



Talking to Your Child About Racism. A guide for parents/ carers to foster understanding, empathy, and inclusion.

Understanding Race and Racism

What is race? Race refers to physical characteristics like skin colour, hair type, and facial features, often linked to ancestry.

What is racism? Racism happens when people are treated unfairly or discriminated against based on their race, faith, nationality or culture.

What types of racism are there?

Overt racism – Obvious and direct, such as racial slurs or physical bullying.

Covert racism– Subtle, such as exclusion or stereotyping.



If Your Child Experiences Racist Bullying

Experiencing racism can lead to anxiety, low self-esteem, and social withdrawal. It's crucial to support children in processing their feelings and seeking help.

Listen & reassure – Let them express their feelings and know they are not alone.

Report & seek support – Speak to the school and consider local support services such as MEAS.

Reporting Hate Crime

If racism escalates to a hate crime (verbal or physical abuse due to race, faith or culture) report it to

- School staff
- Non emergency police 101 or in an emergency 999
- Stop Hate UK Merseyside 0151 233 3001 or www.victimcaremerseyside.org
- Wirral MEAS email: meas@wirral.gov.uk

How to talk to children about Racism

Being open to conversations about racism helps children develop empathy and awareness. Tailor discussions to their age:

Under 5s: Focus on fairness and kindness. Read books that celebrate different cultures.

Primary school children: Discuss how stereotypes form, and how to challenge them. Explore books about diversity and recent history.

Secondary school children: Discuss social media's influence, real world examples, current events, and personal experience.

Effective Communication Strategies

Create a safe space – Encourage open discussions where children feel comfortable asking questions.

Use age-appropriate language – Keep explanations simple for younger children; introduce historical and systemic discussions for older ones.

Teach empathy & active listening – Help children understand different perspectives and the importance of standing up against racism.

Encourage critical thinking – Talk about how racism appears in media and social settings. Ask questions like: Why do you think this stereotype exists? How would you feel if this happened to you? What can we do to make a difference?

Reading together can support discussions about race and racism. Here are some great choices:

Our Skin: A First Conversation About Race– By Megan Madison & Jessica Ralli (for preschoolers)

Something Happened in Our Town– by Marianne Celano and Marietta Collins. A story to help children understand racial injustice

A Kids Book About Racism – By Jelani Memory (for older primary school children)

All Are Welcome by Alexandra Penfold

The Proudest Blue by Ibtihaj Muhammad

Skin Again by Bell Hooks

Creating an Inclusive Future

By fostering understanding and empathy, we can help our children grow into individuals who challenge discrimination and celebrate diversity.

For further support or information contact Wirral MEAS

meas@wirral.gov.uk