



Tamalpais Union High School District Response to Use of the N-Word

“This word is the most inflammatory, shocking and historic word in the English Language.”
-Dr. Neal Lester

- **There should be no confusion around the usage of the N-word if you are not Black**
 - Is it okay among friends? - NO
 - Is it ok to use it if no person of color hears you? - NO
 - Is it ok if I change the ending from “-er” to “ah” or any other ending? - NO
 - Is it ok to use it if your Black friend “seems” ok with it? - NO
 - What if your black friend gave you permission? - NO
 - Can I use it if I am Latino/a/x? - NO
 - Can I use it if I’m singing a song with it in the lyrics? - NO
 - Can I read it out loud in literature/historical documents? - NO
 - Can I use it when sharing a story of what another person said? -NO

- **There is pain around this word:**
 - At diversity meetings, at Equity summits, students of color consistently report being offended by non-black students using it casually and harmfully in our schools, at social events and on social media.
 - Our Black students have told us it is painful for them that their White classmates do not know the history of the word and the pain it evokes
 - When it is read out loud in class, Black students report feeling offended and uncomfortable - even if a teacher has talked to them in advance. They are often the only one or one of two Black students in a class.
 - Students and teachers report not knowing how to deal with hearing it in casual conversation.

- **What will the adults do?**
 - We will ensure that all students and parents/caregivers are aware of this policy
 - As a school, all adults will respond with consistency when they hear it and address it - eg, “For 400 years that word has been used to destroy a people. We don’t use that word out loud at Archie Williams/Redwood/San Andreas/Tam High/Tamisal”. “I don’t care what ending you put on that word. It’s offensive and not allowed here.”
 - We will consistently enforce to ALL students and staff that the N-word has no place in an academic setting nor at our school.

- We will treat it in literature or historical documents with consistency - we say “n-word,” we don’t read or say the word out loud.
- Our classrooms are places where students know well in advance how it will be treated in class when it shows up in literature, media, documents, music, etc.
- **What will happen to a student who uses the N-word on campus or at a school related event?**
 - Any student who uses the N-Word will be held accountable for the harm caused.
 - The student will be subject to disciplinary action in alignment with California Education Code
 - The student will be required to undergo additional antiracist learning
 - The student’s parents/caregivers will be notified and required to attend a meeting with the student and administration

Resources:

1. [Nine Things Everyone Should Know About Race](#)
2. [Tips for Interrupting Racism](#)
3. [Antiracism Resources](#)
4. [What to Say When you Hear Something Racist](#)