

Anti-Racism policy

1.0 Policy Statement

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) of St. John the Apostle and Evangelist Church (St. John's) records its opposition to racist discrimination and harassment in all its forms, including verbal, physical, attitudinal, or biases, whether intentional or inadvertent.

There is a rich ethnic diversity in our parish. The St. John's community and wider Church community represents the whole human spectrum: people of all races, cultures, and ethnic backgrounds stand together in prayer, and they stand before God, equally, as His children. All ethnic groups and cultures contribute to the richness of our church lives.

St. John's Church upholds the belief that every human being is valued as part of God's creation, made in the image of God. Every person in the world is loved by God, who is the God of love. God so loved the world that Jesus was sent to break down all the barriers that divide us from that love and our love for each other. Love is the key to our understanding of how we relate and behave towards one another. As God loves all people unconditionally, we too at St. John's seek to live out that unconditional love in every part of church life.

2.0 Archbishops' Anti-Racism Taskforce

The Archbishops' Anti-Racism Taskforce was established in autumn 2020 to ensure greater racial equality in the Church of England, flowing *"not from identity politics but from our identity in Christ"*. The Gospel calls Christians to confront the evils in our society, proclaim the good news of justice, and live according to the social order modelled by Jesus, which specifically honours those who are marginalised (Luke 4: 16-21).

"Racism is a sin. [It] disfigures God's image in each one of us. Racial sin dehumanises people by taking away their fundamental God-given human dignity. Wherever racial sin flourishes systematically, either in society or in our church, we must challenge it together. We must repent of racial sin, turn away from racism and be reconciled, so that we may all experience the love of God." (Church of England Anti-Racism Taskforce 2021).

3.0 Policy Principles

All individuals are of equal value, irrespective of their background. Diversity is a strength which should be recognised, respected, and celebrated by all.

We value everyone for who they are and recognise differences, so individuals feel understood and accepted whatever their ability or background. We believe that we can become more inclusive by increasing our ability to understand the needs of those from marginalised and minoritised communities.

Racial discrimination is unacceptable, will not be tolerated, and is illegal under the Equality Act 2010. Racial discrimination includes:

- Direct discrimination: when someone is put at a disadvantage or treated less favourably because of their race, the race of someone they know or have a connection with (discrimination by association), or their 'perceived' race (discrimination by perception).

- Indirect discrimination: when a practice, policy, or rule applies to everyone but puts a person or group at a disadvantage because of their race.
- Victimisation: when someone is treated less favourably as a result of being involved with a discrimination or harassment complaint.
- Harassment: any unwanted conduct related to an individual's race, especially when it violates their dignity or creates an offensive environment.
- Institutional: *"the collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture, or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes, and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness, and racist stereotyping."* (MacPherson Report 1999).

For a full glossary of terms, please see **Appendix 1**.

Racial discrimination is not always obvious and might not be noticed by others. This may include:

- Microaggressions or micro-incivilities: subtle comments and behaviours that represent daily verbal and non-verbal indignities, whether intentional or unintentional.
- Unconscious bias: unconscious associations and beliefs that form outside of our own conscious awareness, which lead to positive or negative inclinations towards or against other people, groups, or communities.
- Stereotyping: having a fixed view of what someone is like and / or what they can do based on their race.

4.0 Church Membership and Mission

The PCC welcomes new church members from all cultures, including the global majority. We commit to welcome members of all ethnic backgrounds living in the parish, promoting their participation on parish electoral rolls and in the wider life of the parish.

In pursuing its mission to spread the Gospel among its members and in the community at large, the PCC seeks to take into account the needs and preferences of all the members of our church community. It is important to avoid subtle as well as overt obstacles to diverse participation. Such obstacles might arise, for example, in the nature of:

- Welcome to church activities
- Liturgy
- Instruction
- Social responsibility activities and community action

The PCC commits to use the cultural diversity that is present in our communities to enrich our liturgy and church activities. We encourage the inclusion of racial justice and anti-racism in the teachings, worship, and mission at St. John's.

5.0 Speaking Up

The PCC commits to providing loving support and advice to all members of the Church involved in an incident of racist behaviour, whether as the person affected or as the alleged perpetrator. 'Incidents' are those which

are perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person. We will endeavour to see such incidents dealt with promptly and as fairly as possible.

If anyone experiences, or witnesses, racism whilst working with us, in our communities, or in our congregation, we want to know.

We aim to create an environment where individuals can:

- Make a complaint relating to discrimination and harassment without victimisation.
- Feel confident and able to challenge discriminatory attitudes and behaviours.

All complaints will be taken seriously, dealt with promptly, and investigated as appropriate. Please refer to our Complaints Policy [insert link once ready] for further information on this.

Appendix 2 highlights how we will deal with racist behaviour in greater depth.

6.0 Responsibilities

Every member of the PCC is responsible for conducting themselves in a manner consistent with this statement in all their Church-related activities.

The PCC commits to:

- Create an environment in which individual differences and the contributions of all members are recognised and valued.
- Create a working environment that promotes dignity and respect for every member.
- Not tolerate any form of intimidation, bullying, or harassment, and to discipline those that breach this policy.
- Promote equality and equity in the workings and activities of the Church.
- Encourage anyone who feels they have been subject to racism or who has witnessed racism to raise their concerns with the Vicar and Churchwardens in the first instance (where appropriate).
- Encourage new members to treat everyone with dignity and respect by fostering good relations between all people.
- Regularly review all our policies so that fairness is maintained at all times.
- Designate an EDI Champion on the PCC.

7.0 Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed triennially, or sooner in response to new legislation, regional and / or national policy development, or specific demand and feedback, at the first PCC meeting after the APCM to ensure that equality, diversity, equity, and inclusion are continually promoted.

8.0 Relevant and Related Legislation, Policies, and Resources

- Equality Act 2010
- From Lament to Action, CoE 2021
- Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion policy 2024

- Complaints Policy 2024

9.0 Version Control

Version #	Author	Date	Summary of changes
01	PCC members	November 2020	New policy
02	Meg Murphy	September 2024	Significant refresh of policy, including: - updated terminology definitions - legislative changes - recognition of recent CoE Anti-Racism Taskforce work

Appendix 1: Glossary of terms

Race is defined as: race or colour; nationality (including citizenship); ethnic or national origins.

Racism is when a person is unfairly disadvantaged or treated worse than others for reasons related to their race.

Civility is the act of showing regard for others by being polite. When you show civility, you use kindness and good manners; you are respectful, even if you do not like that person very much.

Respect connects everyone at a personal level. It reflects an attitude developed from deep listening and understanding, cultural and personal sensitivity, and compassion. It honours all the participants in an interaction by creating a safe place to have difficult conversations, and leads to an environment of honesty and mutual trust.

Ethnicity refers to a person's identification with a group which shares some or all of the same culture, lifestyle, religion, nationality, geographical region, and history. Everybody belongs to an ethnic group including, for example, the English, Irish, Scottish, and Welsh.

Institutional racism is the collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture, or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes, and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness, and racist stereotyping. It persists because of the failure of an organisation to openly and adequately recognise and address the existence of racism in policy, example, and leadership. Without recognition and action to eliminate such racism, it can prevail as part of the ethos or culture of the organisation.

Appendix 2: Dealing with racist behaviour

When any incident of racist behaviour involving clergy, church staff, or congregation members occurs in the parish, the following steps are recommended if the incident is to be resolved within the church structures. These steps are without prejudice to the legal rights and responsibilities of the individuals involved. If police or legal action arises from an incident, that action will take precedence over any PCC action.

Making a note of the incident

In the event of any incident of racist behaviour, the people involved are strongly advised to write down exactly what happened, when, where, and in the presence of whom. Such a record should include any words used and witness statements if possible, and should be made as soon as possible after the alleged incident has occurred. These records should be kept in a secure, locked cabinet in the parish office, or in a secure, password-protected folder on the IT systems.

Informal response

Where comfortable, the person affected should consider requesting the alleged perpetrator/s do not repeat that behaviour, either orally or in writing. The person affected may go to the perpetrator alone or with a trusted person. We hope that many incidents will be resolved with understanding and respect in this way, though we recognise that due to the nature of racism in our society, it should not be the responsibility of the person affected to call out this behaviour alone.

Formal response

If such a response does not lead to a satisfactory outcome, or if the person affected is not comfortable confronting the alleged perpetrator, or if the person affected thinks that a more formal approach is required, then further action is necessary. At this stage, the person affected may wish to speak with a member of the PCC, church staff, or clergy to escalate the response to their jurisdiction. Responses will be weighed and measured on a case-by-case basis, and may include a (suggestions: a letter of concern; a discussion; signposting to resources). Where relevant, they may wish to take advice on their legal rights.

Incidents of racist behaviour which are not able to be resolved informally and are not subject to police or legal action will be dealt with through existing grievance procedures, taking account the spirit of this policy:

- Any incident which falls under our Complaints Policy shall be dealt with under this process;
- Any incident involving a member of the clergy shall be dealt with by the Diocese;
- Any incident within the parish which does not involve a complaint against a member of the clergy should be handled within the parish. The PCC may wish to consult with the Diocesan Racial Justice Action Group if an independent perspective is appropriate.