

RCM ANTI-RACISM POLICY

(Approved at the November 2022 meeting of the RCM school board)

This is a living document that will grow and change. This policy will be updated as we recognize the changing needs of our community.

The RCM School Board and Administration reject all forms of racism as destructive to the school's mission, vision, values, and goals. Racism, both past and present, is harmful for all students and has caused inequitable outcomes for BIPOC in schools nationwide. The Board recognizes that students of all ages are able to talk about bias, race, and the impacts of racism.

RCM is committed to ensuring that individuals and groups are not disadvantaged because of their race, culture, ethnicity, nationality or religious background. No student, employee, parent or community member should experience racism within the learning or working environment of the school. Eradicating expressions of racism and discrimination and challenging the attitudes that allow them to emerge is the shared responsibility of all.

RCM is committed to the following principles:

- Establishing and sustaining a school community that shares the collective responsibility to confront, eliminate, and prevent actions, decisions, and outcomes that result from and perpetuate racism.
- Acknowledging that racism is often compounded by other forms of discrimination, including, but not limited to other legally protected classes.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to eliminate racist practices and policies by creating processes that identify any form of racism, work to counter its effects, as well as create a culture of reflective, thoughtful interactions that promote equity.

Educators must play an active and ongoing role in reducing racism and inequity by recognizing the manifestations of racism, creating culturally inclusive learning and working environments, and dismantling educational systems that directly or indirectly perpetuate racism and privilege through curriculum development, teaching, policy, and practice. Racial inequities were created and perpetuated over time and can be eliminated. Similarly, personal prejudice is learned and can be unlearned.

This policy ensures the understanding that racial misconduct is unacceptable and prohibited. The Board holds itself and all RCM and school site decision makers, faculty,

support staff and participants accountable for building a culture of respect for diversity, equity, and inclusion, which is free of racism. To that end, the Board is committed to annual self-evaluation, on-going training, and professional development for staff and board members.

RCM will:

- Implement programs to counteract the causes and redress the effects of racism in the educational context.
- Protect the rights of students, staff and parents to achieve their full potential in an environment which encourages the affirmation of their cultural identity.
- Provide students, staff, parents and community members with a mechanism for the lodgement and resolution of complaints.
- Implement anti-discriminatory employment practices.
- Implement antiracist programs for students at all levels.
- Provide opportunities for bias awareness and antiracist training.
- Review curriculum, instructional materials and resources to ensure the inclusion of racially and culturally relevant content that continue to highlight true history and also narratives of liberation, joy, and justice.
- Allocate resources, including appropriate materials, for whole school and classroom use.
- Intervene to prevent racism from occurring and to redress its effects if preventative measures are not possible.

Communication

The Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee, working with School Administration will ensure that all RCM staff, members of the School Board, parents, students, and community members are familiar with the Antiracism Policy and Grievance and Concerns Procedures and understand their rights and responsibilities in relation to them.

The Board will share the new Antiracism Policy and highlight RCM's commitment to building an antiracist school community that includes actionable implementation steps. This policy shall be included in student handbooks provided to students and families. The Board will identify key benchmarks and receive updates from staff at board meetings on a quarterly basis that will be reported transparently to the public. Administration shall also develop a system that surveys staff, student and family sentiment related to racial inclusion as a tool to evaluate the success of this policy.

Leadership and Administration

The administrative staff will address systemic racism by developing and conducting a racial disparities audit to identify processes and practices that cause inequitable outcomes based on race. Part of this audit would include a review of aggregate discipline actions by staff or the Equity Diversity & Inclusion committee to identify any potential harmful patterns.

Based on the Audit, Site Administrators will assess and adjust practices that pertain to positive school site culture and individual behavior in order to address racial disparities in student discipline, staff professionalism, and student special needs identification.

Site administrators shall provide time at least once a month during planned staff meetings for staff to collaborate on best practices for teaching with an equity lens. Teaching staff will have a colleague 'buddy' to consult as they process/discuss strategies used for behavior management in their classrooms.

The Equity Diversity & Inclusion committee is responsible for identifying the necessary financial and human resources to achieve the goals of the Board's Antiracism Policy.

The Equity Diversity & Inclusion committee will develop a process for addressing racist and race-based misconduct or harassment to hold members of the school community accountable. The process will be delineated in the Employee Handbook.

Curriculum and Instruction

School personnel will work together in the development of strategies for addressing racism across the curriculum. Staff will receive ongoing training and support in reviewing their own curriculum and classroom materials for bias or racist attitudes. This should include peer collaboration and discussion around best practices.

Curriculum and instructional materials for all grades shall be relevant and represent racial diversity and include a range of perspectives and experiences, particularly those of historically underrepresented groups of color, in a way that is age appropriate. All curriculum materials shall be examined for racial bias and students should be given the opportunity to provide input. Student in-class and extra-curricular programs and activities shall be designed, with student input, to provide opportunities for cross-cultural, cross-racial, and intergenerational interactions to foster respect for cultural and racial diversity. Staff shall incorporate these programs and activities beyond specific dedicated months and days.

Training and Professional Development

All Board and RCM staff shall read and abide by this antiracism policy. All RCM staff shall be trained in a Board-approved program about antiracism and about how racism produces inequitable practices and outcomes in education within their first year of being hired. Antiracism training shall be revisited annually for all staff.

Hiring Practices

RCM shall include in its hiring practices and systems the opportunity to share information with applicants regarding RCM's antiracism stance. Hiring data shall be aggregated by race to identify areas of improvement, strengths and weaknesses as related to the potential biases in the hiring process. Recruitment practices and data shall be reviewed by the Board to revise and reassess the need of antiracist practices in recruitment and determine benchmarks.

Policy Enforcement

To ensure consistency in student discipline, each site shall collect and report data on all disciplinary actions. The school shall review data regularly, with the goal of reducing racial discipline disparities and reducing severity of corrective action by race. When it is determined that a student, teacher, or staff member has committed a racist act, the person will be provided the opportunity to learn about the impact of their actions on others through such practices as restorative practices, mediation, role play or other explicit policies or training resources. RCM shall ensure there are various, including anonymous, means for students and staff to report racism and other forms of discrimination.

Concerns and Grievances

Redwood Coast Montessori encourages all members of the school community to attempt to resolve complaints and concerns through the school. The school's concerns and grievances procedures are detailed below:

1. All complaints will be treated confidentially, fairly and consistently, and resolved as speedily as possible.
2. Any member of the district's community who raises an issue of racism or discrimination in good faith will not be victimized or otherwise unfairly treated or disadvantaged. All complaints of victimization will be taken seriously, investigated and acted upon as quickly as possible.
3. Every student and staff member should feel welcome, supported and emotionally and physically secure at school. The wellbeing of all students and staff is a priority for RCM.
4. Concerns and Grievances procedures exist to provide an avenue to address unacceptable behavior. These procedures are designed to explain what to do if you

believe you have been discriminated against as explained earlier in this policy. The school will treat all reports fairly, confidentially and quickly. Only people directly involved in the issue or complaint will be told about it. Each complaint will be investigated to work out whether it is more likely the behavior happened than not and, if so, how serious it is. Appropriate action to resolve the problem will be taken.

5. The Administrator/Site Principal or their designee has responsibility for investigating complaints of racism and/or discrimination. If proven, the consequences of such behavior may include counseling, the removal from participation in extracurricular activities, a parental interview, suspension or expulsion.
6. The Board will monitor how the complaint was resolved and the wellbeing of those involved. Further action will be taken if the problem behavior continues.
7. Even though RCM encourages all members of the school community to attempt to resolve complaints and concerns through the school if possible. It is also your right to seek help from outside the school.

APPENDIX:

Definitions*

- Racism: defined as a system of structuring opportunity and assigning value based on the social interpretation of how one looks (which is what we call “race”), that unfairly disadvantages some individuals and communities, unfairly advantages other individuals and communities, and saps the strength of the whole society through the waste of human resources. (Dr. Camara Jones)
- Antiracism: the practice of identifying, challenging, and changing the values, structures, and behaviors that perpetuate systemic racism.
- Individual racism: pre-judgment, bias, or discrimination by an individual based on race. This includes both privately held beliefs, conscious and unconscious, and external behaviors and actions towards others.
- Systemic racism: encompasses the history and current reality of institutional racism across all institutions and society. It refers to the history, culture, ideology, and interactions of institutions and policies that perpetuate a system of inequity that is detrimental to communities of color.
- Antisemitism: hostility to, prejudice towards, or discrimination against Jews. Antisemitism is a form of racism.
- Racist and race-based misconduct: actions, on and off school grounds, including but is not limited to inappropriate racial comments, intended slurs, jokes, pictures, objects, threats, physical assaults, intimidation, unequal application of policies, and unequal or biased grading. This encompasses offensiveness and misconduct that does not reach the level of racism, and misconduct that is

sufficiently severe and pervasive that it rises to the level of racial harassment or discrimination.

*Definitions are adapted from various sources including the Government Alliance on Race and Equity at www.racialequityalliance.org

Antiracism and Discrimination Grievance Procedures: Categories of Racist Behavior

The following list of behaviors is not in any order of priority, nor necessarily exhaustive. The listed behaviors could be observed in those working for the school (teaching and non-teaching staff) as well as those served by it, that is students and their parents. Any of these behaviors can result in a complaint under this Antiracism Policy.

Physical assault and harassment

Physical assault and harassment may include acts of intimidation or harassment such as pinching, punching, hair pulling, throwing things at others, spitting or physical gestures directed against others because of their color, cultural background or language.

Verbal abuse and threats

Verbal abuse and threats may include verbal intimidation and harassment and threats that lead to high degrees of fear for personal safety. It may also include deliberate use of language so abusive and offensive that it provokes an aggressive response.

Use of derogatory language and ridicule

Racist, derogatory language and ridicule may include name-calling, insults, racist jokes, ridiculing or mimicking accents and cultural differences. Derogatory language may be spoken or written. Ridicule may be spoken, written or acted out.

Racist propaganda

Racist propaganda may include racist graffiti, leaflets, comics and magazines, wearing racist badges and insignia, t-shirts and jewelry. Racist graffiti could appear in/on educational buildings, textbooks, folders, bags, desks, chairs and benches.

Incitement of others to behave in a racist manner

Incitement of others to behave in a racist manner may include encouraging others to hate, have serious contempt for, or ridicule a person or group of people because of race, color, nationality, ethnic or national background. (Racial Vilification Amendment Act, 1989). It may also include attempts to recruit others to join racist organizations.

Racist comments in the course of discussions in lessons

Racist comments in the course of discussions in lessons may include comments, myths and anecdotes that promote stereotyped beliefs about cultural groups and religious groups.

Refusal to cooperate with other people because of their color, ethnicity or language

Refusal to cooperate with other people because of their color, ethnicity or language may include refusal to work in groups, to sit next to, to serve or to interact effectively with particularly individuals or groups. It may include treating some people in ways that discriminate against them and limit their participation or potential.

Indirect racism

Indirect racism (also known as institutional systemic racism) arises from the policies, rules, procedure and culture of an institution. In schools and work sites it may include deliberate attempts to ignore or cover up the existence of racist attitudes or behaviors, use of euphemisms such as 'cultural harmony' rather than 'racism' to avoid admitting that prejudice and bias might be present and denial that current practices could be disadvantaging particular individuals or groups. It may include insensitive application of policies and practices

that no longer reflect community expectations, such as uniform policies that do not allow the wearing of headwear in areas enrolling Jewish boys or Muslim girls; or scheduling school activities at times of abstinence for particular religious groups in the school community.

Cyber racism

Cyber racism is most commonly defined as racism which occurs in the cyber world. This includes racism which occurs on the internet such as racist websites, images, blogs, videos and online comments as well as racist comments, images or language in text messages, emails or on social networking sites.