SHOW RACISM THE RED CARD

Understanding and Responding Racism

Immigrant Council of Ireland

Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Arna chomhchistiú ag an Aontas Eorpach
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A PARENT & CARER'S GUIDE



Welcome

This short guide gives practical information to help parents and carer understand what racism is and how it can affect young people. It will help you recognise racist behaviors, including online racism, know how to respond if your child experiences or witnesses racism, understand the difference between a racist incident and a hate crime, know where and how to report an incident, and find practical resources, organisations and books to help you continue the conversation about racism and inclusion at home.



SECTION 1

Understanding Racism

What is racism?

- ✔ Racism is unfair or harmful treatment, attitudes or behaviour connected to a person's race, skin colour, nationality, religion, ethnic or national origin, decent or related identity.
- ✔ Racism can be direct and obvious, but it can also happen through exclusion, stereotypes or unequal treatment.

What can racism look like?

- ✔ Racist insults, jokes, slurs or comments about someone's appearance, name, accent or background.
- ✔ Bullying or exclusion because of a child's race, nationality, ethnicity or culture.
- ✔ Racist abuse or threats in person, on social media, gaming platforms or group chats.
- ✔ Sharing racist images, memes or messages.
- ✔ Treating someone unfairly because of where they or their family come from.

A note for parents and carers

Racism is not always obvious. Children may experience racism through micro-aggression, repeated jokes, exclusion or stereotypes. It is important to listen to children and take their experiences seriously.

SECTION 2

When Your Child Experiences Racism

What should I do?

01 **Listen.**
Stay calm and give your child space to explain what happened.

02 **Believe them.**
Take what they are telling you seriously.

03 **Reassure them.**
Make clear that racism is not their fault.

04 **Find out what happened.**
Ask what happened, where and when it happened, and who was involved.

05 **Keep a record.**
Save relevant messages, screenshots and other information.

06 **Think about the next step.**
Depending on what happened, this could include speaking to the school, reporting the incident or seeking support.



Helpful things to say

"I believe you."

"You did the right thing by telling me."

"This is not your fault."

"We will work out the next step together."



SECTION 3

Racism at School

If it happens in or around school

- ✔ Tell the school as soon as possible.
- ✔ Ask for the incident to be recorded. (Schools now work under the Bí Cineálta procedures, which specifically address racist bullying and cyberbullying.)
- ✔ Ask what steps will be taken.
- ✔ Ask how your child will be supported and protected.
- ✔ Ask for follow-up on the action taken.
- ✔ This also applies to online bullying where there is a connection to school.

What can parents and carers record?

- ✔ Date and time.
- ✔ Where it happened.
- ✔ What was said or done.
- ✔ Who was involved.
- ✔ Whether there were witnesses.
- ✔ Screenshots, links, usernames or other online evidence.
- ✔ Any physical injury, property damage or other impact.
- ✔ Who you reported it to and when.
- ✔ Any response or follow-up received.

SECTION 2

Racism Online

Where racism can happen online

- Social media.
- Messaging apps.
- Online games.
- Group chats.
- Other online platforms.

If your child experiences racism online

- ✔ Where possible, encourage your child to save evidence before blocking or deleting content.
- ✔ Use the platform's reporting tools.
- ✔ Keep screenshots and relevant information.
- ✔ Speak to the school where the incident is connected to school.
- ✔ Consider reporting serious incidents to Gardaí.

Supporting your child's online life

Webwise offers resources for parents through its Parents Hub, including:

- ✔ A Parent's Guide to Generative AI.
- ✔ Practical advice and resources for parents on children's online lives.
- ✔ Free primary, post-primary and parent resources, including cyberbullying materials.
- ✔ Conversation starters and a parent toolkit for talking about online experiences.

Understanding Hate Crime

What is a hate crime?

- ✔ An Garda Síochána describes a hate crime as a criminal offence perceived by the victim or another person to have been motivated, wholly or partly, by hostility or prejudice based on characteristics including age, disability, race, colour, nationality, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation or gender.
- ✔ Examples can include assault, criminal damage, harassment, public-order offences and threats.

You don't need to decide whether something is a hate crime

- ✔ A racist incident can be upsetting or harmful even where it does not appear to meet the legal definition of a crime.
- ✔ If you believe an incident was motivated by hate, Garda guidance says to report it. Gardaí can assess the information and decide what action is appropriate.

SECTION 6

Reporting Racism and Hate

If there is immediate danger

CALL 999 OR 112

if a crime is happening now, someone is in immediate danger, or there is an immediate risk to life or property.

If the incident happened outside school

- ✔ Report it to your local Garda station.
- ✔ Ask to speak to the Garda Diversity Officer.
- ✔ Use the Garda Online Hate Crime Reporting Service.
- ✔ Any response or follow-up received.

Remember

- ✔ You do not need to work out the legal definition yourself before seeking help.
- ✔ If you believe something was motivated by hate or prejudice, you can report it and allow the relevant organisation to assess what happened.

SECTION 7

Knowing Your Rights

Current legislation in Ireland

This section provides links to relevant legislation and further information.

Discrimination

- ✔ Employment Equality Act 1998.
- ✔ Equal Status Act 2000.
- ✔ Equality Act 2004.
- ✔ Equality (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2015.

Hate crime

- ✔ Criminal Justice (Hate Offences) Act 2024.

Hate speech / incitement

- ✔ Prohibition of Incitement to Hatred Act 1989.

Wider equality and human rights

- ✔ Constitution of Ireland.
- ✔ Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014.
- ✔ Disability Act 2005.

Note

- ✔ This section is intended as a starting point for parents rather than a detailed legal guide.

SECTION 8

Where to Get Help and Support

Irish organisations and practical support

Show Racism the Red Card – Ireland
Educational resources and anti-racism campaigns.

Anti-racism research, campaigns and advocacy
Anti-racism learning, reporting and support resources.

iReport.ie
Confidential reporting of racist incidents in Ireland for data collection.

Reporting and information on hate crime
Educational resources and anti-racism campaigns.

Human Rights and Equality Information and Reporting
Human rights and equality information.

Support services to children and families
24-hour listening service for children and young people up to 18: 1800 66 66 66.

SECTION 9

Talking About Racism at Home

Start the conversation

- ✓ Parents and carers don't need to have all the answers. Talking openly about race, identity, difference and fairness can help children develop empathy and feel more confident discussing difficult experiences.
- ✓ You can use books, films, everyday situations and things children see online as opportunities to start conversations.

Questions you could ask

- ✓ What do you think happened here?
- ✓ How do you think that person felt?
- ✓ Do you think that was fair? Why?
- ✓ Have you ever seen something like this?
- ✓ What could someone do if they saw this happening?
- ✓ What would you do if someone made a racist comment?
- ✓ Who could you talk to if this happened to you?



SECTION 10

Books to Help Start the Conversation

Books for children and young people

The Boy at the Back of the Class – Onjali Q. Raúf
Approx. ages 9–12; friendship, refugees and belonging campaigns.

The Proudest Blue – Ibtihaj Muhammad & S. K. Ali
Approx. ages 4–8; identity, hijab and standing up to hurtful behaviour.

Sulwe – Lupita Nyong'o
A picture book about skin colour, self-worth and colourism.

All Are Welcome – Alexandra Penfold
Young children; diversity, belonging and inclusion.

We're All Wonders – R. J. Palacio
Young children; empathy, difference and kindness.

New Kid – Jerry Craft
Upper primary/early secondary; race, identity and school life.

Front Desk – Kelly Yang
Upper primary/early secondary; migration, discrimination and belonging.

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Ghost Boys – Jewell Parker Rhodes
Older children/teens; racism, justice and difficult conversations.

The Hate U Give – Angie Thomas
Older teens; racism, policing, identity and speaking up.

Books for parents and carers

How to Raise an Antiracist – Ibram X. Kendi.

Raising Antiracist Children: A Practical Parenting Guide – Britt Hawthorne.

Raising White Kids – Jennifer Harvey.

This Book Is Anti-Racist – Tiffany Jewell.

The Uncomfortable Truth About Racism – John Barnes.

Free to Be Me Resource Packs

Children's Books Ireland also has an excellent free resource pack, featuring a recommended book list and suggestions for activities suitable for both primary and secondary school children.

SECTION 11

Keep Learning, Keep Talking, Keep Supporting



Anti-racism is not only about knowing what to do when something goes wrong.

Parents and carers can also help children by:

- ✔ Talking openly about difference and identity.
- ✔ Challenging stereotypes.
- ✔ Encouraging empathy and respect.
- ✔ Speaking up when they hear racist language.
- ✔ Helping children understand how racism can affect other people.
- ✔ Creating a home environment where children feel safe to talk about their experiences.

CONTACT US

If you want to learn more about our program, contact:

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