



Racism Policy

Policy on racism related issues

In 2016, the Chief Justice in a unanimous judgement of the Constitutional Court wrote about non-racialism, human dignity and freedom as being values foundational to our constitutional democracy and about the need to make a decisive break from the ills of the past. He called for all of us to engage in an earnest and ongoing dialogue in pursuit of strategies for a lasting solution to the bane of our peaceful co-existence that racism has continued to be. He wrote: *Nothing that threatens to take us back to our racist past should be glossed over, accommodated or excused*

We acknowledge that

- apartheid, as a crime against humanity was and is legally, morally and theologically indefensible; and
- the systemic impact of our apartheid past has hurt individuals within the community

Consequently, we seek to transform our communal and individual lives to heal the hurt and divisions of our past, in order to embrace a future for South Africa shaped by all who live in it; especially the students within our care.

Sagan Centre aims to provide a safe, secure and supportive environment where:

- individual differences are appreciated, understood and accepted
- individuals empathise with each other and offer each other support
- racism is reported, and the necessary steps are taken to eliminate such behaviour
- awareness and education about racism and diversity will be integral to the teaching and learning process

Racist behaviour, intentional or otherwise, will not be tolerated.

1. Rationale to “no tolerance”

Sagan Centre recognises the importance of the rights of each child, as enshrined in the Constitution of South Africa, and is dedicated to the protection of these rights, while, at the same time, maintaining both the diversity and individuality of a multi-cultural society.

We expect people from each ethnic group to have respect for other groups and for everyone and to be proud of her or his own culture.

In Sagan Centre children will learn

- That racism is wrong, and it is based on false ideas.
- The benefits of a multicultural society.
- The learning resources of the school will reflect the mix of cultures found in our classes; they will be as accurate as possible and will avoid any stereotyping or generalisations.
- Racist insults are comparable to personal insults.

Naturally any incidents of racism will be dealt with at school and parents will naturally be informed.

1.1 Statement of Policy



*“Our school is opposed to any form of racism or racist behaviour.”
We believe that education is the best way to help children understand what racism is and how to work towards a society where it is not tolerated in any form.*

Where racism is encountered we will seek to inform and educate – but will not hesitate to use the law of the Human Rights framework and legislature if this fails.

Examples of Racist Incidents

The following are examples of racist incidents, which may involve pupils,

- Derogatory name calling, insults and racist jokes
- Verbal abuse and threats
- Racist graffiti
- Provocative behaviour such as wearing racist badges or insignia
- Racist comments during discussions
- Ridicule of an individual’s cultural differences, e.g. food, music, dress, religion, language etc.
- Bringing racist materials such as leaflets, comics or magazines into the institution
- Attempts to recruit other pupils and students into racist organisations
- Physical assault which is racially motivated
- Damage caused to a person’s property which is racially motivated
- Incitement of others to behave in a racist way
- Refusal to co-operate with other people because of their ethnic origin

1.2 Tackling Racist Incidents

All staff deal with incidents involving racism (including prejudice and stereotyping), racial harassment, and racist name-calling whenever they occur. This will be done in accordance with the behaviour policy and will vary due to the extent of the incident.

Learners are encouraged to report all incidents involving racism, racial discrimination and racial harassment. They can speak to any member of staff, ask a parent to do this for them or make use of letters or emails to make a staff member aware of any race related issue.

1.3 The staff’s role

- Action is taken to prevent incidents from recurring.
- Report all incidents to the Director and/or Dean of Studies who will record details of incidents.
- Parents will be informed in a formal meeting (refer to point 6 of the policy) of any action taken to deal with racist incidents.
- Racist incidents and complaints of racial discrimination and racial harassment are monitored, and the effectiveness of the action and/or remediation taken to address incidents is assessed.

2. Fundamental Principles

All students at educational institutions are constitutionally entitled to an educational environment in which there is no discrimination on the basis of race, gender, sex, ethnic or social origin, religion, colour, sexual



orientation, disability, conscience, belief, culture, or language preference as determined by the Constitution, Educational Law and the South African Schools Act.

3. Implications

- a. Students are, therefore, encouraged to develop a sense of identity, both with the commonality of South African society as a whole, as well as, with one or other of the diverse cultural groupings, which make up our society
- b. All cultural and racial groupings, norms and beliefs are regarded as having equal validity and value.
- c. All interpersonal interaction within the school will take place in an atmosphere of mutual respect and tolerance for each cultural and racial group's beliefs and values.

4. General tenets of this policy

- a. Sagan Centre acknowledges the fact that certain sections of society, particularly amongst previous generations, have been subjected to unfair discrimination on the grounds of race or culture, prior to 1994.
- b. However, given the fact that the students enrolled at Sagan Centre were born after the establishment of a democratic South Africa, and therefore have never been subjected to the institutionalised injustices or discrimination experienced by past generations, we believe that the principle of justifiable discrimination to redress past injustices has only limited validity.
- c. Sagan Centre believes that, in line with sound educational practice, the principle of corrective measures will always take precedence over punitive sanctions in the Centre's attempts to meet the aims of this policy.

5. Role of Sagan Centre

To ensure that the Constitutional Rights of those employed by, or enrolled at, Sagan Centre are respected, it is incumbent upon each and every individual at the Centre to make every effort to:

- Create an educational environment free from racial and cultural discrimination.
- Create an environment of mutual respect for, and tolerance of, racial and cultural differences. Minimise and negate the negative influences of prejudice and ill-feeling or hatred, as propagated by members of previous generations, on the youth of today.
- Create awareness among staff and pupils of the unacceptability of the use of racial slurs, "hate speech", derogatory or disparaging remarks based on racial or cultural stereo-typing, by all members of the Academy.
- Report behaviour patterns among individuals that are not responding to informal corrective measures, and, if necessary.
- Initiate disciplinary procedures in terms of the Centre's Codes of Conduct

6. Procedure

6.1. All forms of racial abuse by any person within Sagan Centre are treated seriously. Sagan will record, investigate and act upon such incidents and parents will be contacted.

6.2. The steps to be taken by the designated staff member/s on receipt of a complaint must include, but are not limited to:

6.2.1. advising the Complainant that the matter shall, as far as is possible, be dealt with confidentially;



6.2.2. advising the Complainant that late reporting shall not necessarily have negative consequences for the process of decision-making relating to the merits of the complaint;

6.2.3. with the consent of the Complainant, approaching the Respondent to explain the context and nature of the complaint with a view to obtaining further information and obtaining an amicable resolution. The identity of the Complainant may or may not be disclosed to the Respondent, depending on the wishes of the Complainant;

6.2.4. where the Respondent acknowledges responsibility for their conduct, facilitating a process to allow an opportunity for the Respondent to offer an apology. The terms, conditions and acceptance of such an apology will be facilitated, determined and agreed upon in a discussion between the Complainant and the Respondent, facilitated by the designated staff member, or any other manner that is appropriate in the circumstances. Acceptance of the apology does not preclude the

Respondent from facing formal disciplinary action in line with the Sagan Centre's Disciplinary Policy;

6.2.5. preparing a written report containing a summary of the complaint and recommendations on how to adequately resolve the matter and submitting the report to the person(s) presiding over a disciplinary hearing held in accordance with the Sagan's Disciplinary Policy; and

6.2.6. ascertaining whether the Complainant requires any further advice, counselling or support.

6.3. Any learner, staff member who is found to have contravened this policy, either through commission or omission, will face disciplinary action in accordance with Sagan's Disciplinary Policy.

6.4. Parents found in contravention of this policy will deemed to be in breach of their contract with the school

6.5. All reasonable options for redressing any harm suffered because of racism, racial harassment and contravention of this policy must be considered by the person(s) presiding over the disciplinary hearing.