

**LAMBTON HIGH SCHOOL**



***Policy on  
Anti-Racism***

*Reviewed Nov 2009*

The *Anti-Racism Policy* articulates the following responsibilities for schools, regions and the Department in assisting in the elimination of racism

- Nominating Anti-Racism Contact Officers (ARCO)
- Providing timely and professional responses to complaints of racism
- Ensuring that practices and procedures are consistent with the policy
- Including anti-racism education strategies in school plans and the Annual School Report

## **ARCO**

Principals are required to nominate a member of the teaching staff to be the school's ARCO. The ARCO needs to be an experienced teacher:

with good communication and mediation skills  
with the trust of parents, teachers and students  
preferably without an advocacy role in the school.

It is best, therefore, that the ARCO has been a member of staff for some years so that they are easily recognised and well respected.

The cultural background of an ARCO should not be a criterion for selection. There may be members of a school's staff whose cultural background makes them appropriate advocates for students, parents and community members who wish to complain about racism, but the ARCO's role requires impartiality rather than advocacy.

In larger schools, in order to ease the potential load, the principal may wish to nominate several staff to fulfil the role of the ARCO.

## **Role of the ARCO**

The ARCO is the contact between students, staff, parents and community members who wish to make a complaint regarding racism and the appropriate procedure that will be used to resolve the complaint, including the person who will have responsibility for dealing with the complaint - the delegate. The ARCO's role can be described under four headings:

### **Mediator role**

On receiving a complaint the ARCO, in certain circumstances, may attempt to negotiate an informal resolution.

## **Procedural role**

If an informal resolution is not appropriate or satisfactory then the complainant has the option of lodging a formal complaint.

The ARCO may assist the complainant in writing the complaint, if appropriate.

The ARCO may be asked to assist in seeking a resolution through the appropriate formal procedure but it is not the ARCO's role to lead the process. It is the delegate's role to lead the process.

In most cases complaints regarding racism are dealt with using the *Complaints Handling Policy Guidelines*.

## **Educational role**

The ARCO can assist the principal to:

- ensure the school community is aware that the school has an ARCO, who the ARCO is and what the ARCO role involves.
- ensure that staff are aware of the *Anti-Racism Policy*, the *Cultural Diversity and Community Relations Policy: Multicultural education in schools* and the *Complaints Handling Policy*, including the complaints procedures as they relate to complaints about racism, and the *Aboriginal Education and Training Strategy 2006 – 2008*.
- promote anti-racism education in the school.

## **Monitoring role**

The ARCO can assist the principal to:

- maintain records of suggestions, complaints and allegations concerning racism
- decide what statistics regarding complaints about racism would be useful to collect
- alert the school's executive and welfare team to significant statistical trends.

If a complaint is resolved then further action is not required but the situation will need to be monitored.

*It is important to note that the principal is responsible for ensuring that the Anti-Racism Policy is implemented in the school and that complaints regarding racism are dealt with in accordance with the *Complaints Handling Policy Guidelines*.*

Principals must ensure that newly nominated ARCOs undertake ARCO training

## **Making a complaint**

Anyone, a student, a parent, a community member or staff member can make a complaint about racism. Complaints about racism are dealt with using the procedures that are used in

resolving complaints about a range of matters. These procedures are part of the *Complaints Handling Policy Guidelines*.

Complaints can be made to any staff member, who may then seek an informal resolution, depending on the seriousness of the complaint and whether or not the person complaining is fearful or intimidated by the person whose behaviour is being complained of.

The staff member receiving the complaint will refer it to the appropriate person to deal with the complaint. In the case of complaints about racism, this person may be the ARCO. If the complaint has been made orally, it may have to be written down in order to proceed. The ARCO can assist the complainant to write down the complaint.

The ARCO will explain the appropriate procedure and refer the matter to the person who will deal with the complaint – the delegate.

### **Receiving a complaint**

On receiving a complaint, it is very important for the staff member to avoid judging it to be, or not to be, related to racism. The recipient needs to deal with the matter in accordance with the *Complaints Handling Policy Guidelines*.

The matter should be referred to the ARCO or the principal as soon as is practicable. If the complaint has been referred to the principal or other executive member of staff, it is important that they inform the ARCO so that records of complaints of racism can be maintained.

### **The ARCO's role**

If the matter has been referred to the ARCO, they will speak with the complainant and assess if it is appropriate to seek informal resolution, consistent with the *Complaints Handling Policy Guidelines*.

If an informal resolution is not appropriate or possible, the ARCO can assist the complainant to put the complaint in writing and inform the complainant of the relevant procedure and their rights.

The ARCO then refers the matter to the person who will deal with the complaint – the delegate.

It is not the role of the ARCO to lead any negotiation that seeks a formal resolution or to make decisions regarding complaints. However, the principal or delegate may wish to have the assistance of the ARCO in seeking resolution.

## **The delegate's role**

The delegate leads the negotiation or investigation, if required. The delegate follows the steps described in the appropriate procedure from the *Complaints Handling Policy Guidelines*.

If a negotiated settlement is not possible, it is the delegate who makes a final decision and informs the complainant and respondent.

## **Maintaining records**

Data relating to complaints of racism, and the methods used to resolve them, should be maintained, in line with requirements of the *Complaints Handling Policy Guidelines*.

## **School culture, practices and procedures**

**Schools do not have to write individual school anti-racism or complaints handling policies.**

## **Teaching strategies**

In order to confront the race-based generalisation, stereotype, bias, prejudice and discrimination that are the foundations of direct and indirect racism, teaching programs and teaching practice need to include strategies that promote the acceptance of Australia's cultural, linguistic and religious diversity and explicitly teach about racism and how to deal with it.