



Maine Township High School District 207

Responding to Acts of Hate, Racism, and Discrimination

Introduction

When a member of our school community experiences acts of hate, racism, and discrimination having a thoughtful, meaningful, and timely response is our collective responsibility. While the work of changing hearts and mindsets requires daily and adaptive efforts, it is our obligation to be decisive in both our prevention of and response to any incident regarding hate, racism, and discrimination. To support all schools in this effort, we will utilize our building and district equity teams, to employ this protocol to respond to acts of hate, racism, and discrimination.

Foundational Beliefs: Why a Protocol is Needed

District 207 recognizes, embraces, and defends the identities, abilities, and voices of our diverse school community. We value these multiple and unique identities, abilities, and voices as assets and commit to an equitable and inclusive learning environment. District 207 is committed to the practice of identifying, challenging, and changing the values, structures, and behaviors that perpetuate systemic racism and discrimination and prevent our students from accessing learning. Naming, disrupting, and reforming the behaviors that perpetuate hate, racism and discrimination is an essential part of helping our students and community to reach their full potential as human beings.

The District values freedom of thought and expression, respect for multiple points of view, and the civil and open expression of these views. Thus, it is important to note that bias acts or hate crimes do not include speech or behavior that an individual or the institution merely disagrees with or finds offensive. Acts of hate, racism, and discrimination makes civil engagement impossible and has no place in our community.

District 207 is committed to:

- Protecting the rights of all individuals
- Creating a safe environment in which all members of our school community can learn
- Ensuring a person's race and/or identity is never used as a put-down, insult, or as a way to hurt or exclude someone
- Helping all members of our community understand that discriminatory and hateful acts, including slurs, are never acceptable
- Supporting students and staff as they develop their own identity; respecting that identity is something that is self-determined
- Applying an equitable lens across all policies and practices
- Being proactive in ways that focus on student relationships, caring for one another, and ways to learn about others in authentic, thoughtful ways.



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These efforts are best supported through the use of a common language that facilitates understanding for all stakeholders involved. The District 207 Equity webpage [GLOSSARY](#) is a good source of updated terminology for gender, diversity, equity and inclusion that can assist in this work.

This guide is specific to addressing acts of hate, racism, and discrimination that occur on our campuses and/or directly involve D207 students. When larger local and national events occur, district administration, in consultation with the district equity team, will craft messages for the community with the goal of denouncing hate, racism, violence and discrimination.

Protocol Summary ([Link to Infographic](#))

All staff will intervene whenever situations have the potential to cause physical or emotional harm. This process must not mitigate the impact of the action on any targeted individual; in responding, educators must not overly focus on the offender's intentions at the expense of the impact on the targeted individual(s).

Protocol Outline

- [Put safety first](#)
- [Be composed](#)
- [Denounce the act](#)
- [Report](#)
- [Investigate](#)
- [Create an action plan that supports all affected individuals](#)
- [Provide clear and timely communication](#)

Response and Plan of Action

When acts of hate, racism, and discrimination occur here are the steps we take:

- 1. Put safety first.** Ensure the physical and psychological safety of affected individuals. The emergency response team will be activated when warranted.
 - Provide a safe physical place for each individual by separating students, and if appropriate everyone involved.
 - Identify or create a safe space for individuals (these may include student and family service offices, affinity spaces, etc.). Maintain privacy and confidentiality.
 - Employ guidelines to support individual needs (e.g IEP, behavior intervention plan (BIP), Section 504 plan, EL plan, etc).



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- 2. Be composed** - Let all individuals involved know they are cared for; wisdom, firmness, and understanding should be utilized, centering on the victim's comfort first.
 - Be calm - Support the targeted individual with a sense of calm; calmness can communicate confidence that this will be dealt with. Address the offending individual with a calm firmness that sets the foundation for restorative practices.
- 3. Denounce the act** - A clear and direct message should be given to all people involved as soon as possible. This will include the following language and main points:
 - Name the behavior and state that it is unacceptable.
 - Explain why the behavior is unacceptable by discussing why acts of hate, racism, and discrimination are wrong. Emphasize: "Our school stands for the safety and inclusion of all students."
 - Explain there will be follow up and an investigation of what happened.
 - Communicate that staff and administrators will work together and create a plan to make all feel safe and begin repairing the school community.
- 4. Report** - The timeliness of reporting an incident is of the utmost importance to not only the investigation of the incident, but to address the needs of those harmed. When you become aware of an incident:
 - Alert administrator immediately, as soon as there is knowledge of the incident.
 - Any information can be provided by using the anonymous alert system.
 - If there is a need to contact DCFS, please complete the DCFS reporting form. If you are unsure, be sure to ask a building administrator.
- 5. Investigate** - All investigations may include interviewing involved parties, obtaining and reviewing evidence and gathering written statements collected by building administrators.
 - Administrators will meet with all individuals involved that have witnessed or responded to the incident to determine the impact and nexus to school.
 - Administrators will use a restorative practice framework as part of the investigation process.
 - An incident report documenting all phases of the incident should be completed in Infinite Campus.
 - Building administrator(s) are responsible for determining the outcomes of the investigation, whether or not they are confirmed or unfounded.
- 6. Create an action plan that supports all affected individuals.** Plans will be implemented for individual and group support for a restorative intervention as needed. Document all contacts; be mindful of being factual, concise, and objective. The goal of this plan is to teach and build empathy to prevent future incidents as well ensure the safety of the targeted individual. When willing, the targeted individual and family will give input



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about what they need to feel safe. The action plan will be communicated with staff members involved.

- Seek to repair harm and promote healing. Staff and administrators will develop a plan for the offending individual to address and begin to repair any harm done; if a staff member lacks expertise in restorative practices, immediately contact the building administrator to identify potential resources. Be cognizant of relationships and readiness between targeted and offending individuals; we do not want to retraumatize the victim if their readiness is not confirmed. Be cognizant that marginalized, oppressed, and/or targeted groups often know what is necessary to make things right.
- Use resources from Restorative School Communities, including, but not limited to
 - Restorative practices guidelines and protocols (most importantly, with the students involved in the incident.)
 - Individual contracts for behavior
- Consider having a space for affinity groups/allyship. Affinity groups must be facilitated by an adult that shares the same affinity identity.

7. Provide clear and timely communication. To bring closure to the immediate incident and lay a foundation for next steps, clear and timely communication to stakeholders is essential.

Guidelines for communication:

- Determine who is the target audience of the communication. Because of the delicate nature of incidents of hate, racism, and discrimination, communication on such incidents may need to reach a broader audience than typical disciplinary incidents. School administrators should consult with the District Office if they are unsure of the audience and/or if they need support in crafting communication.
- Create a unified, coherent message to share with all affected members of the school community. Administrators will:
 - Collaborate with a diverse group of staff when developing community correspondence to ensure clarity of message; prepare for this collaboration in advance by having networks that include the different targeted groups referenced throughout this protocol.
 - Collect and prepare information that can be made available upon request by any members of the school community: school board members, families, and staff. Any information that would compromise student confidentiality CANNOT BE RELEASED TO THE PUBLIC.



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- Communicate with stakeholders. In communicating with stakeholders, focus on communicating the District's commitment to equity, affirming student identity, safety, repairing harm, and community.

Shared Language and Terminology

As school climate and leadership teams work to promote an anti-racist culture that actively addresses issues of hate, racism, and discrimination. An important element to achieving a community that reflects these values is to have clear, agreed upon definitions for critical concepts and terms. As in many fields that address the changing social dynamics of our country, the concepts and terms in this field of study are ever evolving and ever changing. Our [District 207 Equity Webpage](#) will serve as a source to develop and maintain shared common language and understanding.

References and Resources

These protocols and materials were adapted from:

- *Anti-Bias Education for Young Children and Ourselves*, Louise Derman-Sparks and Julie Olsen Edwards (2010), the National Association for the Education of Young Children.
- Maine Training 2020-2021 [Lurie's Children's Hospital Resources](#)
 - [Slides Pt. 1](#)
 - [Slides Pt. 2](#)
- August 2020 Institute Day Presentation - [Equity Guidance to Support Learning](#) - Includes responding to hateful, racist, and/or discriminatory remarks made in a classroom setting.
- Teachers, Students, and Free Speech - [2021 Franczek Presentation](#)
- [Learning for Justice: Responding to Hate and Bias at School](#)
- [Courageous Conversations About Race: A Field Guide for Achieving Equity in Schools](#), Glenn E. Singleton (2015)