating to anti-racist initiatives. This commitment is one of proactiveness and is embedded in the way we work on a daily basis. Developing ideas and methods of working in partnership, and engaging all parties within, and those beyond our organisation, will have wide-ranging positive impact. It will highlight areas of both good practice and areas in which we can, and will, do better.

Collaboration

A deep understanding of our local and national context will be an enabler to understanding the needs of the communities we serve. Through positive, proactive and honest engagement with our communities, we will develop an understanding of the issues faced by those involved with our organisation. This will assist us in shaping our practices and curricular content, so they are reflective of the community and combat biases and prejudices within those communities and beyond. It will also aid us in becoming increasingly representative of our communities.

Community

Transparency, honesty and integrity in our communication at all levels will serve to ensure we are being reflective in our anti-racist approach. Through sharing information clearly, consistently and without bias, we will be open to change and will be able to act in a way that benefits all of those involved with our organisation. This will empower us to make decisions and engage in practices that are anti-racist. It will inform our policy, which will transcend into practices, which we will be accountable for.

Communication

Our five areas of focus for our anti-racist approach

Curriculum

Combating deep held, systemic, prejudices is our duty as educators. Positive representation of previously underrepresented, or negatively represented groups, including but not limited to those from Black, Asian and LGBT+ groups in our curriculums is essential. It will allow open dialogue and break long held misconceptions and stereotypes about our society. This will empower our pupils to build a better society through a deep understanding of historical and current issues relating to racism and other discriminatory behaviours and policies.

Culture

The culture of our organisation at all levels must permit for open and honest dialogue. People must feel that they can be heard in a safe space. Garnering an honest perspective of the experiences, negative or positive, of people from different backgrounds will help us to create more inclusive policies and practices. This will help us to shape our anti-racist approach that will then become integral to our way of working. Ultimately, anti-racist, and other anti-discriminatory, practice will be deep rooted and automated in all that we do.

Our minimum commitment

These are our minimum commitments to our anti-racist approach, set out within the five areas of focus.

Collaboration

We will seek the views of the impact of our work from different stakeholders within our community, especially those who identify as being from a minority group, and use this to help shape and improve our practice

We will work in partnership with organisations beyond our own to improve our anti-racist practice

We will work in partnership with other organisations within Educate Together Academy Trust to improve our anti-racist practice

Communication

We will ensure all members of our community are given voice, including those from underrepresented backgrounds, within the organisation

We will provide 'safe' places for individuals or groups to be heard, including for issues relating to race and racism

We will clearly communicate our work in relation to anti-racist and other anti-discriminatory practice

We will aim to ensure that our communication is not biased towards one group

Culture

We will challenge any racist or perceived racist actions and report accordingly on our actions to counter the negative impact of such actions

We will be open and honest in our reflective practice and use this approach to shape our future anti-racist work

We will proactively seek to include all communities

Our policies will be considerate and inclusive of those from minoritized ethnic backgrounds so that they have equal opportunity in the workplace and are able to flourish in their careers

We recognise that those from different backgrounds have different cultural needs and we will endeavour to be supportive of this

We understand that families from minoritized ethnic groups face different and unique challenges and barriers compared to those from white backgrounds. We will be considerate of this and ensure we make adjustments to support those families.

Curriculum

We commit to developing our communities understanding of decolonising the curriculum

We will ensure that our curriculum has representation of the positive impact of individuals from previously underrepresented groups

Our curriculum will encourage open debate in relation to issues relating to racism and other deep held stereotypical beliefs within society

We will ensure our curriculum has resources that are representative of all groups, including those of Black and Asian backgrounds, and will ensure that all children have access to these resources in a positive and safe environment

Our schools will be reflective of world cultures

We will be aspirational for all pupils

Community

We will work in partnership with community groups in the best interests of our children and families, especially those from minoritized ethnic groups

We will proactively seek positive relations with groups outside of our school that our children and families access so that we better understand the issues that they are facing

We will support our parents and carers from minority ethnic groups accessing support in the community so that they can feel included within the community

Principles when applying this framework

We want to work with a shared understanding of language. As such, we have committed ourselves to developing an agreed language set in relation to anti-racist practice, and other protected characteristics as defined in the Equalities Act. As our work in relation to anti-racism develops, we will review this language and adapt the documentation as required. We want this to empower our communities to have open dialogue.

Apply shared language

Be perceptive

No single person has the same lived experience as any other person. It is important to acknowledge this. Nobody is expected to know or understand how another person feels about their identity. However, it is important that we are perceptive to the reality that others do not have the same lived experience as one another. We must be alert to the fact that some individuals are afforded privileges that others are not.

Fear of saying the wrong thing in relation to race can often lead to conversations not taking place. While this may come from a place of not wanting to offend others, if we are not open in our dialogue, we will limit the pace of change. It is imperative that we engage in open and safe conversations to challenge stereotypes and broaden perspectives.

Be open

Be sensitive

Open dialogue is critical; however, this must be tempered with sensitivity. Thinking before speaking is a useful rule of thumb to follow. It should be acknowledged that conversations about race could offend individuals so they should be conducted in a 'safe' place where individuals are open to feedback and sensitive to comments they both make and receive. Try not to embarrass or close down others – think about how you respond.

Being curious and non-judgemental will lead to meaningful conversations and better understanding. Recognising differences and being interested in them from a positive perspective can help to empower individuals. Recognising, celebrating and embracing differences between people helps to foster belonging in groups. If you don't know the answer to something, just ask.

Be curious

Roles and responsibilities

Monitor the Trust website to ensure it's inclusive and representative

Receive and review Trust wide data through the lens of race

Review LGBs works in application of this framework

Write and review policies through the lens of race

Ensure an equality impact assessment is undertaken for policies

Keep training up to date

Ensure the strategic implementation of this framework

Monitor the school website to ensure it's inclusive and representative

Receive and review anti-racist reports from headteachers three times a year

Ensure curriculum is representative and is moving towards anti-racism

Trustees

Governors

Ensure development and delivery of a curriculum that's working towards anti-racism

Hold staff members to account for application of this framework

Ensure feedback (including surveys) capture the views of all stakeholders, including those from ethnic minority background, and these views can be identified by group so plans can be made

Write and review policies through the lens of race

Complete equality impact assessment for policies

Ensure application of framework across the Trust

Review the work of schools in their application of this framework

Ensure Trust documentation, including the website is reflective of this framework

Ensure application of this framework in school

Report progress of anti-racist work (based on five areas of focus) to governors three times a year

Ensure school documentation, including the website, is reflective of this framework

Trust Education Leaders

Headteachers

Apply and uphold this framework

Make a commitment to developing understanding and practice in relation to anti-racist and inclusive practices

All Staff