

A Parent's Guide to Reporting Racial Bullying in Scottish Schools

Practical steps to protect your child from racism, racial bullying,
and discrimination at school

Produced by the Aberdeen Ethnic Minority Women's Group (AEMWG)

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Your Child's Rights

Every child in Scotland has the right to be treated with dignity regardless of their race, ethnicity, nationality, or colour. Racial bullying is illegal, and schools have a duty to prevent it.

Key Legal Protections:

- **Equality Act 2010** — Race is a protected characteristic. Schools must prevent discrimination, harassment, and victimisation based on race, ethnicity, nationality, or colour.
- **Education (Scotland) Act 1980** — Parents have the right to have their children educated in an environment free from racial discrimination.
- **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)** — Incorporated into Scots law in 2024. Article 2 protects children from discrimination. Article 30 protects the right of minority children to enjoy their own culture and language.
- **Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC)** — Scotland's national framework requires that every child is safe, respected, and included.
- **Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000** — Places a positive duty on schools to promote race equality and eliminate unlawful racial discrimination.

What Counts as Racial Bullying?

Racial bullying includes any behaviour that targets a child because of their race, ethnicity, skin colour, nationality, or cultural background. It can be direct, subtle, or online.

- Racial slurs, name-calling, or 'jokes' about a child's skin colour, accent, or ethnicity
- Mockery of cultural food, clothing, hairstyles, or traditions
- Being told to 'go back to your own country' or asked 'Where are you really from?'
- Physical intimidation or violence motivated by race
- Exclusion from friendship groups because of ethnicity or skin colour
- Stereotyping — being assumed to be 'good at maths' or 'sporty' because of race
- Teachers or staff making dismissive comments about a child's cultural background or name
- Online bullying — racist memes, group chat exclusion, or targeted social media posts
- Being treated differently from white peers in discipline, attention, or opportunities
- Microaggressions — comments like 'You speak English so well!' that communicate othering

Step-by-Step: How to Report

Step 1: Document Everything

- Write down exactly what happened — dates, times, locations, who was involved
- Save screenshots of any online bullying (social media, group chats, messages)
- Note any witnesses (other children, staff who were present)
- Keep copies of any school communications about the incidents
- Record how your child felt and any impact on their wellbeing, attendance, or confidence
- Keep a running log — racial bullying is often a pattern, not a one-off

Step 2: Speak to the Class Teacher

- Request a meeting (in writing — email is best so you have a record)
- Calmly describe what happened, using your written notes
- Explain that this is racial bullying and reference the Equality Act 2010
- Ask what action the school will take and request a written response
- Set a clear timeline — ask to hear back within 5 school days

Step 3: Escalate to the Head Teacher

- If the class teacher's response is insufficient, write to the Head Teacher
- Reference the school's anti-bullying and equality policies (every school must have these)
- State that race is a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010
- Request a formal meeting and ask for the school's complaints procedure
- Bring a supportive friend, advocate, or interpreter if you wish

Step 4: Contact the Local Authority

- If the school does not resolve it, contact Aberdeen City Council's Education team
- Email: education@aberdeencity.gov.uk
- You can also contact the council's Equality & Diversity team
- Request that they investigate under their equality duties
- Ask about their racist incident recording and monitoring procedures

Step 5: Make a Formal Complaint

- Every council has a formal complaints procedure — ask for it in writing
- Stage 1: Frontline resolution (5 working days)
- Stage 2: Investigation (20 working days)
- If still unresolved, escalate to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO)
- You can also report hate incidents to Police Scotland (101) — racial harassment is a criminal offence

Template Letter to the School

You can adapt this letter and send it by email or post:

Dear [Head Teacher's Name],

I am writing to formally report that my child, [Child's Name], in [Class/Year], has been experiencing racial bullying.

On [date(s)], the following incidents occurred: [describe what happened].

As you will be aware, race is a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010. The school has a duty to prevent discrimination, harassment, and victimisation on the grounds of race. I also note that the UNCRC, now incorporated into Scots law, protects my child from all forms of discrimination (Article 2) and protects their right to enjoy their own culture (Article 30).

Under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, the school has a positive duty to promote race equality. I expect this incident to be recorded as a racist incident in line with local authority monitoring requirements.

I would like to request a meeting to discuss what steps the school will take to address this and to ensure my child feels safe and included. I would appreciate a written response within 5 school days.

Yours sincerely,

[Your Name]

[Date]

Key Contacts & Resources

Organisation	Contact
AEMWG (Aberdeen Ethnic Minority Women's Group)	WhatsApp: 07440 685720 www.aemwg.org workshops@aemwg.org
Aberdeen City Council Education	education@aberdeencity.gov.uk 03000 200 292
Respectme (Scotland's Anti-Bullying Service)	www.respectme.org.uk 0344 800 8600
CRER (Coalition for Racial Equality & Rights)	www.crer.org.uk
Tell MAMA (Anti-Muslim Hatred)	www.tellmamauk.org 0800 456 1226
Police Scotland (Hate Crime)	101 (non-emergency) 999 (emergency)
Equality Advisory Support Service (EASS)	www.equalityadvisoryservice.com 0808 800 0082
Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO)	www.spsso.org.uk 0800 377 7330

Remember: Your child has every right to go to school without fear of racism. You are not alone — we are here to help.

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