

Recognising, Addressing and Reporting Islamophobia in Schools

🕒 Protecting Our Children 🕒 Strengthening Belonging 🕒 Building a More Inclusive Future



What Is Islamophobia?

Islamophobia is any behaviour that targets or harms a student because they appear Muslim. It includes:

- Bullying, name calling, stereotypes;
- Mocking hijab, prayer, fasting;
- Biased curriculum content;
- Microaggressions;
- Exclusion or unfair treatment;
- Institutional barriers (no prayer space, inflexible uniform rules)

Islamophobia harms learning, wellbeing, and belonging. Every child deserves to feel safe, respected, and included at school.



When Your Child Tells You Something Happened

1. Listen and Validate

- Stay Calm
- Affirm their feelings- "What happened is not okay."
- Thank them for telling you: "I'm glad you told me."

2. Gather Details by recording:

- What happened?
- Who was involved?
- Date/time/location;
- Witnesses;
- How your child felt

If the religious bullying continues over time, monitor and document how it is impacting your child's overall wellbeing including academic performance at school.

3. Check Safety

If your child feels unsafe contact the wellbeing team immediately.



Document Everything
Clear documentation strengthens your advocacy

- Keep a single folder with notes from your child;
- Screenshots (of online incidents);
- Photos (if relevant); Emails sent/received;
- and, Patterns of repeated behaviour

Reporting Pathways

It is appropriate and strongly encouraged to report any Islamophobic incidents your child may experience at school. The NSW Department of Education's Anti Racism Policy makes clear that all forms of racism—including Islamophobia—must be addressed promptly, respectfully, and in a way that supports student wellbeing.

Some parents may hesitate to raise concerns because they fear that speaking up could affect their child's relationship with the school or staff. However, schools are required to respond in a manner that upholds student safety, confidentiality, procedural fairness, and cultural respect.



Classroom Teacher

Use calm, clear and confident language: "My child has reported behaviour that may be religious bullying. I'd like to discuss next steps."



Wellbeing Team / Anti Racism

Contact Officer (ARCO)/Year Advisor
Request a meeting and bring documentation.



Deputy Principal / Principal

Ask for a formal investigation if serious or ongoing.



Request Written Outcomes

Ask for: Actions taken; Monitoring plan; Staff responsible; and, names of staff members your child can go to if it happens again



External Reporting (if needed)

- AAI Islamophobia Reporting Portal
- NSW Department of Education (public schools) The NSW Department of Education Religious Intolerance / Religious Bullying Hotline is: 1300 679 332
- School governing authority for independent schools or faith-based schools
- Police for threats, violence or hate crimes

Communicating with Schools

- Be factual and specific
- Use collaborative language: "Let's work together to support my child."
- Ask for practical strategies
- Make sure to send a follow up email after meetings and copy the school leadership within the email.



Supporting Your Child

- Reinforce pride in your child's Islamic identity
- Encourage open conversations
- Teach calm, confident self advocacy
- Connect them with supportive peers or mentors
- Monitor wellbeing and their progress over time



If Staff Are Involved

- Document immediately;
- Request a meeting with the principal;
- Ask for an investigation;
- Request written outcomes;
- and, Escalate externally if needed.

Role of Community Members

Community members including the Action Against Islamophobia team can:

- Support families in documenting incidents
- Encourage early reporting
- Provide culturally informed guidance
- Share ANIC/AAI resources with schools
- Promote multifaith safety initiatives

Parent Communication Templates



Initial Email

Dear..., My child has shared an incident that may constitute religious bullying.



Escalation Email

Dear..., I am requesting a meeting regarding an incident involving my child.



Request for Written Outcome

Dear..., Thank you for meeting with me. Could you please provide a written...



Key Messages



Muslim children have the right to feel safe;



Islamophobia must be addressed early;



Schools must respond;



Documentation strengthens advocacy;



AAI provides support.



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