

ELREC disagree with council over racism in schools

Foyso! Choudhury MBE is the Chair of Edinburgh & Lothians Regional Equality Council. He has written to us to express the organisation's views on racism in schools.

Mr Choudhury writes:

Dear Madam,

Racism in Schools

As the Chair of Edinburgh and Lothians Regional Equality Council, I want to make it very clear that we do not agree with the Council that, "there is no culture of racism in the city schools".

We get many complaints from parents telling us about incidents in schools all the time and reports of racism have increased since the Black Lives Movement. This is not just the case in schools but many other institutions.

There has been a culture of racism in many schools both public and private for a long time.

We promoted and assisted with some work dealing with racism in schools, however some schools have dealt with it better than others by acknowledging that there is a problem and then making sure something is done about it quickly.

We have always said that no child should be facing or dealing with racism and educational institutions should be protecting our young people and Councils should be doing more to alleviate racism in schools and this starts with the curriculum and with external help.

Racism will not disappear until we all work together, from government level to schools. However, some schools need to acknowledge there is a problem, and seek help. If this truth is not accepted, racism will continue to damage our children. This is totally unacceptable.

The Council

The City of Edinburgh Council announced last month that they have drawn up a robust set of actions setting out how schools in the capital should deal with racist incidents.

This follows [an independently-overseen inquiry](#) into the handling of racism complaints by city high schools which highlighted four main areas for improvement.

- These are:
- Improving processes to report racist incidents
- Improving the culture in schools to clearly show zero tolerance of racist conduct
- Managing racist incidents sensitively and ensuring ongoing support for anyone reporting racist conduct
- Reviewing the curriculum to ensure it does not perpetuate racist or colonialist attitudes

Councillor Ian Perry, Convener for Education, Children and Families at the City of Edinburgh Council, said at the time of the report: “Firstly I want to apologise unreservedly to any of our young people who felt their concerns or reports about racism were not taken seriously or that their school has not dealt with any incidents properly. I want to thank everyone who has come forward and brought these allegations to light

for sharing their personal accounts and recollections and to the staff who took part in the inquiry.

“This will have been very difficult for our young people but hearing their voices has allowed this investigation to take place and has shown clearly what is needed to drive forward positive change in our schools.

“This was a very thorough investigation and as a result we now have a clear and very robust action plan which can only strengthen our commitment to dealing with racism. Ultimately, we all want every young person who attends our schools to feel safe and supported as they go through their education. I hope that the lessons learned from this investigation will mean that many more young people feel that this will improve as a result.”