

Preventing and responding to racism in schools, and strengthening cultural safety



Preventing and responding to racism in schools

Experiences of racism can have significant detrimental impacts on mental health and contribute to the marginalisation and isolation of young people

School responsibilities

Schools play a key role in preventing, identifying and responding to incidents of racism. The department acknowledges that culturally safe environments support better engagement and outcomes for learners.

By taking a proactive and whole-of-school approach, schools can ensure that all students are respected, valued and treated equally. Evidence shows that early intervention of prejudiced attitudes and behaviours, including racist bullying, can contribute to positive lifelong impacts for all students and the school community.

Policy interventions and legislated mechanisms

Under the [Child Safe Standards](#), schools are required to establish culturally safe environments where diverse and unique identities and experiences are respected and valued:

- [Child Safe Standard 1](#) focuses on ensuring Koorie children and young people feel safe, requires schools to address all forms of racism and adopt measures to ensure racism is identified, confronted and not tolerated.
- [Child Safe Standard 5](#) requires schools to pay particular attention to the needs of students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and Aboriginal students (in addition to students with disability, students who are unable to live at home, international students and LGBTIQ+ students).

The department provides guidance to support schools to meet these obligations via the [PROTECT website](#), with [additional guidance on creating culturally safe school environments available here](#).

School policy requirements

School policies

Schools are required to have a local policy or statement that details the actions and strategies taken by the school to uphold Child Safe Standards 1 and 5. Schools often include this information in their [Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy](#) and [Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy](#).

The department's [Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Policy](#) requires schools to have a local policy that explains that discrimination will not be tolerated, such as an [Inclusion and Diversity Policy](#).

The [Bullying Prevention and Response](#) policy outlines how schools can create safe and respectful school climates and address all forms of bullying.

Universal supports

All supports are available to rural and regional schools.

- [Respectful relationships teaching and learning materials](#), which support schools to deliver respectful relationships education via the Victorian Curriculum.
- [Intercultural Capability in the Curriculum](#) enables students to explore their own and others' cultural practices and cultural diversity in Australian society.

Reporting pathways

- Schools must report incidents affecting student wellbeing via the eduSafe Plus platform.
- Schools can seek support from the Incident Support & Operations Centre, which is staffed 24/7, 365 days a year.
- [Report Racism hotline](#) is available for students/families unhappy with the school's response to an incident.

Preventing and addressing racism: Schools Standing Up To Racism resources

These resources were developed by the Centre for Multicultural Youth (CMY) to support schools to address racism and strengthen inclusion.

Schools Standing Up to Racism encourages a whole-of-school approach, which actively promotes, encourages and supports student voice in order to create meaningful and sustainable change.

The suite of resources includes:

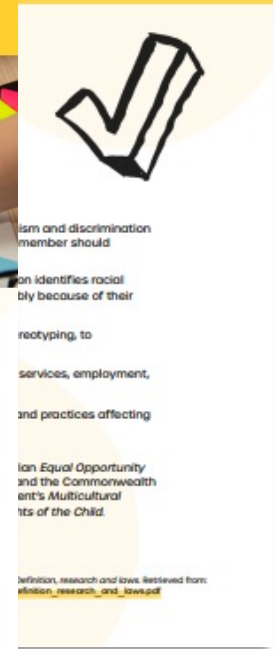
- Factsheets and lesson plans
- Case studies
- action plans
- Podcasts and videos.

CMY is delivering free workshops with these resources in 2024 – see [School Update for more information](#) and to book in.



Victorian Curriculum Content Descriptions:

Curriculum Area	Curriculum Content Descriptions
Level 4 Critical and Creative Thinking	Explore reactions to a given situation or problem and consider the effect of pre-established preferences (VCCT001)
Level 4 Ethical Capability	Discuss the role of personal values and dispositions in ethical decision-making and actions (VCEC008)
Level 4 Intercultural Capability	Identify how understandings between culturally diverse groups can be encouraged and achieved (VICC008) Compare their own and others cultural practices, showing how these may influence the ways people relate to each other (VICC800)
Level 4 Personal and Social Capability	Identify conflicts that may occur in peer groups and suggest possible causes and resolutions (VCEC004) Examine the similarities and differences between individuals and groups based on factors such as sex, age, ability, language, culture and religion (VCEC300) Describe the ways in which similarities and differences can affect relationships (VCEP300)
Level 3 English	Identify the point of view in a text and suggest alternative points of view (CELY205) Draw connections between personal experiences and the worlds of texts, and share responses with others (CELY201)
Level 4 English	Discuss literary experiences with others, sharing responses and expressing a point of view (CELY300) Use comprehension strategies to build literal and inferred meaning to expand content knowledge, integrating and linking ideas and analysing and evaluating texts (CELY208)



Holocaust education and preventing and addressing antisemitism

Professional learning

Understanding and responding to antisemitism

- The department has developed a series of online videos for school staff on the nature, history and impacts of antisemitism, developed in partnership with the Jewish Community Council of Victoria, the Jewish Museum of Australia and the Ark Centre. The videos are [available to watch on-demand in Arc Events here](#).

Teaching about the Holocaust

- The Melbourne Holocaust Museum has developed a free 8-step Teacher Professional Learning Program for Educators to support Victorian schools in implementing mandated Holocaust education at Level 9/10. The Museum also offers online learning experiences accessible to rural and regional schools. For more information, contact the Melbourne Holocaust Museum: <https://mhm.org.au/>

Building cultural awareness

- [Jewish Museum of Australia](#) - A place for all people to share in the Australian Jewish experience.
- [Immigration Museum](#) - Explores the histories, stories and contemporary issues of Victoria's diverse communities.

Policies and frameworks

- [Holocaust Education – Delivery Requirements: Policy](#), which requires that all government school students be taught about the Holocaust as part of the school's Level 9/10 history curriculum.
- [Teaching and Learning Resources – Selecting Appropriate Materials: Policy](#), which includes references to Nazi symbol ban legislation.



For further assistance or information on the supports available for schools and students, contact: multicultural.education@education.vic.gov.au

Student programs and support

- [Courage to Care](#) workshops promote acceptance of diversity, transform bystander behaviour and inspire students to become Upstanders. Includes rural and regional visits. For more information, contact Courage to Care: <https://couragetocare.org.au/>
- [Melbourne Holocaust Museum](#) offers programs for primary and secondary students, Year 9/10 immersive experiences and a Meet a Survivor program on the Holocaust and its significance. Delivery to gov't and non-government schools.
- [Map of key mental health and wellbeing supports](#): sets out key mental health and wellbeing supports for all students in government schools.

Curriculum and teaching

Teaching about the Holocaust

- Department-curated and created resources developed in partnership with Gandel Holocaust Programme alumni (teachers), Jewish cultural institutions (Melbourne Holocaust Museum, Jewish Museum of Australia), community organisations, Universities, and the Yad Vashem World Holocaust Remembrance Centre in Jerusalem.
- The resources [are publicly available on Arc](#).

Additional resources

All supports are available to rural and regional schools

Prevention and capability-building resources

[Bully Stoppers](#): an online toolkit to support teachers, principals, parents and carers, and students to help prevent and respond to bullying, including racist bullying.

[Map of key mental health and wellbeing supports](#): sets out key mental health and wellbeing supports for students in Victorian government schools.

[Student Leaders for Multicultural Inclusion](#) for leaders, teachers and students. This comprehensive resource includes activities that have been designed for Victorian schools based on the Framework for Improving Student Outcomes (FISO 2.0).

Curriculum resources

[Intercultural Capability in the curriculum](#): enables students to explore their own and others' cultural practices and cultural diversity in Australian society.

[Curriculum and Policy matrix](#) – Developed by the Centre for Multicultural Youth, this tool maps the Schools Standing Up to Racism components to the Victorian Curriculum and policies.

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