Anti-Racism Policy

Rationale

Legislative Framework

- 1966 International Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination, which Australia is a signatory, embodies the principles on which the Anti-Racism policy is based
- 1972 SA Education Act
- 1975 Racial Discrimination Act of the Commonwealth
- 1977 Aboriginal Education Workers Industrial Agreement
- 1984 Equal Opportunity Act
- 1986 School Support Officers (Government Schools) Interim Award

Definitions

- The 1966 International Convention defined Racial Discrimination as “any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life.”
- Racism is the assumption of superiority of one group over another with all the gross arrogance that goes with it. (Whitney Young)
- A particularly deep-seated and widespread form of discrimination and intimidation, often denied and hidden both in the community and in our schools. (ED Anti-Racism Policy, 1990)
- The purpose of the Education Department’s Anti-Racism Policy is to eliminate Racism from the learning and working environment. The Policy articulates the unacceptability of racist attitudes and behaviours and provides avenues of redress.

Effects Of Racism

- At the individual level it causes shame, fear, anxiety, frustration, anger, outrage, rebellion and feelings of powerlessness in those who experience it. These feelings are personally destructive, undermine self-esteem and promote alienation and disenfranchisement from the family’s cultural group and the general community.

Groups Affected By Racism

- Within Australia, people from non-English speaking backgrounds as well as Aboriginal people are most vulnerable and are most disadvantaged by racism.
Racial Discrimination
- Is the unfair treatment of individuals or groups on the basis of negative assumptions about their cultural backgrounds and physiological characteristics.
- Is used as a means by which members of the dominant group maintain power over other groups.

Racial Harassment
- Consists of behaviour which is insulting, demeaning, humiliating, offensive and intimidatory.
- Can include verbal abuse and belittling remarks.
- If tolerated, has a cumulative effect, and will exclude and limit access, and constitutes systemic discrimination.

Responsibilities
Of Schools
- Schools operate within community contexts in which racism is tolerated if not legitimised, where negative attitudes and behaviours towards certain groups are nurtured by media images, and where the structure of the language, and the humour and power within our society negate the acceptance of difference.
- Therefore schools are responsible for providing a work environment which affirms cultural diversity and is free from racial discrimination and harassment.
- Furthermore “unless the school educates to counter prejudice and discrimination, it is inevitably reinforcing those attitudes and behaviours. It cannot remain neutral”. (James Lynch).

Of Teachers
- The Director General’s October 1992 document “The Roles and Responsibilities of Teachers” states that teachers are accountable to the Principal for “…the welfare and development of the students in their care and that it is expected that all teachers will take into account differences between students which may involve the following factors: cultural, linguistic, social and economic backgrounds, and age, gender, abilities and location”.
- The Regulations under the Education Act state: 122 (1) “…teachers shall be responsible within their schools for the establishment and maintenance of a social and educational environment favourable to learning and acceptable forms of behaviour…to develop self-control and self-discipline within students and a respect for other persons…”
- In “Teachers’ Work” it states that teachers “…should respond to the needs, rights and contributions of all students and take into account their gender, abilities, and geographical cultural, linguistic and socio-economic backgrounds in order to promote equality of educational opportunity.”
- Further, the document also states that a teacher should value the gender and cultural and linguistic background of students and acknowledge the experiences, skills and perspectives of women, Aboriginal people and those from a non-English speaking background in the choice and presentation of learning activities.
- At the same time, a teacher should take action to eliminate discrimination and harassment between and among students and employ strategies and techniques to prevent or stop behaviour which intimidates or denigrates a student on the ground of gender, culture, physiology, socioeconomic background or ability.
The Curriculum
- Every effort should be made to ensure that what is taught is based on an Inclusive Curriculum, which affirms the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of all students.
- An Inclusive Curriculum is reflective of and responsive to the needs, rights and contributions of all groups within the Australian and world community. It explicitly makes clear the unacceptability of racist attitudes and behaviours, upholds the human rights of all and challenges the basic premises and attitudes which sustain discriminatory behaviour.

Individuals
Each individual demonstrates commitment to racist-free education by
- Modelling appropriate behaviour.
- Being aware of personal prejudices.
- Making appropriate changes to attitudes and behaviours.
- Confronting and intervening to stop racist behaviour in others.
- Not condoning racism in any form.

The Grievance Procedure
- A contact person shall be appointed by Staff.
- The Policy shall be endorsed by Staff, students and School Council.
- Grievances shall be resolved through adoption of one or more of these agencies:
  - personal resolution
  - mediation
  - the Principal as agent/monitor/respondent
  - an expression of concern
  - a formal complaint leading to investigation and/or
  - appeal to the Equal Opportunity Commission.