Clear Definition & Examples of Racist Incidents

Handling Racist Incidents Toolkit

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1. What is a Racist Incident?

A **racist incident** is any occurrence in which a person is subjected to harassment, discrimination, exclusion, or harm because of their race, ethnicity, skin colour, culture, or perceived background.

Racist incidents can take many forms:

- **Overt:** obvious actions such as racial slurs, threats, or graffiti.
- **Subtle:** behaviours that appear minor but cause harm (stereotyping, dismissive jokes).
- **Systemic:** embedded practices, rules, or curriculum choices that disadvantage racial/ethnic groups.
- **Microaggressions:** everyday comments/questions that communicate bias (e.g. "Where are you really from?").

👉 *Key Principle*: All racist incidents - intentional or unintentional, overt or subtle - must be taken seriously.

2. Why Clear Definitions Matter

- They **empower learners and staff** to recognise racism in all its forms.
- They ensure **consistent recording** of incidents (avoiding minimisation as "banter" or "bullying").
- They highlight the **curriculum link** — racist incidents can happen in lessons, resources, and staff–learner interactions, not just in playgrounds.

3. Examples in Educational Contexts

Context	Example of Racist Incident
Classroom Discussion	A learner repeatedly interrupts a peer, dismissing their viewpoint with "*people like you wouldn't understand*". A teacher/learner uses a stereotype (e.g. "*Asian students are always good at maths*").
Group Work / Projects	A learner is excluded from a group project because of their ethnicity. Jokes made about a learner's accent or name when roles are being assigned.

Context	Example of Racist Incident
Corridors / Social Spaces	A racial slur shouted at a learner during breaktime. Learners imitate/mock cultural clothing, hairstyles, or languages.
Digital / Online Spaces	A racist meme or GIF shared in a class group chat. Racist comments in online platforms or gaming chats.
Curriculum & Teaching Materials	Resources present a one-sided history that erases contributions of Black, Asian, and minority ethnic groups. Only White authors are set in English literature despite diverse alternatives.
Staff–Learner Interactions	A staff member repeatedly mispronounces a learner's name, despite correction. A teacher assumes a learner needs extra support because of race or perceived background.

4. Reflection Prompts (for staff & learners)

- How do I know when a behaviour is racist, not just "unkind"?
- How might it feel for the person harmed if I minimise the incident?
- Do our teaching resources reinforce or challenge stereotypes?
- Where in our curriculum or school culture might systemic racism be present?