

Truly embracing *Lux, Vita, Caritas*

A Commitment Against Racism from St John's College

Racism is a belief in the superiority or the inferiority of one particular group on the basis of race, colour, descent or national or ethnic origin.

Racial discrimination is behaviour that disadvantages people on the basis of their real or perceived membership of a racial, ethnic or ethno-religious group.

Preamble

St John's College espouses the values reflected in the school motto *Lux, Vita, Caritas*.

In all our actions and interactions, our community values should reflect:

- **Lux:** to be an example of inclusive education.
- **Vita:** to value human life and dignity in that life.
- **Caritas:** to do everything in love and care for all people.

Importantly, as a Christian school we are guided by Scripture, and hold to the truth that :

“ . . . God created humankind in his own image,
in the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them.” (Genesis 1:37)
and that

“there is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for
you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:28).

The externals of race and gender, of nationality and social status are of no consequence in how people are valued and treated at St John's. This document defines how Johannians and all member of the St John's community address issues of racial prejudice. In particular that,

St John's College rejects racism in any form, overt or covert.

1. Framework and Objectives

The act of racism creates deep and complex emotions of hurt, the effects of which may be felt immediately and permanently. The effects of racism deeply scar a person's life, producing anger, frustrations, feelings of shame, anxiety and stress that are often never forgotten and difficult to manage fully.

It is incumbent upon us as a project of citizenship, and as a school community:

- to uphold the fundamental freedoms and human rights as entrenched in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa;
- to have a clear anti-racism policy in place;
- to provide the channels to enable victims of racism to proceed in a practical manner to report and expose incidents of racism at any level of the school community;
- to assist members of the community to deal with the psychological effects of racism;
- to educate all members of our community to be understanding and aware of the impacts of their words and actions.

St John's commits to achieve the above through its its broader transformation initiatives.

2. Recognising Racism

Racism is not only recognised by adults but also by children and young people. Members of the St John's community should be enabled to take the lead in identifying racism, including empowering the children and young people to identify and report racism they see from adults or between adults. A racist incident is one perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person and may include:

- Physical assault and harassment
- Verbal abuse, threats, derogatory language, ridicule, stereotyped comments
- Racist propaganda: symbols, signs, graffiti
- Incitement of others to behave in a racist manner
- Refusal to co-operate with other people because of their colour, ethnicity or language

- The engagement in any activity which is intended to promote, or has the effect of promoting exclusivity, based on race.
- The denial of access to opportunities or failing to take steps to reasonably accommodate the needs of such persons.
- Institutional racism: biased policies, rules or curriculum
- Indirect racism
- Cyber racism
- Bystander racism
- Direct or indirect vilification of another person relating to race

3. Reporting Racism

The School will ensure that each incident will be recorded and assess whether outside parties such as counselors are needed.

Victims of racism will be shown understanding and given reassurance and support.

To achieve these outcomes, the School will:

- Set up a Transformation and Diversity Office.
- Appoint a suitably-qualified Reporting Officer/s.
- Place signs around the School and use its website to inform all in the School community about the Transformation and Diversity Office, and Reporting persons, and how to contact them.
- Maintain a register of reports of racism including the outcome of investigations.

Moreover, the School will:

- Allocate resources and responsibilities for the implementation of this policy and any policy dealing with discrimination.
- Develop, implement, review and evaluate an Anti-Racism policy, starting with the work of the Independent Representative Interim Committee
- Assist staff to develop strategies for addressing racism across the curriculum and in all classrooms.
- Develop strategies in the School for increasing students' understanding of racism.

- Continually promote awareness in the school environment in terms of racist attitudes and behaviours.
- intervene actively to prevent racism from happening in the School.

4. Complaints mechanism and disciplinary process

Any accusations of racism must be dealt with swiftly, efficiently and fairly via a complaints mechanism to be detailed in the school's anti-discrimination policy and will be dealt with by the Anti-Discrimination Committee. This also includes an appeal process.

5. Commitment

In a Christian institution, Jesus commands us to:

“Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another”(John 13:34).

All members of the St John's community commit to a stand against racism not only in spirit but formally in codes of conduct for students, parents and staff and in the commissioning of members of Council and the Old Johannian Association. This will allow us all to build a St John's that truly displays the qualities of *Lux, Vita, Caritas*.

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