

Anti-Racism Pocketbook

for Headteachers, Staff and Governors



EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY UK



Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Section 1: Understanding Racism in Decision-Making	5
Section 2: Embedding Anti-Racism - How to Implement Change ..	6
Section 3: Scenarios and Case Studies (Real UK Context)	7
Section 4: Monitoring Equity and Accountability.....	8
Section 5: Governance Leadership.....	9
Checklist: EDI Policy MUST Include	10
Impact of Racism on Children, Staff and Families	11
Conclusion.....	12

Embedding Cultural Inclusion, Accountability and Structural Change in UK Schools

Introduction

Britain's cultural diversity strengthens learning, creativity and problem-solving in schools. Inclusive practice expands pupil awareness of the world, improves attainment, and builds social cohesion. However, racism persists in UK schools and results in unequal educational and wellbeing outcomes for ethnically diverse pupils and staff.

Staff across all roles must have the cultural competence to:

- Understand identity and lived experiences
- Teach inclusive, diverse content
- Recognise bias in decision-making
- Respond effectively to racist harm

Structural, institutional and interpersonal racism impacts:

- Pupil aspirations and progression
- Sense of belonging and safety
- Access to SEND identification and support
- Exclusions and police involvement
- Staff recruitment, promotion and retention

Racism can look like:

- Negative assumptions about behaviour or intelligence
- Punishing natural Afro-textured hairstyles
- Curriculum erasing global majority histories
- Families judged when advocating for their children
- Racial bullying dismissed as “banter”

Racism feels like:

- Being misunderstood or blamed for stereotypes
- Having identity controlled or questioned
- Fear of speaking up due to consequences
- Exhaustion from being the “only one”

Every school must anchor anti-racist practice into:

- Curriculum content and images
- Participation and representation
- Policy design and review
- Staff development, coaching and governance
- A visible diversity calendar demonstrating action over words

Children and young people must feel safe, seen and valued every day. Co-production with families and learners must shape policies, processes, safeguarding and professional development.

Section 1: Understanding Racism in Decision-Making

Racism influences:

- Who is rewarded or punished
- Who receives support or surveillance
- Which histories and cultures are legitimised
- Who is listened to and who is ignored

Examples:

- Black Caribbean boys more likely to be excluded than White peers
- Black children disproportionately identified as having behavioural SEND
- School policies policing Black hair and names
- Muslim pupils over-policed under Prevent Duty

If inequity exists racism exists.

Section 2: Embedding Anti-Racism – How to Implement Change

Leadership:

- Anti-racism framework embedded in school improvement plan
- Equity Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) monitored and published each term
- Staff performance aligned to inclusion outcomes

Training:

- Cultural competency for all roles
- Trauma-informed responses to racial harm
- Safer recruitment and anti-bias training for panels

Curriculum:

- Representation across subjects AND year groups
- Assemblies and displays reflect community diversity
- Dual focus on celebration and critical understanding

Policy Reform:

- Equality Impact Assessments before adoption
- Anti-racism check on uniform, behaviour, safeguarding
- Language review to remove deficit terms

Safeguarding:

- Racism logged as harm type
- Restorative, accountable interventions
- Clear response pathways for families

Section 3: Scenarios and Case Studies (Real UK Context)

1. Hair Discrimination – UK legal case

- School bans Afro-textured protective hairstyles
 - Court finds discrimination
 - Policies rewritten with pupil/family voice

2. Racism as Safeguarding – Police escalation

- Black boys treated as “threat” → police called
 - Safeguarding review: racial profiling identified

3. SEND and Bias

- Pakistani pupil labelled disruptive instead of supported
 - Change in approach results in rapid progress




These reflect national trends highlighted by Runnymede Trust, DfE and Ofsted.

Section 4: Monitoring Equity and Accountability

Schools must track:

- Behaviour + exclusions (patterns by ethnicity)
- Attainment and subject entry (GCSE set access)
- Belonging survey data + racist incidents logged
- Racist incident data collected, analysed and used to plan/eradicate/change inequalities
- Workforce recruitment, pay and retention
- Parent trust and engagement input

Dashboard:

-  Green: Equitable outcomes
-  Amber: Disparity emerging
-  Red: Racism active – urgent action

Section 5: Governance Leadership

Governors must:

- Demand robust equality performance reporting
- Monitor resources allocated to anti-racist work
- Protect whistleblowing and parent advocacy
- Engage with community voices regularly

Strategic Questions:

- What inequity has been reduced this term?
- Where do outcomes remain unequal?
- How was pupil and family voice included?

Checklist: EDI Policy MUST Include

- Statement of anti-racism and cultural diversity commitment
- Explicit safeguarding protection from racial harm
- Curriculum representation expectations + auditing
- Behaviour and exclusions monitored by ethnicity
- SEND access monitored to prevent bias
- Workforce representation data published
- Pupil belonging survey outcomes
- Co-production commitment with communities
- Governor accountability + review schedule

Impact of Racism on Children, Staff and Families

Children:

- Anxiety, identity harm, lower aspirations
- School avoidance, performance decline

Staff:

- Burnout, microaggression trauma
- Limited progression and recognition

Families:

- Distrust of school and reluctance to engage
- Advocacy punished instead of welcomed

Conclusion

Anti-racism is a leadership, safeguarding and moral requirement. Schools must move beyond statements to measurable structural change.

Monitoring and accountability must involve learners and families at the centre.

This pocketbook supports schools to create safer, fairer education through culturally competent practice and equity-focused governance.



Equality and Diversity UK

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