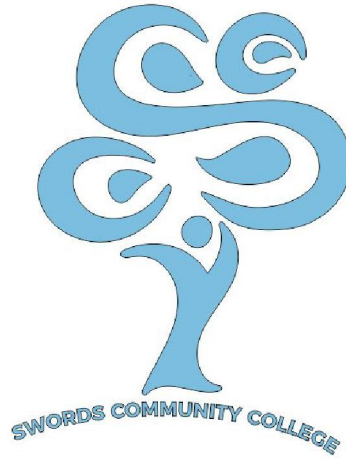




**Anti-Racism Policy
Swords Community College
June 2026**

Date for review: June 2028

Chairperson of the Board

Secretary to the Board

Date

Date

1. Mission Statement

At Swords Community College, we believe there is a place for everyone. We are a welcoming, inclusive, multi-denominational school where students' opinions matter and their learning and welfare are at the centre of all we do.

We support our learners to aim high and reach their full potential through strong pastoral care, engaging teaching which encourages and supports students individual learning styles, in a respectful and caring environment. Learning in our school blends traditional methods with digital technologies to create an experience that encourages curiosity and independence.

Through a rich and varied programme of extra-curricular activities, designed to cater to all interests and abilities, we encourage students to explore their passions, develop new skills and build confidence beyond the classroom.

Guided by our four pillars of Respect, Excellence, Resilience and Teamwork, we empower our students to become confident learners, active citizens and well-rounded individuals, prepared for further education and for life beyond school.

This policy is informed by national legislation and policy frameworks:

- Equal Status Acts 2000–2018 – prohibit discrimination in access to education and services on nine protected grounds, including race, ethnicity, and nationality.
- Education (Welfare) Act 2000 – requires schools to promote the educational welfare and inclusion of all students.
- The Children First Act 2015 – places a statutory obligation on schools to protect the welfare of all children.
- EU Racial Equality Directive (2000/43/EC) – provides a framework for preventing and combating racial and ethnic discrimination across the European Union.
- Education for Sustainable Development to 2030: National Strategy – promotes respect, global citizenship, and equality within education settings.
- Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice (2023) – guides schools in creating inclusive, supportive learning environments that promote the wellbeing of all students.

- Looking at Our School 2022: A Quality Framework for Post-Primary Schools – sets standards for inclusive school cultures that value diversity and equality.

This policy is informed by the following school policies and procedures:

- Bí Cineálta Anti-Bullying Policy
- AUP Policy
- Code of Positive Behaviour
- Mobile Phone Policy
- Wellbeing Policy

2. Definition of Racism

Racism is defined as “any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent or national or ethnic origin” by the United Nations (UN).

It is further defined as “an attitude or belief is racist if it implies that some groups are superior or inferior to others based on their ‘race’, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin” by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) (2005).

Any action, practice, policy, law, speech, or incident which has the effect (whether intentional or not) of undermining anyone’s enjoyment of their human rights, based on their actual or perceived ethnic or national origin or background, where that background is that of a marginalised or historically subordinated group. Racism carries connotations of violence because the dehumanisation of ethnic groups has been historically enforced through violence. (Irish Network Against Racism (INAR) 2020).

3. Types of Racism

To effectively create an inclusive and equitable school community, it is essential that all staff, students, and parents understand the different ways racism can appear. Racism is not always overt or intentional—it can be expressed through language, behaviour, systems, and everyday interactions. Recognising these forms allows the school to respond appropriately, challenge bias, and foster an environment where every member of the community feels respected, valued, and supported. The following section outlines the key types of racism and how they may present within a school context.

3.1 Individual Racism

Individual racism occurs when a person's beliefs, attitudes, or actions—whether intentional or unintentional—discriminate against others based on race, colour, ethnicity, or national origin.

In a school setting, this can include:

- Making racist jokes, name-calling, or using racial slurs.
- Excluding a student from group activities because of their background.
- Making assumptions about a student's behaviour, intelligence, or ability based on Stereotypes.
- Treating students or colleagues differently due to skin colour or accent.

Even when not deliberate, these behaviours contribute to an unsafe and unwelcoming environment. All staff and students have a role in challenging and addressing such behaviour.

3.2 Institutional Racism

Institutional racism refers to policies, procedures, or practices within the school that disadvantage certain racial or ethnic groups, even when not intentional.

Examples include:

- Disciplinary policies that disproportionately affect minority students.
- Lack of cultural representation in the curriculum, displays, or school events.
- Limited access to leadership opportunities or advanced subjects for certain groups.
- Recruitment or promotion practices that do not reflect diversity within the staff.

Addressing institutional racism means regularly reviewing school policies, data, and practices to ensure they promote equity and inclusion for all students and staff.

3.3 Systemic Racism

Systemic racism refers to the wider patterns of inequality across society that affect students and families within the school community.

In education, this might be seen through:

- Persistent achievement gaps between different student groups.

- Unequal access to resources, extracurricular activities, or support services.
- Barriers faced by minority families when engaging with school systems.
- Broader social issues such as housing, healthcare, or employment inequalities that affect students' ability to learn and thrive.

Schools play a crucial role in recognising these inequalities and working actively to counter them through inclusive teaching and equitable support.

3.4 Cultural Racism

Cultural racism occurs when the values, traditions, and practices of one cultural group are seen as superior to those of others, leading to marginalisation of diverse identities.

In schools, this can include:

- Celebrating only certain cultural or religious holidays.
- Mocking, stereotyping, or dismissing different accents, foods, clothing, or customs.
- Promoting materials that reflect only one cultural perspective in textbooks or lessons.
- Expecting students to conform to dominant cultural norms at the expense of their own identity.

Schools should celebrate cultural diversity and ensure all students see their heritage and experiences reflected and respected within the school environment.

3.5 Internalised Racism

Internalised racism happens when students or staff from marginalised backgrounds start to believe negative stereotypes or discriminatory ideas about their own group

This can show up as:

- Students expressing shame about their cultural background or appearance.
- Preferring to hide elements of their culture (such as language, hair, or traditional clothing).
- Believing that success requires rejecting one's own cultural identity.

Creating an affirming school environment, where all cultures are respected and Represented, helps combat internalised racism and fosters pride in identity and heritage.

3.6 Microaggressions

Microaggressions are everyday comments, jokes, gestures, or assumptions that send subtle but harmful messages about a person's race or ethnicity.

They are often unintentional but can build up over time and cause significant harm.

Examples in a school context include:

- Asking a student, "Where are you really from?"
- Praising a student for "speaking good English" when it is their first language.
- Failing to pronounce a student's name correctly despite repeated correction.
- Using classroom materials that reinforce stereotypes or exclude diverse perspectives.
- Teachers should be mindful of language, classroom dynamics, and curriculum content to ensure every student feels seen, respected, and valued.

4. How racism may manifest in school.

The following types of behaviour are included in the definitions and types of racist behaviour but not limited to:

- Discriminatory hate speech or name-calling, insults, racist jokes and language.
- Verbal abuse and threats of a racist nature.
- Physical assaults of a racist nature.
- Ridicule based on differences of colour, race, ethnicity, nationality, culture, religion or language.
- Refusal to cooperate with others because of any of the above differences.
- Stereotyping on the basis of colour, race, ethnicity, nationality, culture, religion/belief or language.
- Racist graffiti.
- Written abuse of a racist nature including racist comments made by emailing, text messaging and/or on any social media forums.
- Damage to property motivated by racism.
- Incitement of others to act in a racist manner.
- Provocative behaviour such as wearing racist badges, insignia or clothing.

5. Aims of this Policy

- To support and give meaning to our college ethos and in particular the four pillars Respect, Excellence, Resilience and Teamwork.
- To develop a safe and welcoming environment for all, in which racist speech and behaviour are continually challenged.
- To dismantle stereotypical views which have an underlying racist bias.
- To empower our school community to identify and engage with racist or discriminatory behaviour.
- To promote a culture of inclusivity, respect, and diversity within the school.
- To ensure that racism in any form is actively challenged and addressed.
- To educate students and staff on the impact of racism and the importance of anti-racist practices.
- To establish clear procedures for reporting, addressing, and preventing racist incidents.

6. Responsibilities

Creating an anti-racist school environment is a shared responsibility. Every member of the school community plays an important role in ensuring that respect, inclusion, and equality are always upheld.

6.1 School Leadership

The Principal, Deputy Principals, and Senior Management Team are responsible for:

- Ensuring the implementation, communication, and ongoing review of this policy.
- Providing leadership and resources to promote anti-racist practices throughout the school.
- Ensuring that incidents of racism are addressed promptly, fairly, and in line with school procedures.
- Supporting professional development and training to build staff awareness and confidence in addressing racism.

6.2 Teachers and Staff

All staff members have a duty to:

- Model inclusive behaviour and promote respect and understanding in their classrooms and interactions.
- Actively challenge racism and discriminatory language or behaviour whenever it occurs.
- Report all incidents of racism through the appropriate channels.
- Embed diversity, equity, and inclusion within teaching, learning, and school activities.
- Provide support and reassurance to any student affected by racism.

6.3 Students

Students are expected to:

- Treat all members of the school community with respect and fairness.
- Refrain from any racist language, behaviour, or exclusionary actions.
- Report any incidents of racism or discrimination to a trusted staff member.
- Participate positively in classroom and school discussions that promote diversity, empathy, and understanding.

6.4 Parents and Guardians

The school values the partnership of parents and guardians and encourages them to:

- Support the school's anti-racism initiatives and uphold its values at home and in the community.
- Communicate concerns related to racism or discrimination promptly to school staff.
- Work collaboratively with the school to address incidents or issues that may arise.
- Encourage their children to demonstrate respect, empathy, and inclusion in all interactions.

6.5 Board of Management

The Board of Management holds ultimate responsibility for the governance and oversight of the school's anti-racism policy. The Board will:

- Ensure that the policy is developed, implemented, and reviewed in line with legislative and Department of Education requirements.

- Promote a whole-school approach to equality, diversity, and inclusion.
- Support the Principal and staff in maintaining a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment for all students and employees.
- Allocate appropriate resources to support anti-racism education, staff training, and student initiatives.
- Review reports on incidents of racism and monitor the effectiveness of the school's response and prevention strategies.
- Ensure that all members of the school community are aware of their rights and responsibilities under this policy.

Together, these shared responsibilities ensure that anti-racism is not only a stated policy, but an active practice embedded in every aspect of school life. Through collaboration, accountability, and ongoing reflection, the school community can uphold its commitment to our four pillars of Respect, Excellence, Resilience and Teamwork.

7. Responding to and Reporting Racist Incidents

The school is committed to ensuring that all incidents of racism are taken seriously, addressed promptly, and used as opportunities for education and improvement. A clear and consistent response helps maintain a safe and inclusive environment for all.

7.1 Principles of Response

All responses to racism will be guided by the following principles:

- Racism in any form will not be accepted or ignored.
- Both the targeted individual(s) and those involved in the incident will be treated fairly and supported appropriately.
- Where possible, the school will seek to use restorative practices to help students understand the impact of their behaviour, take responsibility, and repair harm.
- All reports will be handled with sensitivity and in line with data protection and safeguarding guidelines.
- The school aims to promote understanding and learning, ensuring that responses lead to positive behavioural change.

7.2 Reporting Procedures

Any member of the school community: student, staff, or parent, may report an incident of racism.

For Students:

- Students are encouraged to report incidents to a trusted teacher, tutor, year head, guidance counsellor, any member AEN team and a member of the Senior Leadership Team.
- If a student witnesses racism, they are also encouraged to speak up or seek adult support.

For Staff:

- All staff members must record and report any incident of racism they witness, hear about, or that is disclosed to them.
- Reports should be made to the Principal or Deputy Principal.

For Parents/Guardians:

- Parents or guardians should report any concerns to their child's Tutor, Year Head, Principal or Deputy Principals who will ensure the information reaches the appropriate person.

7.3 Investigation Process

Once an incident is reported:

- The report will be logged and reviewed by the Principal, Deputy Principal, Year head or Tutor.
- All relevant parties will be given an opportunity to share their perspective in a respectful, private setting.
- Reports will be handled confidentially and investigated promptly.
- The school will determine appropriate action, which may include mediation, disciplinary measures, or referrals for further support.
- Parents/Guardians will be informed where appropriate.

- Appropriate sanctions will be applied to those who engage in racist behaviour, in line with the school's Code of Positive Behaviour.
- A follow-up will take place to ensure that the issue has been resolved and that support is in place for those affected.

7.4 Recording and Monitoring

All incidents of racism will be recorded by the relevant year head. Patterns or recurring issues will be monitored to identify areas for improvement in policy or practice.

8. Support and Education

The school recognises that responding to racism must go beyond individual incidents.

Ongoing support will include:

- Counselling or pastoral care for students affected by racism.
- Restorative discussions to rebuild relationships and understanding.
- Educational workshops and assemblies promoting diversity, empathy, and inclusion.
- Staff training on recognising bias, addressing racism, and supporting inclusion.
- Anti-racism education will be embedded into the curriculum through subjects such as SPHE, CSPE, Wellbeing, History and English.

9. Review

This policy will be formally reviewed every two years, or sooner if required due to:

- Legislative or Departmental updates.
- Significant incidents or emerging issues within the school community
- Recommendations from the ETB, Board of Management, staff, or parents/guardians
- All amendments will be communicated clearly to the school community following Board of Management approval.