

As of May 17, 2021

Policy Title:	Anti-Racism Policy	Policy ID:	
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I. Purpose of Policy

The purpose of this policy is to provide a call and plan of action to address racism and all forms of racism within the White River Valley Supervisory Union (the “Supervisory Union”) and its member school districts (the “Districts”). The goals of this Anti-Racism Policy include:

1. Promoting the development of Brave Spaces to allow critical thinking and open dialogue regarding the history, contribution, perspectives, and structural barriers placed upon diverse ethnic and racial groups, specifically those traditionally excluded from K-12 education
2. Incorporating classroom content and strategies that enable students to safely explore questions of identity and membership in diverse ethnic groups, race equity and equality, and racism; and
3. Creating engagement opportunities that provide families with a welcoming means of raising any concern about their child’s experience as it relates to racial, ethnic, or cultural identity at school.¹
4. Ensuring students graduate from the district with a baseline understanding of the history and power dynamics created by race, racism, and discrimination; acknowledging the role of racism in creating institutional and systemic barriers which create varying life experiences.
5. Providing those harmed by racism with confidential, reporting mechanisms.
6. Recognizing that becoming anti-racist, and the pursuit of anti-racism, requires continuous community support, education, action, and accountability.

II. Policy Scope

This policy applies to the Supervisory Union, its Board Members, employees, and volunteers, as well as all the Districts, their School Boards, school employees, volunteers, students, and visitors.

III. Policy Statement

It is the policy of the Supervisory Union and all school districts within the Supervisory Union to:

1. Provide safe educational spaces of learning for all students in a manner that is free from racist ideology or imagery.
2. Provide an education free of teachings that perpetuate white supremacy, superiority and/or privilege by acknowledging the violence, disenfranchisement, and bigotry these topics depict before a lesson begins because doing otherwise would be equivalent to claiming these prejudices never existed and individuals are not harmed, which causes tremendous erasure of BIPOC history.
3. Identify, address, eliminate, and prevent actions, decisions, and outcomes that result from and perpetuate racism.
4. Eliminate inequitable practices that create prejudicial or disparate outcomes for students based on race, socio-economic class, ethnicity, religion, gender, or gender identity.
5. Respect and champion the diversity and varied life experiences of all community members that contribute to the goals of inclusivity, equity, and justice.
6. Acknowledge that racism is often compounded by other forms of discrimination.
7. Prohibit retaliation that may arise as a result of an individual's good faith report or participation in processes established under this policy.

IV. Definitions:

Anti-racism: the active process of identifying, challenging, *then* changing the values, structures and behaviors that perpetuate systemic racism.

BIPOC: Black, Indigenous, People of Color. The term intentionally separates Black and Indigenous communities from the term "people of color" to acknowledge the heightened layers of systemic oppression these communities face in this country.¹

Brave Spaces: a non-physical space within a school or organization designed to help create an environment that allows individuals to engage with one another over controversial issues like race, diversity, and social justice with honesty, sensitivity, respect. The intention is to help reassure those who feel anxious about sharing their thoughts and feelings regarding these sensitive and controversial issues.²

¹ Which is right? Black vs. BIPOC vs. African American vs. POC vs. BAME, Packs Light, <https://www.packslight.com/which-is-right-term-african-american-vs-black-vs-bipoc-vs-poc-vs-bame/>.

² Brian Arao and Kristi Clemens, *The Art of Effective Facilitation: Reflections from Social Justice Educators*, Chapter 8: "From Safe Spaces to Brave Spaces" (2013), <https://sites.lsa.umich.edu/inclusive-teaching-2/wp-content/uploads/sites/732/2016/06/From-Safe-Spaces-to-Brave-Spaces.pdf>.

Culture: the values, beliefs, system of language, communication, and practices that people share in common and that can be used to define them as a collective.³

Ethnicity: the shared social, cultural, and historical experiences, stemming from common national or regional backgrounds, that make subgroups of a population different from one another.⁴

Ethnic Group: a non-dominant racial and ethnic groups in the United States, including people who are Abenaki, people from other indigenous groups, people of African, Asian, Pacific Island, Chicano, Latino, or Middle Eastern descent; and groups that have been historically subject to persecution or genocide in the United States.⁵

Explicit Bias: Biases we are aware of on a conscious level. Explicit bias is the traditional conceptualization of bias. Overt racism and racist comments are examples of explicit biases (for example, feeling threatened by another group and delivering hate speech as a result).⁶

Family Group Conferencing: a form of voluntary mediation with the community of people most closely involved in an incident — likely including the offender, the victim, and their families— to discuss levels of harm and how that harm might get repaired.⁷ Some of the goals of this method include ensuring that the victim is involved in the discussion and decision-making process for next steps, and allow both victim and offender to reconnect to key community support systems, among others.⁸

Implicit (Or Unconscious) Bias: An unconscious association, belief, or attitude toward any social group.⁶ These biases often arise as a result of trying to find patterns and navigate the overwhelming stimuli in this very complicated world. Culture, media, and upbringing can also contribute to the development of such biases.⁹

Individual Racism: pre-judgment, bias, or discrimination by an individual based on race. Individual racism includes both privately held beliefs, conscious and unconscious, and

³ Nicki Lisa Cole, *So What is Culture, Exactly?*, ThoughtCo (Aug. 02, 2019), <https://www.thoughtco.com/culture-definition-4135409>.

⁴ *The Meaning of Race and Ethnicity*, Sociology, University of Minnesota (2016), <https://open.lib.umn.edu/sociology/chapter/10-2-the-meaning-of-race-and-ethnicity/>.

⁵ As defined in Vermont's H(3): An act relating to ethnic and social equity studies standards for public schools, <https://legislature.vermont.gov/Documents/2020/Docs/ACTS/ACT001/ACT001%20As%20Enacted.pdf>.

⁶ *Understanding Bias: A Resource Guide*, U.S. Department of Justice, <https://www.justice.gov/crs/file/836431/download>.

⁷ U.S. Department of Justice, *Family Group Conferencing: Implications for Crime Victims*, https://www.ncjrs.gov/ovc_archives/reports/restorative_justice/restorative_justice_ascii_pdf/ncj176347.pdf (2000).

⁸ Office of Justice Programs, National Institute of Justice, Office for Victims of Crime, National Institute of Corrections, and Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention *Restorative Justice Fact Sheet*, <https://www.courts.ca.gov/documents/FamilyGroupConferencing.pdf>.

⁹ Wijeyesinghe, C. L., Griffin, P., and Love, B. (1997). Racism Curriculum Design. In M. Adams, L. A. Bell, & P. Griffin (Eds.), *Teaching for diversity and social justice: A sourcebook* (pp. 82-109). New York: Routledge, p 88, <https://www.vanderbilt.edu/oacs/wp-content/uploads/sites/140/Key-Terms-Racism.pdf>.

external behaviors and actions towards others. Individual racism refers to the beliefs, attitudes, and actions of individuals that support or perpetuate racism. Individual racism can be deliberate, or the individual may act to perpetuate or support racism without knowing that is what he or she is doing.¹⁰

Intersectionality: coined in 1989 by civil rights activist and legal scholar, Kimberlé Crenshaw, intersectionality is the lens through which you can see where power collides and creates barriers. It is the interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, and gender as they apply to a given individual or group, regarded as creating overlapping, particularized, interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage.¹¹

Institutional Racism: occurs within institutions and organizations, such as schools, that adopt and maintain policies, practices, and procedures that often unintentionally produce inequitable outcomes for people of color and advantages for white people. Institutional racism refers specifically to the ways in which institutional policies and practices create different outcomes for different racial groups. The institutional policies may never mention any racial group, but their effect is to create advantages for whites and oppression and disadvantage for people from groups classified as people of color.¹²

Race: the man-made grouping of humans based on shared hereditary traits and physical qualities-- such as skin color, hair texture, facial features and statute-- into categories generally viewed as distinct by society. Racial categorization schemes were invented by scientists to support worldviews that viewed some groups of people as superior and some as inferior.¹³

Restorative Justice: a practice that allows individuals and communities to be more actively engaged in responding to harm. Restorative justice creates opportunities for people who have experienced harm to have a voice in shaping a response, and for people who caused harm, to make amends and be accountable for their actions. Restorative responses to harm honor the individuals and communities affected and allow for tailored and empowering responses appropriate to those most affected.¹⁴

Responsible Owner:	White River Valley Supervisory Union	Contact(s): email	
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¹⁰ Sherri L. Mitchell, J.D., *Racism, Colonization, and Other Distortions of Thought Glossary of Terms*-- Weeks One and Two (February 2021). Examples: Telling a racist joke, using a racial epithet, or believing in the inherent superiority of whites over other groups

¹¹ https://www.cjr.org/language_corner/intersectionality.php

¹² Sherri L. Mitchell, J.D., *Racism, Colonization, and Other Distortions of Thought Glossary of Terms*-- Weeks One and Two (February 2021). Examples: Government policies that explicitly restricted the ability of people to get loans to buy or improve their homes in neighborhoods with high concentrations of African Americans (also known as "red-lining"). City sanitation department policies that concentrate trash transfer stations and other environmental hazards disproportionately in communities of color.

¹³ Sherri L. Mitchell, J.D., *Racism, Colonization, and Other Distortions of Thought Glossary of Terms*-- Weeks One and Two (February 2021).

¹⁴ National Center for Restorative Justice, *Why Restorative Justice?*, Vermont Law School, <https://www.vermontlaw.edu/academics/centers-and-programs/national-center-on-restorative-justice>.

Approved By:		Revision History:	
Approval History:			
Current Approval Date:			
Related Policies & Procedures:			
Related Job Aids:			

Title:	<u>Anti-Racism Procedures</u>	Policy ID:	
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Purpose of Procedures: Is to provide a call and plan of action to address racism and all forms of racism within the White River Valley Supervisory Union (the “Supervisory Union”) and its member school districts (the “Districts”) by creating actionable steps to ensure implementation of the Anti-Racism Policy.

The following procedures apply throughout the Supervisory Union and its member Districts (See policy for definitions):

1. **Anti-Racist Statement:** The Supervisory Union and the Districts shall post a statement of its commitment to anti-racism in a high foot traffic location visible to students, staff, and visitors as well as on the Supervisory Union and the Districts websites.

The statement shall read:

“The White River Valley Supervisory Union, all its member School Boards and school districts reject all forms of racism. [School name] is committed to respect through the cultivation of a greater collective understanding of diversity, inclusion, equity, implicit bias, white privilege, white supremacy, and systemic racism.”

This statement shall also be included in the student handbooks provided to students and families and shall be translated into other languages and be made available for families with limited English proficiency, if and when needed.

2. **Anti-Racist Hiring Practices:** The District shall proactively seek to recruit or hire diverse faculty and staff to their schools, with a focus on retention.
 - a. All hiring committee members must complete a diversity, equity, and inclusion training prior to appointment
 - i. To be completed by May 2022
 - b. Hiring committees must have at least one member of the student Anti-Racist Committee

3. **Anti-Racist Committee:** The S.U committee shall establish an organization or committee of current students, former students, and community members to promote equity and diversity and to serve as leaders and spokespersons within the District. Current students can include middle school and high school representatives.
 - a. The Superintendent shall appropriate funds annually to ensure Committee members receive anti-racism, implicit bias, and cultural awareness training
 - b. The committee shall host and facilitate brave space conversations for students and their families within the district
 - c. The committee shall appoint one member to be involved in the hiring process to ensure anti-racism practices have been met.

4. **Climate Assessments**

- a. The District shall develop and conduct periodic climate assessments. Assessments shall include measures of implicit bias and whether all students feel welcome and respected.
- b. The Supervisory Union, member School Boards and school administrative staff shall develop plans to address findings of climate assessments and implement recommendations, if any, from the assessments.

5. **Alternatives to Discipline:** The District shall develop and implement alternative discipline processes, such as peace-making circles and family group conferencing, to reduce racial disparities in discipline and suspension.

6. **Data Collection:** The District shall collect data of racially-motivated incidents as well as data of the racial and ethnic makeup of students who have been disciplined. This data shall be used to measure frequency of racial incidents as part of the Superintendent report outlined in Section 8 of this document. Any reports containing this data shall be compliant with any State and Federal education privacy laws.

7. **Responding to Racist Acts**

- a. A racist act is conduct, whether verbal or physical, that demonstrates prejudice, discrimination, or antagonism directed against a person on the basis of their membership in a particular ethnic or racial group.
- b. The District must establish a set of guidelines and steps for responding to acts of racism to ensure transparency, accountability, and adequate followup for the students involved and their families.
- c. When school administrators determine a student has committed a racist act, the student will be provided the opportunity to learn about the impact of their actions on others through such practices as restorative justice, mediation, role play or other policies or training resources.
- d. The District shall develop a support group for victims to cope with race-related stress and disclose their experiences through a safe, non-punitive platform.

8. **Training:**

- a. All teachers and school staff shall be trained in the Anti-racism policy.
- b. All teachers and administrators shall be trained in ways to eliminate disparate outcomes in school based on race, including professional development focused on cultural awareness, implicit bias, restorative justice, and dispute resolution.

- c. All teachers and staff shall be trained about racism and how racism produces inequitable practices and outcomes in the school system and beyond.
- d. Every year, the District shall budget monies towards addressing racism through training and/or activities for school staff, teachers, and students.
- e. All teachers and staff must be trained on de-escalation techniques and strategies to immediately respond to racist acts that occur in the classroom setting.

9. **Enforcement:**

- a. The Superintendent shall be responsible for implementation and evaluation of District strategies for actualizing the goals outlined in this policy.
- b. The Superintendent shall collect, review, and provide on a two year cycle a report to the School Board regarding racial disparities in areas including, but not limited to, student achievement, enrollment, suspension/discipline, and graduation rates. The report shall also include evidence of growth in each area outlined by the anti-racism policy. These written reports shall also be made available to the public.
- c. The Principal shall be responsible for establishing a process for students and staff to report racism and other forms of discrimination, and shall include a way for such reports to be submitted anonymously.
- d. Violations of this policy may be cause for discipline for any WRVSU personnel including and not limited to staff, teachers, coaches, and administrators.