



## AP 372 – ANTI-RACISM AND RESPONSE TO RACISM

### BACKGROUND

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Saskatoon Public Schools recognizes the diversity of our school communities, commits to establishing environments open to all, and believes that all members of our community have the right to live and work in an environment that protects fundamental human rights and human dignity. We acknowledge that racism, in all its forms (including individual, institutional, cultural, structural) is embedded in our society and we support the ongoing commitment to the elimination of racism. Saskatoon Public Schools commits to breaking down barriers that lead to inequitable outcomes. The staff of Saskatoon Public Schools have a responsibility to ensure that schools do not perpetuate stereotyping, bias, discrimination, racism, or inequality, and to respond with timely intervention when these become evident.

Saskatoon Public Schools has committed to answering the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission that pertain to education and we believe that our staff and students' hearts and minds are open for learning. We answer the call by enacting division-wide anti-racist/anti-oppressive practices and professional learning that grows our collective understanding about Indigenous identity, histories, worldviews, and systemic barriers. Further, we understand that interventions which seek to eliminate racism and oppression benefit everyone. We commit to the learning and unlearning – as well as the doing and undoing - that is necessary to ensure that every student is known, valued, and believed in.

Proactively addressing racism and oppression requires:

- acknowledgement that certain groups in our society are treated inequitably because of systemic barriers, individual bias, racism, and oppression.
- a clear understanding of how land ownership, and the forced displacement of the original inhabitants of this land, enables the ongoing oppression of Indigenous people.
- acknowledgement and increased awareness and understanding that we each have biases and that systemic and individual bias, racism, and oppression, exist within our school division, and may be perpetuated unless explicit, persistent, and determined action is taken to identify, challenge, and overcome them.
- the application of an equity lens at all levels and areas within school division including, but not limited to, policies, pedagogies, practices, program placements, and decision making.
- knowledge of practices and procedures which operate in school structures such as classrooms, hallways, and on school grounds that contribute to inequitable outcomes, including disparities in how Black, Indigenous, and Students of Colour experience education.
- knowledge of how curriculum and resource selections may reinforce bias and stereotypes.
- development of the skills necessary to recognize and respond effectively to a racist action.

### PROACTIVE EDUCATIONAL PROCEDURES

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Saskatoon Public Schools commits to equity by embedding anti-racist/anti-oppressive practices into its educational and operational functions to ensure that racism and oppression are not tolerated.



### **Board of Education Responsibilities**

The *Saskatoon Public Schools Human Rights Equity Policy (Policy 15)* is based on the principles of human rights and equity. It recognizes that all persons are equal in dignity and rights and mandates that learning environments are safe, caring, and inclusive. It is our goal to work together with parents/caregivers/guardians and community partners to ensure that every student is known, valued, and believed in.

### **Leadership Responsibilities**

At all levels, leaders will model and align school operations with [Equity, Anti-Racist/Anti-Oppressive Competencies](#). We commit to equity by embedding anti-racist/anti-oppressive practices into our educational and operational functions to ensure that racism, bias, stereotyping, and discrimination are not tolerated. School-based and central office leaders have an obligation to support educators and support staff in creating learning and work environments that are safe, caring, and that ensure racism and oppression are not tolerated.

Therefore, leaders are expected to:

- understand that learning about anti-racism/anti-oppression will help to broaden and deepen understanding of *how and why* experiences of discrimination, racism, and oppression occur and how this learning can assist in effectively intervening with issues of racism and discrimination.
- engage in ongoing professional learning to increase knowledge of anti-racism/anti-oppression and then incorporate this knowledge into school-based professional development and expectations. Embedded within this professional development should be the goal of fostering reflexivity, the development of critical self-knowledge and self-examination.
- establish consistent, widely understood school-based practices to ensure that members of school communities and families of all races, cultures and ethnicities are welcomed, accepted, and included in all aspects of education and school life. This should include consideration of the ways in which assumptions of inclusivity operate.
- ensure that all schools include in their school codes of conduct clear statements reflecting the commitment to the elimination of bias, discrimination, and racism.
- take timely action and intervene effectively when instances of racism occur as outlined in the responsive components and procedures.
- document incidents of racism and the responses to these occurrences.

### **Educators and Support Staff Responsibilities**

All students need access to an equitable classroom environment and school that shares a commitment to fostering caring and supportive relationships. Students need to see themselves, their lives and the lives of their families positively reflected in all aspects of schools. It is expected that teachers create classrooms where students see a commitment to creating safe, supportive, inclusive, and discrimination free environments. All staff share this collective responsibility.



Therefore, educators and support staff are expected to:

- understand that learning about anti-racism/anti-oppression will help to broaden and deepen understanding of *how and why* experiences of discrimination, racism, and oppression occur and how this learning can assist in effectively intervening with issues of racism and discrimination.
- enact anti-racist/anti-oppressive practices in their classrooms and recognize that this can be accomplished through a variety of methods.
- incorporate curriculum with resources focused on equity and social justice.
- include positive images and accurate information which reflects the accomplishments and contributions of people of diverse racial, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds.
- model and teach inclusive, equitable practices that promote human rights, cultivate critical thinking, and provide students opportunity to question issues of power, identity, and to challenge the status quo.
- follow up on all instances or allegations of racism in consultation with the student(s), school principal, and others as necessary.

## COMPONENTS AND PROCEDURES

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Individual acts of racism between students will not be tolerated in Saskatoon Public Schools. These incidents will be reported to school administration who will follow up on all allegations of racism based on the response outlined below.

### 1. Reporting

All members of the school community - including students, staff, parents/caregivers/guardians – have a duty to report any racist act.

- Students and parents/caregivers/guardians should report to teachers, school counsellors, school administrators or other school staff.
- Staff should report the racist act to school administration immediately.

### 2. Responding

Individual acts of racism, stereotyping, and discrimination are not tolerated in Saskatoon Public Schools. Our staff will respond in the following manner:

- All staff involved will support the student who experienced the racist act by centering and prioritizing their feelings, needs, and voice.
- Parents/caregivers/guardians of the students involved will be notified.
- Response by schools should include explicitly naming the *act* as racist, followed by taking necessary steps in accountability.
- Restorative and collaborative approaches to responding will be emphasized, but only after responsibility has been taken.



- School staff will extend efforts to provide learning for the student who committed the racist act on the impact of their actions, and/or observers to the incident, and support from central office can be provided if requested.
- The views of the student who committed the act must be given due weight in context of the student's age and maturity, and/or special considerations such as any formal diagnoses impacting the student.
- The school-based administrator will follow division discipline procedures when implementing any consequences required for racism.

## DEFINITIONS

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Saskatoon Public Schools recognizes that providing definitions and context matters and have included several in the list below. However, definitions in equity work are constantly evolving and changing over time so this should not be viewed as a comprehensive or definitive list. Rather, definitions can provide an essential foundation for a common understanding from which the work can grow. There can be tensions about what is, or who has, the right definition or the right language. In response, the focus of definitions could be understood as a method in which people engage in and practice *applying* the work and additionally self reflect on the ways in which the thinking has been absorbed.

### Racism

An individualized understanding of racism would define it as thoughts and actions of a person working against another because of their race, the belief that some races are better than others, and the mistreatment of a person based on these beliefs. However, racism can also exist within institutional structures, policies, and procedures. Racism is more than just individualized incidents of racism; rather, it impacts everything at all levels of society and is understood as systems of advantage, power, and oppression based on race.

### Oppression

Oppression can be understood as a prolonged system of domination that denies individuals dignity, human rights, social resources, and power. It is the imbalance and misuse of power by a dominant group towards an oppressed target group resulting in the mistreatment of some individuals and groups. This results in inequitable conditions as some individuals and target groups experience ongoing barriers accessing and receiving services such as education, housing, health care, etc. Conversely, individuals from dominant groups can receive unearned social advantages which enables barriers to equal access to remain largely invisible and ignored by dominant groups.

### Discrimination

Any practice or behaviour, both individually or institutionally, that results in an unfair action on an individual or group because of religion, creed, marital status, family status, sex, sexual orientation, disability, age, colour, ancestry, nationality, place of origin, race or perceived race, receipt of public assistance, or gender identity. Discrimination can limit access to opportunities or advantages that are available to other members of society.

### Intersectionality

Intersectionality recognizes that individual experiences of racism or racial harassment may intersect with other experiences of discrimination, including but not limited to sex, ancestry, ethnicity, language,



ability, faith, age, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression. To this end, it is essential to understand how experiences of racism intersect with other bases of inequality.

### **Human Rights**

Rights that recognize and promote the inherent dignity and worth of every person and provide for equal rights and opportunities without discrimination regardless of religion, creed, marital status, family status, sex, sexual orientation, disability, age, colour, ancestry, nationality, place of origin, race or perceived race, receipt of public assistance, or gender identity. Human rights violations are harmful to an entire organization and community, not only to those who are directly affected. Every individual has the right to live, work, and learn in an environment free from fear, discrimination, and harassment.

### **Anti-Racism**

Anti-racism is the work of being able to identify and eliminate inequities in the structures and behaviours that perpetuate racism, including structural racism. It names issues of race and difference as issues of power and equity. It can be understood as forms of thought and practices that set out to confront and dismantle structural racism in the pursuit of justice and social change. In this way, it recognizes that racism is more than just racist ideas that are held by individuals who enact racist actions. Anti-racism examines racially inequitable outcomes, the power imbalances between racialized and non-racialized people, and how racism operates as a tool of oppression and colonization.

### **Anti-Racist Education**

Anti-racist education understands race as a socially constructed concept that is used as a tool to advantage and disadvantage; and since these effects are not equally distributed it creates inequitable conditions. Anti-racist education seeks to create equitable conditions through identifying and changing policies, procedures, and practices that sustain inequity, along with any racist attitudes and behaviours that may reinforce these. Because racism can be found everywhere, anti-racism education is necessary in all spaces and places. Anti-racist education investigates 1) how race and racism affect all people and how it disadvantages some and advantages others; 2) how race normalizes human difference into hierarchies that produce, reproduce, and maintain systems of power; 3) how racism operates in different layers, including structurally, and how this enables it to remain largely invisible and unchallenged. 4) how racism operates structurally often through people who are not consciously racist.

### **Anti-Oppression**

Anti-oppression is the way in which systems of oppression (racism, sexism, ableism, ageism, homophobia, etc.) are understood and how these can result in individual discriminatory actions as well as structural inequalities for some groups. It works to disrupt and dismantle discriminatory actions and recognize power imbalances. Anti-oppression actively promotes change, both at the individual and structural level, and seeks to redress the balance of power.

### **Anti-Oppressive Education**

Anti-oppressive education is about developing a deep critical consciousness so that a person can disrupt inequitable systems and practices to create more equitable structures in education. It examines the ways in which many normalized practices in education contribute to oppression in schools. As such, it requires critical questioning and rethinking of current educational organizational structures, teacher pedagogies and practices, curriculum, assessment, school cultures etc. Anti-oppressive education explores issues of power and privilege to reduce inequalities that may be operating at the individual, group, or structural level.



## Administrative Procedures Manual ♦ AP 372 – Anti-Racism and Response to Racism

References: Saskatchewan Human Rights Code (HRC)  
The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms  
United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights  
Canadian Multiculturalism Act  
The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child  
United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

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