# Racism<br/>BesponseGuidelines2025



Ministry of Education and Child Care

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# **CONTENT ALERT**

Anti-racism work is nuanced and complex. Everyone comes to this work with varied lived, living, and/or witnessed experiences. While the intention of this document is to provide contextual information and guidance to reduce harm, the examples used in the resource guide may be upsetting or painful to read. For some, the scenarios might be re-traumatizing. This resource contains descriptions of harmful language and racially motivated situations, which may be distressing for some individuals.

Consider your own positionality and how it will impact your engagement. Please take care of your emotional well-being while engaging with this material, and after supporting your students. If you are impacted by any of the incidents discussed, or those you may address at your work site, please reach out for support (see Appendix A). You are also encouraged to review your contract (for example, your CUPE/BCTF Collective Agreement) to access other mental wellness services.

# Acknowledgements

This resource was developed in collaboration with Burnaby School District 41, informed by early content developed by the Principals' and Vice-Principals' Association and the voices of many from across B.C.

The author extends gratitude to all the participants for their honesty and vulnerability. Participants took risks to share stories, experiences, and ideas about dealing with racism and responding to racist incidents in B.C. schools. They have contributed invaluable knowledge and lived experiences, and have helped shape the development of this resource. The author extends their sincere appreciation for participants' courage and generosity through what they have shared.



The Ministry of Education and Child Care acknowledges that its offices are situated on the Lək ' ʷəŋən territory of the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations, and on the territories of the xʷməθkʷəýəm (Musqueam), Sk̠wফ̯wú7mesh (Squamish), and səlilwətaɬ (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

British Columbia's education and child care sector carries out its work on the territories of First Nations across the province. Each First Nation has a unique culture, language, legal tradition, and relationship with the lands, waters and air.

Please take the time to learn about the <u>First Nations territory</u> where you work.

# Identifying and responding to racist incidents in B.C. schools

In consultation with educators from over 40 school districts in the province, the content provided in this guide includes protocols to address common issues of racial harm and hate in B.C. schools. It will help educators understand the impacts of incidents of racism and hate on school communities, and will offer pathways towards inclusion and healing moving forward.

Racism is rooted in the belief that a person or group of people is inferior to others based on their race or ethnic background. More broadly, hate includes expressions or actions motivated by intolerance towards individuals or groups. This intolerance is based on not only race, but also attributes such as ethnicity, language, religion, disability, gender, or sexual orientation. These negative beliefs and attitudes can result in harm and exclusion (Corlett, 2003). Racism can manifest on individual, institutional, systemic, and structural levels (Menendian, 2023).

This resource is designed to provide a comprehensive framework for identifying and addressing incidents of racism and hate. The framework is intended for use alongside existing district and school policies and procedures, to address student-tostudent incidents of racial harm.

Educators are required to ensure the safety and well-being of students (BC Teacher's Council, 2019). This means that when a racist incident occurs, there must be an appropriate response. This response demonstrates to students a commitment to anti-racism. Beyond utilizing the strategies offered in this resource, anti-racist education requires a long-term commitment to learning, which ultimately leads to students feeling safe and supported in schools.

66 We need to educate teachers specifically on: what microaggressions are; how can we solve racist situations and problems. Many of them don't know how. Or how to cope with that.

— Student, Minister's Anti-Racism Youth Dialogue Series, 2022

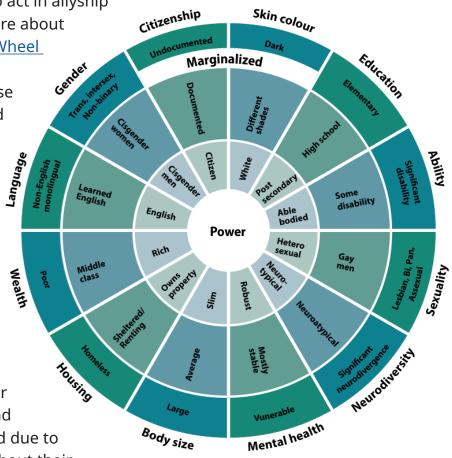
# Intersecting identities

Everyone has multiple identity markers that shape their experiences and understanding of the world. Kimberlé Crenshaw coined this phenomenon "intersectionality" (Crenshaw, 1991). Learners need to consciously recognize the variety of identities and characteristics that exist to better understand

themselves and others, and to act in allyship with one another. To learn more about intersectionality, refer to the <u>Wheel</u> of Power and Privilege in the *Learning To Be Anti-Racist* course (B.C. Ministry of Education and Child Care, 2024).

All learners need to know that there are identity traits protected under the <u>B.C. Human Rights Code</u>.

These include Indigenous identity, race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, political belief, religion, marital status, family status, physical or mental disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, and others. People can be targeted due to perceptions or assumptions about their



identities. Protection under the B.C. Human Rights

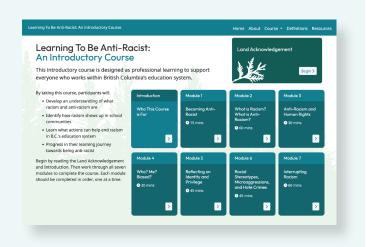
Code means that it is unlawful to harm or discriminate against someone based on these grounds. Students and educators should understand their rights.

Educators need to be aware of intersectionality because harm does not happen in silos. Often issues surrounding racial prejudice or hate can involve homo-negative, trans-negative language and/or behaviors, anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, and intolerance of neurodivergence among other harmful beliefs. The strategies and frameworks offered in this resource can be used to address various incidents of harm.



## Learning To Be Anti-Racist

<u>Learning To Be Anti-Racist: An</u> <u>Introductory Course</u> is a free online course for all district and school employees. The course includes seven training modules designed to support and strengthen anti-racism learning environments within B.C. schools.



# Types of racist incidents

A racist incident is any occurrence, action, or behaviour that discriminates against or harms individuals or groups based on their perceived and/or actual race or ethnicity. For the purpose of this document, different types of racist incidents are described below.

### Micro/macroaggressions

A micro- or macroaggression is an action or comment that conveys discriminatory attitudes towards members of marginalized communities based on aspects of their identity. These aspects include race, place of origin, language, religion, disability, sex, and gender identity. This type of incident could be unintentional or intentional. The harmer may or may not understand how or why their comment or action is harmful. Micro/macroaggressions may also include cultural appropriation: the unacknowledged or inappropriate adoption of the customs, practices, clothing, music, ideas, etc. of a culture by members of another culture that is typically more dominant.

# 2

### Non-verbal harm

Non-verbal harm occurs when an act or behaviour communicates bias, prejudice, or hostility against individuals or groups of people based on their identity/identities. This can include facial expressions, hand gestures, body language, writing, photos/images, and so on.



### Music, multimedia and social media

Music, lyrics, images, or themes (including videos, memes, etc.) can promote prejudiced beliefs that demean and/or dehumanize individuals or groups based on identity characteristics. These characteristics may include race, place of origin, religion, disability, sex, and gender identity.

### Graffiti and other acts of vandalism

The defacement of public or private property with words, images, and/or symbols that promote hate and discrimination is a racist act.

### Verbal hate and/or harassment

Verbal hate and harassment take place when spoken language expresses hostility, anger, prejudice and/or contempt towards others through slurs, insults, derogatory comments and/or threats. These types of incidents may also include comments such as "You're not really Black," or "You're not a real Muslim."

### Physical violence and threats of violence

Physical acts or threats of violence can be motivated by anger, hostility, prejudice and/or hate towards an individual or group based on identity characteristics. These characteristics include race, place of origin, religion, disability, sex, and gender identity.

# Hate crime

A hate crime is any criminal offense committed against a person or property that is motivated in whole or in part by bias, prejudice, or hate. This motivation can be based on race, national or ethnic origin, language, colour, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or any other similar factor. A hate crime may be an act of violence (assault), intimidation (following, shouting threats), or property damage (arson, vandalism, graffiti). A person may experience a hate crime based on intersecting aspects of their identity, such as race and religion (Canadian Race Relations Foundation, 2024).



### Anti-racism terms

For definitions of anti-racism terms, visit: <u>Anti-racism definitions - Province of British Columbia (gov.bc.ca)</u>

# Responding to incidents of racial harm—a framework

The following framework is based on recommended practices to respond to instances of harm. The framework is meant to work in harmony with the school or district's non-discrimination and anti-racism policies, procedures, and safety protocols.

This resource is an accompaniment to district policies and procedures around incident response. District and school personnel should adhere to district policies, procedures, and protocols, including codes of conduct, when responding to incidents or allegations of racism, discrimination, threats, or other safety concerns.



# Immediately



# Stop the incident

- **Call in**—privately address incidents of harm in a supportive manner.
- **Call out**—publicly address problematic behaviour to maintain safety.

All educators must:

- **Name** the behaviour and intervene immediately—acknowledge that what was said or done is inappropriate.
- **Remind** everyone that this behaviour goes against the school Code of Conduct, and that it is not accepted at any time in the school community.



- 2 Centre the harmed person and offer a support person (see Appendix B)
  - **Connect** with and provide a safer and supportive space for the student(s) that have been harmed.



**PAUSE AND REFLECT:** How can the voice and experience of the harmed person(s) be centred?

- **Identify** and respond to their immediate needs.
- **Prior history:** What can this student's formal documentation (school notes, Individual Education Plans (IEPs), individual learning plans) and lived experiences reveal about the impact of this event on their well-being?
- **Check in** with a trusted adult (coach, teacher, counsellor, youth care worker, Cultural Advisor).
- **Allow** for agency by letting the harmed person communicate in a way that is comfortable.
- **Identify** and respond to any possible invisible harm to others (witnesses, staff, students).

# Next steps



# Seek, find, and document

All incidents should be taken seriously and treated with urgency.

- **Remain calm**, neutral, and supportive.
- **Honour** and listen to all who share.
- **Keep an open mind**. Do not presume guilt or innocence. Do not make determinations based on the



### PAUSE AND REFLECT: What needs to be known?

known? What needs to be unpacked?

appearance, position, or reputation of the students involved.

**Share once and document well**. Harmed students should not have to repeat their trauma.

**Prioritize** accurate note-taking.

- **Review** available information about the online activity of students involved to identify patterns or antecedents that can provide context for the behaviour.
  - **Preserve privacy**. Ask parties not to discuss the investigation, except with designated personnel. Explain that this is a request, not an order, and provide the reason for it.

# Ensure accountability (the harmer)

Inform the student that the choice of behaviour goes against the school Code of Conduct, and it is not accepted at any time within the school community.



### **PAUSE AND REFLECT:** What do accountability, learning, and community healing look like for this student?

- **Consult** with the administration to ensure communication with the families involved.
- **Contact** the student's parent or caregiver.
- **Consider** how to best support the student who caused the harm at this moment. What is needed?

- **Question** what is known about this student. Is there a history of mental health challenges, an IEP, or previous or current living experiences that may have triggered the behaviour?
- Seek out a trusted adult (coach, teacher, counsellor, youth care worker, Cultural Advisor).
- **Continue documenting actions taken**. Describe the incident, response/intervention, and supports being planned.
  - **Communicate** continuously with parents/caregivers and all other involved parties as progress is made. This may include local First Nation community members, interpreters, and advocates as part of the communication team.

# Follow-up

# Restore community

**Insist on an appropriate response** for the harm done. This is determined by the school team or district administration. When possible, invite input from racialized team members who want to engage.



### PAUSE AND REFLECT: What restorative practices can be implemented to heal and rebuild trust among all members?

- **Consider the severity of the action** to determine whether restitution, a restorative process, suspension, a violent threat risk assessment, or other response(s) are warranted. To whom does communication need to be directed? What type of communication? Additional responses include:
  - A school-wide assembly in which staff inform students of school policy, what hate crimes are, what their rights are (based on the B.C. Human Rights Code), and supports available to them (for example, how to use the ERASE reporting tool).
  - The school community highlighting the response, actions taken to demonstrate commitment to anti-racism and inclusivity, and available resources to continue learning.
- **Provide targeted education** to the students who caused the harm. Restoring justice doesn't mean the absence of consequences.

Activate agency and accountability by extending an opportunity for students, staff, families, and community members who may have been impacted to participate in restorative practices led by a skilled professional.

**Follow up** regularly with students impacted by the incident. Ensure support and remind them of available resources (one day, one week, one month, etc.).

# Reflect and resource

**Reflect on the event**. Was this a one-off incident, or possibly an extension of the broader school culture?

**Reflect on the response**. Was the response timely and considerate in terms of the learning and healing that occurred for all involved? What actions could have been taken differently? Did existing policies help or hinder the response? Would First Nations and racialized communities agree that they were seen, valued, and supported by the response and how it was carried out? (This may require direct consultation with the local First Nation).

**Resource yourself**. After responding to the incident, what is needed to replenish and restore capacity for addressing incidents of harm?

**Reactive or responsive?** Determine if the actions taken to resolve the incident were reactive or responsive. What learning opportunities can be implemented to strengthen anti-racist learning environments?

As educators, engaging in critical reflection is essential. This involves considering the following factors:

- **Existential:** Who is the individual, and what kind of person does that individual want to be?
- **Relational:** How does the individual relate to others and the world around them?
- **Praxis:** Praxis concerns the need for self-conscious and ethical action based on a critical questioning of past actions and future possibilities (Cunliffe, 2004).

By critically examining our assumptions, actions, and their impacts, it is possible to develop more collaborative, responsive and ethical ways of operating (Cunliffe, 2004). Critical reflexivity can enhance educators' ability to support students.



# Taking care of well-being

Responding to incidents of racism can be challenging and triggering for racialized and marginalized educators. Prioritizing self-care during these moments is essential. Acknowledge and validate emotions whether anger, pain, frustration, or sadness. Surround oneself with supportive colleagues who understand these experiences. It is important to seek professional support if needed (see Appendix A).

# Scenarios

There is no effective one-size-fits-all response to a racist incident. The framework and discussion questions provided are starting points to address harm. To respond effectively to each incident of harm encountered, apply a critical lens and an understanding of district and/or school policy. Using intersections and perspectives, contemplate the scenarios below to unpack examples of racist incidents and develop <u>trauma-sensitive practices</u> that can foster healing and understanding.

For each scenario that follows, apply the framework and consider the accompanying questions. First, identify what was harmful and who was harmed (see Appendix B).

# MICRO/MACROAGGRESSIONS

# Elementary/middle

Ms. W's grade 2 class has been building a class community. Today, in partners, they interviewed each other and introduced their partner to the class. Noah introduced his partner and new friend, Thanh, who recently moved from Indonesia. Noah said positive things about his friend, but when he described him, he played with Thanh's curly hair and said: "He has cool hair." He then said Thanh has "squinty eyes" and used his hands to pull back the skin around his own eyes. He also said Thanh eats "stinky food... I tried it though – it tasted pretty good!"



- How could a settlement worker foster cultural competencies with students?
- How might a leadership class benefit from learning about unconscious bias?
- How can the core competencies support deeper learning and appreciation of one another?
- What preventive measures can be put in place to proactively address harm?

# Secondary

It is day three of Spirit Week and the leadership class has been busy planning five special days full of events. The students worked hard and organized a fundraiser, to donate money to an international charity. Two students came forward, upset about "End Hunger Day." They were offended because all the promotional posters only had pictures of Indigenous, Black, and Brown children.

### **Discussion questions:**

- How could a conversation around media literacy and bias support student understanding of representation?
- How might a leadership program embed bias and sensitivity learning?
- What other actions may need to be taken?

# NON-VERBAL HARM

# Elementary/middle

On a middle school playground, a group of students get together to retaliate against a classmate of African descent who is known to bully and intimidate. They silently make monkey faces and arm gestures when they are near him. After the nutrition break, they leave a banana on his desk, snickering and pointing as they walk away.  $( \Xi )$ 

- How can you lead a conversation about the harms of stereotyping to build community and foster cultural humility among students?
- What resources are needed to support this conversation?
- What other actions may need to be taken?

# **3** MUSIC, MULTIMEDIA AND SOCIAL MEDIA

# Secondary

Lately more and more junior students are eating their lunch in the hallways, rather than in the cafeteria. When the vice-principal, Mr. Shields, asks why, the students simply say they would rather eat in the halls because there's more space. Knowing the cafeteria provides ample space for all students to eat their lunch, Mr. Shields decides to investigate. As he approaches the cafeteria, he hears loud music reverberating through the halls. Upon entering the cafeteria, he sees two groups of students with portable speakers blaring music full of racial slurs, queer-negative, and sexist language.



### **Discussion questions:**

- How could you support a studentled initiative to build community in the school?
- What other actions may need to be taken?

# **4** GRAFFITI AND ACTS OF VANDALISM

# Secondary

After being away on medical leave, Ms. Leigh finds the following note from the teacher-on-call:

"Hi Ms. Leigh,

I had a great time with your class. I did notice that a few of your female students were spending a lot of time out of the classroom when they asked to use the bathroom, despite having a girls' and universal bathroom right beside your room. I didn't ask them why; however, during the nutrition break, I went into both bathrooms and found the stalls, walls, and mirrors marred with trans-negative and racial slurs. -Mx. Shilpy"



- How can gender diversity learning supports and other local queer resources support conversations and learning around inclusivity and access?
- How do situations like these affect trans members of the school community?
- What needs to be done to foster a better sense of belonging and safety?
- What other actions may need to be taken?

# **VERBAL HATE AND HARASSMENT**

# Elementary/middle

Zhara is a grade 2 student, and her family immigrated to B.C. from Iran just six weeks ago. She wears a hijab. She has been "buddied" with Mia, who has been a friendly support. At lunch, their teacher, Mr. Dwight, noticed Mia and Zhara quietly walking alone together but not really engaging. He checked in with Mia, who shared that other students in their class have been making fun of Zhara and her scarf: "They say don't play with the new girl—she'll get a bomb and blow up your house!"



### **Discussion questions:**

- How can you use stories to dispel the harmful attitudes that students have towards Zhara and visible Muslims?
- What other actions may need to be taken?

# Secondary

Logan is an avid gamer. Logan has many friends and is open about being lewish. He feels comfortable at school and has not experienced discrimination in the past. Logan is in a wheelchair and especially enjoys the virtual space where he feels more like the other kids. Recently, his chat feature has been filled with some mean comments about Jewish people. He tells his mom, and she tells him to turn off the chat feature or stop playing the game. He listens to his mom and after a few days, thinks everything is resolved until he sees a red handprint on his woodworking project, and no others. At the school bus stop, he sees another red handprint on the bus shelter, some antisemitic text, a drawing of a wheelchair, and the words: "We're talking to YOU, Logan!"

# $( \Xi )$

- How can accountability be established for students when the identity of the harmer is unknown?
- What collective learning needs to occur?
- Who needs to be involved?
- How can Logan's sense of belonging be restored?
- What other actions may need to be taken?

6 VERBAL HATE AND HARASSMENT

# Elementary/middle

Ms. Rami's grade 7 boys are playing in the high school basketball invitational game against their rival school, the Vanderhouse Vipers. The game has been physical, as each team wants to impress the grade 8 coach. With seconds left in a tie game, Ms. Rami's guard goes up for a layup; the Viper player commits a foul against him, knocking him to the ground. As Ms. Rami's player tries to get up, the Viper pushes him back down and leers over him in a menacing way. Ms. Rami's player gets up, and the Viper player steps closer to him. Seconds later, the referee separates the two players. Ms. Rami's player takes his foul shots and walks towards the bench to be subbed off. Ms. Rami notices her star guard is upset and goes over to him to check in. Tears in his eyes, he tells his coach, "Number 8 pushed me, called me the N-word and told me to stay on the bench or else. I am not even Black, Ms. Rami!"



### **Discussion questions:**

- How will the sense of self for the student be restored? What conversation needs to occur with the team around healthy competition and harmful actions?
- How can the annual BC School Sports Handbook, published by BC School Sports, support conversations and learning around interscholastic activities?
- What other actions may need to be taken?

IF A RACIST INCIDENT INCLUDES A VIOLENT OR PHYSICAL THREAT, FOLLOW THE SAFE SCHOOLS PROTOCOL.

# References

- BC Teacher's Council (2019). *Professional Standards for BC Educators*. <u>https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/kindergarten-to-grade-12/teach/</u> <u>teacher-regulation/standards-for-educators/edu\_standards.pdf</u>
- British Columbia Ministry of Education and Child Care (2024). *Learning To Be Anti-Racist.* <u>https://mytrainingbc.ca/anti-racism\_course/index.html</u>

Canadian Race Relations Foundation (n.d.). *Advancing Canada's Approach to Tackling Hate.* <u>https://crrf-fcrr.ca/tackling-hate-in-canada/#:~:text=A%20criminal%20offence%20</u> <u>committed%20against,on%20any%20other%20similar%20factor</u>

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- Government of British Columbia. (2024). *Core Competencies*. Retrieved on May 28, 2024, from <u>https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/competencies</u>
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# **Appendix A: Resources**

Below are available resources. You are also encouraged to consult your contract (for example, the CUPE/BCTF Collective Agreement) to access mental wellness services.

ORGANIZATION	DESCRIPTION/LINK
KUU-US Crisis Line Society	KUU-US Crisis Line Society B.Cwide Indigenous crisis line available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, toll-free from anywhere in British Columbia. KUU-US Crisis Line can be reached toll- free at 1-800-588-8717
Crisis Line Association of B.C.	<u>Mental Health and Information and Support Line</u> Dial 310-6789 (no area code needed)
Trans Lifeline	Trans Lifeline A trans-led organization that connects trans people to the community, support, and resources they need to survive and thrive. Call 877-330-6366
Government of British Columbia	<ul> <li>erase = expect respect &amp; a safe education - Province of British Columbia (gov.bc.ca)</li> <li>HelpStartsHere</li> <li>Report Hate Crime</li> </ul>
Resilience BC	Resources for Victims of Racism and Hate
BC School Sports	BC School Sports Handbook
Métis Crisis Line	24/7 Métis Crisis Line Provides a Métis specific crisis line available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, toll-free from anywhere in British Columbia. Call 1-833-638-4722

# Appendix B: Responding to racist incidents

Supporting the harmed and the harmer

This chart outlines steps to support both parties immediately, during, and after a racist incident, emphasizing healing and accountability. In addressing incidents of racism and hate in schools, it is vital to support both the harmed and the harmer. Accountability for harm must include consequences, but must also include education to promote reflection and growth. Restorative practices, when the harmed is willing, can foster repair and create a safer, more inclusive environment.

IMMEDIATELY STEPS 1 and 2 <sup>*</sup>	<ul> <li>Remove from harm</li> <li>Provide a safer and supportive space</li> <li>Connect student(s) with a trusted adult</li> <li>Consult counsellor/provide counselling support</li> <li>Listen to understand and believe</li> <li>Phone parent(s)/caregiver(s)</li> <li>Consider connecting with appropriate com First Nation community, cultural organizat</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Remove from the situation</li> <li>Connect student with a trusted adult</li> <li>Consult counsellor/provide counselling support as needed</li> <li>Listen and remain neutral</li> <li>Phone parent(s)/caregiver(s)</li> <li>Remember: the harmer may have been harmed</li> </ul>
<b>DURING</b> STEPS <b>3</b> and <b>4</b> <sup>*</sup>	<ul> <li>Allow the harmed to communicate with agency and hold space for their voice and emotions</li> <li>Document—take thorough notes. Student(s) should not have to repeat their harmful lived experience</li> <li>Listen to understand and believe</li> <li>Inquire about online activity</li> <li>Preserve privacy</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Hold supportive space for their perspective of the incident</li> <li>Document—take thorough notes</li> <li>Listen to understand and remain neutral</li> <li>Inquire about online activity</li> <li>Share the immediate impact for the harmed with the harmer and their parent(s)/caregiver(s)</li> <li>Consider what accountability might look like</li> </ul>
<b>AFTER</b> STEPS 5 and 6 <sup>*</sup>	<ul> <li>Consult and collaborate on a safety plan as needed</li> <li>Communicate with the harmed student(s)' parent(s)/caregiver(s) and share supports:         <ul> <li>Communicate that an appropriate consequence was given—cannot share details</li> <li>Inform classroom teachers and appropriate staff to support student safety</li> <li>Provide ongoing counselling support as needed</li> <li>Check in with the student the next day, in a few days, a week later, a month later, months later (can be through their trusted adult)</li> <li>Check in with staff on their awareness of relevant online activity</li> <li>When appropriate, invite student(s) to take part in a restorative/healing process</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Determine appropriate consequence(s)         <ul> <li>Connect to school/district code of conduct</li> <li>Consult and collaborate on a safety plan as needed</li> </ul> </li> <li>Communicate appropriate consequences:         <ul> <li>To school community members impacted—cannot share details</li> <li>Connect to the impact on the harmed and the school community</li> </ul> </li> <li>Meet with parent(s)/caregiver(s)         <ul> <li>Share consequences and supports</li> <li>Connect to school/district code of conduct and B.C. Human Rights Code</li> </ul> </li> <li>Provide ongoing counselling support as needed</li> <li>Check in with the student the next day, in a few days, a week later, a month later, months later (can be through their trusted adult)</li> <li>Check in with staff on their awareness of relevant activity</li> <li>When appropriate, invite student(s) to engage in restorative practice with those negatively impacted/harmed</li> <li>Consider providing targeted education and reflection</li> </ul>

<sup>\*</sup> Refer to the framework in the Racism Response Guidelines.





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