

Policy 17

Dealing with racial harassment

We have the duty to create and implement strategies in the nursery to prevent and address racism. Such strategies include:

- 1 that the nursery records all racist incidents
- 2 that all recorded incidents are reported to the children's parents/carers, and when appropriate to the registering authority.

Parents have a right to know when racism occurs and what actions the nursery will take to tackle it.

In the Race Relations Act 1976 Section 71 there is a statement of the duty to 'promote harmony and good relations' between different groups in society. We have a statutory responsibility to monitor, review and eliminate racial discrimination.

Definition of racial harassment

'Violence which may be verbal or physical and which includes attacks on property and people because of their race, nationality, ethnic origins – when the victim believes that the perpetrator was acting on racial grounds and/or there is evidence of racism' – (Commission for Racial Equality).

Incidents may involve a small or large number of persons, they may vary in their degree of offence and may not even recognise the incident has racial implications; or at the other extreme their behaviour may be quite deliberate and blatant.

Examples of racial harassment:

- 1 physical assault against a person or group of people
- 2 derogatory name calling, insults and racial jokes
- 3 racist graffiti and other written insults
- 4 provocative behaviour such as wearing racist badges and insignia and the distribution of racist literature
- 5 threats against a person or group of people because of their colour or race
- 6 discriminatory comment including ridicule made in the course of discussions in class or elsewhere
- 7 patronising words or actions.

Procedure

1. All staff in the nursery should be constantly aware and alert of any racial harassment taking place
2. They must intervene firmly and quickly to prevent all forms of racial harassment. Any allegation should be taken seriously and reported to the nursery manager
3. Each incident should be investigated and recorded in detail as accurately as possible in the incident book. This record should be available for inspection by staff, inspectors and parents where appropriate, on request.
4. The nursery manager is responsible for ensuring that incidents are handled appropriately and sensitively and entered in the incident book. Any pattern of behaviour should be indicated. Perpetrator/victim's initials may be used in the incident book as information on individuals is confidential to the nursery
5. Where an allegation is substantiated following an investigation, the parents of the child/ren who are perpetrators and victims should be informed of the incident and of the outcome
6. Continued racial harassment may lead to exclusion but such steps should only be taken when other strategies have failed to modify behaviour
7. Adults found to be perpetrators must be reported immediately to the manager/principal.

Racial harassment needs to be recorded to ensure that:

- 1 strategies are developed to prevent future incidents
- 2 patterns of behaviour are identified
- 3 persistent offenders are identified
- 4 effectiveness of nursery policies are monitored
- 5 a secure information base is provided to enable the nursery to respond to comments about racial incidents.

Nursery staff

All staff should be alert and seek to overcome any ignorant or offensive behaviour based on fear or dislike of racial distinctions that pupils or adults may express in nursery.

An atmosphere must be created where the victims of any form of racial harassment have confidence to report such behaviour, and that subsequently they feel positively supported by the staff of the nursery.

It is incumbent upon all members of staff to ensure that they do not express any views or comments that are racist. Nor must staff appear to endorse such views by failing to counter behaviour, which is prejudicial in a direct manner. A sensitive and informed approach must be used to counter any racial harassment perpetrated out of ignorance.

When a member of staff violates this nursery code of practice he/she will be counselled by the nursery manager. It will be explained to them why the behaviour is unacceptable and what steps will be taken to remedy the situation. At this stage it will be made clear that the content of the discussion will not be used as evidence in further disciplinary action. A repetition of such behaviour will lead to a formal verbal warning at which point the member of staff will be advised of their right to have a witness present. From this point, the normal disciplinary codes of practice for employees of the nursery will come into effect.

