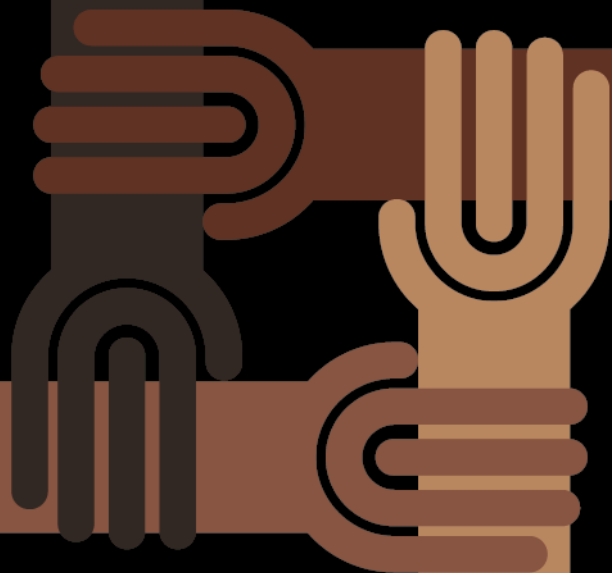


**Working for  
every child**



**CHILDREN AND EDUCATION**

# **Anti-Racist Practice Standards**

## **Accessibility statement**

If you require this document in a different format, please email [\*\*antiracistpractice@hackney.gov.uk\*\*](mailto:antiracistpractice@hackney.gov.uk)

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# Children and Education Anti-Racist Practice Standards

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# Children and Education Anti-Racism Position Statement

**June 2024**

**Hackney's Children and Education Directorate is committed to eradicating systemic racism, inequity, and injustice in all our work. We recognise, however, that being truly anti-racist goes beyond 'not tolerating' racism. It requires us to acknowledge the impact of existing and systemic racism in all its forms. It is being proactive in tackling existing systems and structures that perpetuate and embed racism in our profession, organisation, and the wider community.**

This means that anti-racism forms a foundation that underpins our practice. We actively demand that our partners apply our anti-racist principles in our interactions and decision-making processes.

We are committed to calling out racism, anti-semitism, islamophobia, and all forms of discrimination, exclusionary behaviours and microaggressions, ensuring that they are addressed at all levels and ensuring that children, their families, and the workforce are listened to, supported, and valued.

We will work to ensure that all voices are represented and heard and that our workforce reflects the diverse community we serve. By actively working towards anti-racism, we can create a better future for everyone.

Additionally, we will actively work with schools and settings to ensure children's cultural identity is reflected through a diverse and insightful curriculum underpinned by culturally appropriate teaching resources that support anti-racist interactions and decision-making with pupils, parents/carers, and staff.

We will challenge the harm and impact of racism on our staff and children and families that we work with, acknowledging that experiences of racism can differ between different Black and global majority ethnic groups.

We are committed to supporting colleagues who experience work-based racism, exclusionary behaviours, and microaggressions, and we strive to ensure that our workforce adequately reflects the community we serve.



## Foreword

### **Councillor Anntoinette Bramble**

Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Education,  
Young People and Children's Social Care

**To be proactive in becoming an Anti-Racist Council, anti-racist practice must be embedded in all that we do when serving our children and families in Hackney. In adopting these Anti-Racist Practice Standards, we acknowledge the fight against systemic racism requires not just words but tangible and meaningful actions.**

These Practice Standards set the guidelines for all our Children's and Education staff to embed anti-racist practices when working with our children and families, challenge our biases, and cultivate an inclusive and supportive community.

As leaders, we must support an environment where Council staff can be comfortable being uncomfortable and challenging societal systemic prejudice. We must take every opportunity to lead by example and empower others in positions of influence to do the same to sit on the right side of history.

I am deeply proud of the dedication and passion demonstrated by our staff in embracing this initiative. By upholding these Practice Standards, we reaffirm our commitment to anti-racism and providing the best outcomes for our children and families, particularly those most disadvantaged.

Our commitment to anti-racism requires an intentional and sustainable effort to dismantle systemic inequality and provide opportunities for our children and families to thrive. Anti-racism demands collective action and a united front across our workforce. We can create a safer and more nurturing environment for our children and families. I hope that our commitment to being an anti-racist organisation will serve as a guide in creating a more equitable future for everyone.



## Foreword

### Jacquie Burke

Group Director of Children and Education

**I am immensely proud of our workforce for producing Hackney Children and Education Anti-Racist Practice Standards. We have gone beyond intention to show our actions. Shaping services and places that recognise anti-racism's value must be at the heart of everything we do.**

We are all leaders in our anti-racism endeavours, whether leading services, teams, professional meetings, or family meetings. These Practice Standards provide us with the tools to lead and hold ourselves and others accountable for active anti-racism. We, individually and collectively, can and will do this.

Racism diminishes us all, and it can deprive society of talent, innovation, and contentment. Individual acts of anti-racism make a difference, but our collective anti-racism lifts us all and our children, learners and Hackney families.

Since joining and championing our anti-racism work, my greatest reflections have been the importance of starting with oneself, taking feedback from others, listening and showing curiosity about colleagues' experiences. Anti-racism isn't just about tackling the big incidents that make us all angry; it's about tackling our colonial mindset, our anti-Semitic mindset, and our anti-Islamic mindset (among others). I suspect none of us have lived or worked without racism playing a part; this is our opportunity to create anti-racism together. The anti-racist practice standards are a tool to enable us to do this.

# Introduction

Our Anti-Racist Position Statement and Practice Standards are supported by our **Children and Education Anti-Racism Joint Action Programme Governance 2022/2024** and the wider **Corporate Equalities Plan** to actively promote and embed anti-racism and address issues as they arise. The action plan is updated by input from our Anti-Racism Practice—Staff Reference Group and reviewed annually by our senior leadership governance.

The Joint Anti-Racist Practice Standards aim to provide a clear framework for the purpose, processes, and expectations of anti-racist practice for both practitioners and service users of Hackney Education and Children.

The Standards are not intended to govern our partners but to support and influence their decisions when working together.

The Children's Social Care Practice Standards, Hackney Family Support: Practice Guidance and Standards, and the Hackney Anti-Racism Framework frame our practice's key expectations and organisational values regarding children and families. These standards are intended to provide a framework for quality assurance and performance measurement against which our staff working with children and families are held accountable.

We expect our staff to follow our complaints procedures, including the **Corporate Complaints Procedure, Children's Social Care Complaints Procedure, and Education Complaints Procedure, where appropriate.**

Hackney's Children and Education Directorate has developed a directorate-wide approach combining systemic theory, trauma-informed practice, and anti-racist practice. This 'STAR' approach provides a directorate-wide framework for working with children and families, including further techniques to strengthen supervision.



## Our expectations

### We expect all members of Children and Education to:

- **Understand** that we live in a racist society and know that within a racist society, it is not enough to be non-racist: in our practice, we must demonstrate that we are actively anti-racist;
- **Educate** themselves about anti-racist practice via our **Anti-Racist Practice Hub** and self-directed learning;
- **Participate** in opportunities to talk together and think about their own and each other's anti-racist practices through supervision, appraisals and team meetings;
- **Understand** that in creating an anti-racist workplace, we will all experience moments of vulnerability, both for those speaking up about hurt personally experienced or witnessed and for those needing to hear that, acknowledge it, and respond in a way that is appropriate for those who have been harmed using appropriate **policies**;
- **Challenge** and support others (including systems and institutions) to embed anti-racist practices;
- **Listen** to understand rather than to respond.





## Our expectations

**We expect all leaders in our directorate to demonstrate the following continually:**

- **Proactively encourage** feedback using a variety of approaches from everyone in their area of responsibility concerning Anti-Racist Practice and have mechanisms to monitor this effectively;
- **Encourage** a culture of challenge and receive criticism or concerns raised as a call to action and respond accordingly;
- **Role model** these Practice Standards and hold those you manage to account (via supervision and appraisals) whilst supporting those you lead to meet these standards;
- **Proactively work** towards the reduction in disproportionality of our marginalised groups by reviewing referrals both to our services and for **escalation** within our service with an anti-racist lens;
- **All leaders** must have participated in the Anti-Racist Practice Action Learning Sets (ARP ALS) or equivalent within 12 months of starting their role.



## What outcomes are we aiming to achieve with these Standards?

We want all our children and families to be **treated equitably with dignity** and respect, regardless of their cultural background or heritage.

We want to build learning experiences between our practitioners, children, families, and partners that **acknowledge the unique challenges** children and families face because of society and/or the system(s) that disadvantage them due to their culture and/or ethnicity.

We want our families to know that we **aspire to be an anti-racist organisation**, and in doing so, we will support them to be able to raise concerns about racism and discrimination.

We want to **reduce the disproportionality** in our system so that the cultural and ethnic background of the children and families we work with is proportionate to the diversity of our community.

We want all staff to be committed to reflection and challenging their own biases regarding race and racism. We expect staff to align with our aspirations to be an anti-racist organisation, which includes **fully engaging in training and professional development opportunities** to improve their understanding and practice.

We expect all staff to **feel confident and competent in reporting** issues of racism throughout their recording and reporting. If this is not the case, we expect staff to seek management support.

## How we work with children, families, school settings & partners



- 1** Our core values are driven by a systemic, trauma-informed, anti-racist (STAR) and Relationships approach. We work collaboratively with children, families, schools and settings as part of a wider set of systems and work with partners, e.g. commissioning and relationships.
- 2** As practitioners, we take time to learn about our children and families' cultural frames of reference and understand that there are myriad stories and beliefs within each culture, and how each child and family interprets these will be unique. This will be monitored through supervision, appraisals and anti-racist practice audits.
- 3** When working with vulnerable children and young people, we are alert to the risk of **adultification**. We understand that if Black children are seen as less vulnerable and more adult-like, services may overlook their needs and disregard their legal rights to be protected, supported and safeguarded.
- 4** We take steps to assess and understand interpretation and translation needs in a preferred language, accepting that we are responsible for ensuring that we communicate appropriately and effectively.
- 5** We ask children and families to describe to us – in their own words – how they self-identify their culture, ethnicity and religion. We are curious and actively listen to children and families' cultural heritage and customs and how these shape them and the world as they see it.
- 6** We recognise that we will be perceived as service representatives and, at times, more widely as state agents. We understand that families' experiences of racism – both overt and covert – may inform how they respond to us. This awareness should impact how we engage with our children and families.

7	In our direct work with our children and families, we responsibly initiate and accept conversations with them about their experiences of racism. We ensure that our practice is changed and improved based on what we learn from these conversations and that we advocate for our families where they are experiencing racism in the wider system.
8	We have a comprehensive programme of work that helps us think about our anti-racist practice. In <b><u>Supervision</u></b> , we are now working towards an anti-racist <b><u>supervision model</u></b> . We suggest using the systemic model of the <b><u>Social GRRAACCEEESSS</u></b> , or the <b><u>Power of Privilege Wheel</u></b> , to examine and reflect upon our beliefs and biases. In addition, a reflective programme of Action Learning Sets is delivered to support a consistent understanding of anti-racism across the workforce. This will help practitioners consider what they bring to interactions with children and families.
9	We recognise the inherent power dynamics in the context of our work and that, because of their experiences of inequality, families from the global majority may feel less confident to challenge us and other professionals. We strive to ensure that children and families know their rights# and support them in accessing advocacy services if they struggle to make their voices heard.
10	We are committed to using clear, straightforward language in all our communication with and about children and families. We understand that using professional jargon and abbreviations can be disempowering for families.
11	We are clear in our commitment to safeguarding all children in Hackney in a way that promotes their identities, heritage and freedoms by using the STAR (systemic, trauma-informed, anti-racist) and Relationship model approach. We will not allow neglect or harm to be done to children in the name of religion or culture, and we will promote the safety and well-being of any child referred to us.

## How we talk about families



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| <b>12</b> | We use the language children and families use about themselves when describing identity. We invite them to share specific details about their heritage, religious practices, culture and values. We recognise that terms like 'White', 'Black' and 'Asian' may have been used to collect data but do not always come from the children and families themselves. |
| <b>13</b> | We only recycle information from previous records by allowing families to comment on and confirm its content. Where historical documents containing harmful language are needed, we will recognise this and amend//repair them as required.   |
| <b>14</b> | Where possible, we avoid the use of behavioural labels that can trigger preconceived ideas related to racism, such as 'aggressive' or 'emotionally unavailable'.  |
| <b>15</b> | We recognise that raising children involves cultural differences and that there is no 'one size fits all' approach to parenting. We consider this in our assessment processes, work with wider partners, and safeguard decisions regarding risk and celebrating strengths.  |

## How we advocate for families



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|----|---|
| 16 | <p>We act as powerful advocates in the system for children and families who experience racism and accept a responsibility to encourage other professionals to challenge their individual and institutional biases and assumptions.</p> <p>Anyone commissioning services that involve or work on behalf of Hackney children must complete an <b><u>Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)</u></b>. They will have a duty of care to ensure these Standards are shared to guide how we serve our children in Hackney.</p> |
| 17 | <p>When we are told about or observe any acts of racism, we have a duty of care to support families in accessing the complaints process and, where necessary, escalate concerns internally and to partner agencies.</p>   |
| 18 | <p>Staff should share their concerns with their manager and Head of Service to gain advice on addressing the incidents.</p> <p>We will log all incidents and observations of racism to continue to support the discussion and development of an anti-racist practice approach across the safeguarding partnership in Hackney. All senior leadership across Children and Education will review the log regularly.</p>  |
| 19 | <p>Suppose we meet with a professional or agency unwilling or unable to discuss racism/microaggressions in practice. In that case, we will use the City &amp; Hackney Safeguarding Children Partnership (CHSCP) <b><u>Curiosity, Challenge &amp; Escalation</u></b> protocol to advocate for our children and families.</p>   |

## How do we respond when there is a disclosure of racism from children, families and service users



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| <b>20</b> | When a child, family, or other service user complains that they have experienced racism and discrimination from us, their complaint will be taken seriously and investigated under statutory timescales and our complaints procedure. (See <b><u>Appendix 2</u></b> )   |
| <b>21</b> | Any allegations will be taken seriously and investigated under our complaints procedure, making a referral to LADO where/if necessary.  |
| <b>22</b> | When a child or family tells us they have experienced racism and discrimination, we acknowledge the importance of validating their experience. We will arrange for a case audit to review further learning. Services are encouraged to explore the learning, including training in line with our Anti-Racist Practice Standards.            |
| <b>23</b> | We will ensure that our commissioning arrangements and partnership agreements, including through our Placement Management Unit and contracts through Early Help and Prevention, adhere to anti-racist practice, as outlined in our Anti-Racist Practice Standards.  |
| <b>24</b> | Where relevant, practitioners will support children and families in preparing for meetings where they wish to talk about their experiences of racism. It is expected that all professionals are prepared for this discussion and accept the child/family's perspectives and the reality of their experiences of racism.                     |
| <b>25</b> | We will ensure the child has an immediate safety plan following their disclosure, identifying advocacy support to process their experiences. Advice and guidance should be sought from managers, and where appropriate, this can be extended to the Children's Rights Officers, Clinical colleagues, and Race Equality & Inclusion Service. |

<b>26</b>	In such incidents, staff are expected to record a verbatim statement of the disclosure in writing, ensuring they are provided with a copy and confirming that what we have recorded is accurate. The lead professional will have an initial conversation with professionals after the meeting about the next steps and any immediate actions that need to be taken.
<b>27</b>	We will plan monitoring and review points in respect of the child/family's experiences of racism and ensure that the outcome of the investigation is shared sensitively with those concerned, including any non-confidential actions that will be taken to address their concerns.



## How do we respond if a member of staff experiences racism from a service user/family?



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|-----------|--|
| <b>28</b> | We take a zero-tolerance approach to racism and discriminatory behaviour from service users to our staff.                            |
| <b>29</b> | Staff should speak to their managers about the racial incident, and a formal process will be undertaken to investigate the incident. |
| <b>30</b> | Managers and senior managers should provide support to the affected member of staff.   |
| <b>31</b> | Following the investigation, managers should contact the service user to discuss available options and any parenting support needed. |

## How our Business Support Staff will uphold the Practice Standards



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| 32 | In Children's Services, we have identified the <b><u>top ten languages</u></b> most frequently spoken in our Borough. To enhance communication and support, we aim to maintain an updated directory of voluntary staff members fluent in these languages to assist with informal interpreting during unplanned drop-in appointments and telephone calls. Additionally, for formal meetings where accurate and clear communication is crucial, we ensure the availability of professional interpreters to facilitate discussions in your first language. |
| 33 | When sharing minutes and documents with parents and family, we will always aim to translate them into their first language.   |
| 34 | In documenting discussions, our Business Support team is conscientious about the language used in informal and formal meeting minutes. They are trained to avoid language that could be triggering or carry prejudiced connotations, such as using terms like 'difficult' to describe behaviours that can inadvertently reflect personal biases. The Business Support team will advocate and challenge where needed for the correct language/terminology to be used in informal or formal settings, whether in person, virtually or via the telephone.  |
| 35 | When scheduling and minuting meetings, we will always consider the cultural nuances and preferences of the families involved. Awareness of cultural differences helps prevent misunderstandings and misinterpretations. Examples of how we will do this include. In cultures that value formal respect and hierarchy, we ensure the use of appropriate titles and formal language to address family members as a sign of respect. When scheduling meetings, we will always aim to accommodate religious holidays.                                       |

<b>36</b>	Our Business Support Team Managers have received Anti-Racist Supervision Training. We aim to create psychologically safe environments for our business support staff to openly recognise, reflect on, and address instances of racism that may occur during meetings. We use regular team training to empower business support staff to escalate racist incidents to their Business Support Managers, who facilitate action via the council mechanisms (including our anonymous grievance process or mediation within the service area).
<b>37</b>	Respectfully <b><u>using the language and terms</u></b> that children and families prefer when describing their identity, ensuring that our communication honours their personal and cultural expressions.
<b>38</b>	To ensure equal access to information about our services and processes, we prioritise creating our leaflets in the top ten languages spoken in the Borough; we have made these available online and in our child protection conference meeting rooms.
<b>39</b>	We encourage our Business Support team not to make assumptions about individual children & their families, their heritage, first language, religion and culture. We will always aim to understand how our children and families self-identify as individuals so our recording is informative and specific and avoids using labelling language.
<b>40</b>	Through regular team training, Business Support Leaders reinforce the importance of raising instances of racist or inappropriate language, biases and microaggressions used by partner agencies at multi-agency meetings. We encourage our business support staff to be actively anti-racist and to escalate these concerns to their business support team manager, who is responsible for escalating this with the service leads and addressing it with the partner agency.

## How will we know that these Standards are being adhered to?

We have a rolling quality assurance programme that measures compliance against these standards. This includes:

- Audit programme to understand children's and families' experience of our practice.
- Family feedback
- Feedback from young people, e.g. Children in Care Council
- Service area Anti-Racist Practice work plans are reviewed quarterly
- Staff surveys
- An increased number of complaints in the next two years demonstrates that we are viewed as a service capable of listening and changing. This will lead to a decreased number of complaints overall in the longer term as we become an anti-racist organisation.
- Data (reduction in exclusions and increase in achievement outcomes)

## Appendix

- [Appendix 1: Context for the C & E Anti-Racist Practice Standards](#)
- [Appendix 2: Complaints Procedures](#)

## Further resources

- [Hackney Anti-Racist Animation](#)
- [The Hackney School Inclusion Charter](#)
- [Language around SEND & Inclusion](#)
- [Anti-Racist Practice Guidance](#)
- [Child and Families Language Guide](#)

# See it. Build it. Live it.

## The Hackney Poem

We gather the infinite in our skeletons,  
Write towards our future selves,  
Upwards and forwards, pulled  
Away from exhaustion to inspiration.

True liberation: a ripening fruit within  
our grasp,  
Not exotic, not bitter, nor angry,  
The tangy juice of fear a memory we  
hold.  
We are blood, muscles, bones, and so  
much more.

We are our mother's patience,  
Our daughter's passion for what's next  
The tentative steps we place above  
The footprints of those who've come  
before.

And so much more...

We become a hopeful hummingbird,  
A drawing of a cloud to conjure  
Up the sound of rainfall, falling on zinc  
roofs,

The heat that hits as we step off the  
plane.  
All we cannot name we gather up  
Into an outstretched palm we call  
hope.

We hope someone listens.  
We hope we do not say the wrong  
thing.  
We hope to move beyond our skin.

The discomfort of transformation:  
a caterpillar's tears.  
These years of conversations must  
find us held accountable.  
Even when this means we stand alone,

calling out our friends.

We must face the beast of racism  
among us.

We push back. And love hard.  
And our blood boils red and rich.

We did not come this far to come this  
far. For what?  
How will these bones be remembered  
beyond our skin?

Our hopes kaleidoscope with  
questioning:

Will our schools be places of love and  
not exclusion?  
How will love reside within us in the  
face of bitterness?

Will the tightness in our chest and  
throat be broken?  
Will we recognise we are closer  
To each other than we think we are?  
When will we become the ancestors  
we need?  
And still, there is so much more...

Beneath our skin, our hidden voices  
rise.

A mosaic or a pulse propelling us to  
push away  
The blanket of hate that once tucked  
us in at night.

We push back. We love hard. And  
brick by brick  
The new hope we wish to build  
becomes visible.

© Keith Jarrett, in collaboration with Hackney Council at the Anti-Racist Summit 2023

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**Working for every child**

