

Racial discrimination in the community - Short guide to assisting parents, families and carers

Australia's diversity and multiculturalism is a sign of its strength, and source of pride. Despite this, one in five Australians experience racially-based discrimination within the community.¹

As such, from time to time school staff may find themselves in a position of providing support or guidance to students and families about this issue. This quick guide is designed to assist school staff to inform families of where they can get specialised advice and support.

For specialised advice and to lodge a complaint regarding racial discrimination, contact:

Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission (VEOHRC)

- **Ph: 1300 292 153** (interpreting and Auslan services available upon request)
- **Email:** enquiries@veohrc.vic.gov.au
- **Information sheets in languages other than English (LOTE):**
<https://www.humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au/languages>

For assistance in determining the difference between “unfair treatment” or “unlawful discrimination”, contact:

Victorian Legal Aid Equality Law Program

- **Ph: 1300 792 387** Available Monday to Friday, 8am – 6pm.

¹ Markus, A. (2019). *Mapping social cohesion: The Scanlon Foundation surveys 2019*. Scanlon Foundation. Retrieved from: <https://scanlonfoundation.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Social-Cohesion-2018-report-26-Nov.pdf>

To report incidents of racism within the community, refer to:

VEOHRC online reporting tool

- <https://www.humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au/home/our-projects-a-initiatives/report-racism-preventing-prejudice-based-crime>

**Available to participating local government areas only, please check website for list of participating councils.*

General tips and suggestions for families:

NOTE: Important to notify Supervisors, Year Level Coordinators, Assistant Principals, Principals, and/or Wellbeing teams, as well as refer to relevant internal policies and procedures, regarding any requests for support regarding racism and discrimination.

- For all serious incidents of racism, encourage family members to notify their local police station. If their immediate safety is at risk, encourage them to contact 000.
- For all clear-cut, or potential incidents of discrimination, encourage family members to contact VEOHRC.
- Suggest making a record of all incidents and interactions – include the date, time, location, who was involved, description of what happened, witnesses, and any responses or follow up to date.
- Encourage arrangement of a support person to assist them through any follow up such as a supportive family member, colleague, friend, support worker, or community member.
- Inform them that all organisations – public, private and governmental – are bound by the Racial Discrimination Act 1975 and thus should have processes in place for responding to incidents of racism and discrimination. Where possible and if safe to do so, it is preferable to express concerns or lodge a complaint with the organisation in which the incident occurred directly. The following table provides suggestions and options of who to contact within specific organisations or contexts.

Options for reporting racism and discrimination within specific

organisations/sectors:

Employment

- Speak to your Line Manager
- Speak to your Human Resources Officer
- Submit an incident report
- Speak to your Union Delegate

Accommodation services

- Contact Tenants Victoria
 - Tenants advice line: **(03) 9416 2577**
 - Social housing advice line: **1800 068 860**
 - Homelessness advocacy service: **1800 066 256** or **9415 6200**

Victoria Police and Public Service Officers

- Request to speak to the Officer-in-Charge at your local Police Station
- Make a complaint to the Police Conduct Unit (information available in languages other than English from website)- <https://www.police.vic.gov.au/complimentsandcomplaints>
- Consult with the Police Accountability Project, Flemington & Kensington Community Legal Centre: **(03) 9376 4355**

Public, private, community and governmental services

- Request to speak to a Supervisor or Manager
- Find out what the formal complaints procedure is

Hospitals

- Request to speak to a Patient Advocate