

# The effects of racism in schools

Racism in schools hurts both individuals and the learning and working environment. It generates tensions that distort cultural understanding and narrow the educational experiences of all students.

It affects:

- Educational outcomes
- Individual happiness and self confidence
- School climate
- Cultural identity
- School-community relations
- Student behaviours

*Source: Racism. No way.*

Racist attitudes may be manifested in incidents that are often reported as name-calling, teasing, exclusion, verbal abuse or bullying. Teachers and other school staff may also experience racism in the form of harassment, abuse or the promotion of racist stereotypes by students and colleagues.

If there are policies and procedures at the systemic level that support these behaviours and allow them to continue unchallenged, they can contribute to systemic racism and, often inadvertently, foster a teaching and learning environment that sustains racist attitudes.

Discriminatory policies and practices that can exist in schools:

- ignoring or not responding to incidents or complaints of racism
- not informing students, parents and staff of their rights in relation to racism
- having parent and community organisations that are not representative of the diversity of the school community
- not providing access to interpreters or translations for parents
- discouraging the involvement of parents and community members from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds in school activities or decision-making processes
- not allowing students to speak their first languages at school
- compelling students to take part in activities that conflict with their cultural or religious beliefs
- forcibly anglicising students' names
- applying more severe discipline measures for students from some cultural and linguistic backgrounds than others
- condoning racist behaviour or practices or allowing them to go unchallenged

Programs or strategies which actively engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse students and encourage their participation in the broader school community may be effective ways of overcoming systemic racism.

*Source: Racism. No way.*