

When Racialized Harm Happens: District-Wide Response Protocol

Co-Designed February 23, 2026¹

Draft 3.0 — For Review and Refinement

“Safety fast. Repair deep. Accountability always.”

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About This Protocol

A cross-role group of Edmonds School District administrators, parents, classified staff, certificated staff, and students co-designed this protocol on February 23, 2026. It is intended to provide specific, usable guidance for responding when an incident has a racial dimension — guidance that goes beyond existing Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying (HIB) policy, discipline procedures, and our nondiscrimination policy, which remain in effect and required.

The term “racialized harm” is used intentionally throughout. Racism names the systemic and permanent cause. Racialized harm names how that permanence is experienced in specific interactions. This protocol will not solve racism. It is scoped to respond to racialized harm within the district’s sphere of responsibility.

The test for every component: If someone new joined Edmonds tomorrow, could they follow this? If the answer is no, it is not specific enough yet.

¹ Facilitated by Dr. Jamila Singleton, Expansive & Empower.ED

Key Terms

Racialized Harm

An incident in which a person experiences harm because of their race or ethnicity — including slurs, mocking of name, hair, or cultural background, stereotyping, exclusion, threats, or actions that target or demean someone based on race, whether intentional or not.

Microaggression

A comment or action that communicates a hostile, derogatory, or negative message about a person's racial identity, often unintentionally. Examples should be provided to staff as part of training.

Person Who Experienced Harm

The individual(s) targeted or impacted by the racialized incident. Their agency, comfort, and needs are centered at every stage of this protocol.

Person Who Caused Harm

The individual(s) whose action or words caused the racialized harm. This protocol treats accountability as an educational process, not only a punitive one.

Restorative Process

A structured conversation or series of actions aimed at repairing harm, rebuilding the relationship, and preventing recurrence. It must be facilitated by someone with specific training in racial harm, and it must never be forced on the person who experienced harm.

Protocol Overview

This protocol has six components, beginning with prevention and education before any incident occurs. Each component has specific timelines, named actors, and guardrails. Components are sequential but not isolated — community learning and ongoing support run throughout.

Step 0	Prevention & Community Education — Before an incident occurs
Step 1	Entry & Reporting — What happens first
Step 2	Immediate Response — First 24–48 hours
Step 3	Communication Norms — Who communicates what, to whom
Step 4	Repair & Follow-Up — What does repair look like
Step 5	Accountability & Documentation — How is this tracked and reviewed

The linear order matters for response, but community learning is not a one-time step. People can support different phases of this process at different times. The protocol should wrap around the community, not run past it.

Step 0 Prevention & Community Education

This step is foundational, not optional. Without community education, the reporting system will not be used, the language of racialized harm will be unfamiliar, and incidents will continue to go unnamed. Step 0 is what makes every other step possible.

What This Includes

- Districtwide introduction to what racialized harm is, with clear examples of microaggressions, stereotyping, slurs, and exclusion provided in accessible language
- Explicit teaching that racism is a systemic cause — and that racialized harm is how it shows up in specific moments at school
- Introduction of this protocol to all staff, students, and families, including how to report and what to expect afterward
- Accessible materials for multilingual families, translated into home languages — including the reporting form
- Guidance on trying to resolve incidents directly and informally when the person experiencing harm feels safe doing so
- Clear statement that the protocol exists, so responses are consistent regardless of building or administrator

Who Is Responsible

- District leadership: Ensure materials exist and are distributed to all buildings
- Building principals: Introduce protocol expectations to all staff at the start of each year and when staff join mid-year
- School Counselors and SINCes: Support student-facing education and answer questions
- EAACH and community organizations: Should be invited into this conversation as partners, not recipients

Guardrails

- Community education must happen before incidents, not only in response to them
- Families must be informed that the reporting system is not connected to immigration enforcement
- LGBTQIA+ students' identity and status should be considered when communicating with families — student safety and privacy must be weighed

Step 1 Entry & Reporting

Reporting must be universally available, easy to access, and not contingent on whether the person who experienced harm is willing or able to initiate it. Anonymous reporting is available. Oral reporting is accepted. The adult who receives an oral report is responsible for filing it.

How Reporting Works

- A form is not required. Oral reporting, an email, a handwritten note, etc., may be used to report.
- A fillable online report form will be available to anyone — students, families, staff, witnesses
- Anonymous reporting is an option on the form, but with a notation that anonymous reports of staff behavior may be difficult to respond to adequately.
- Reports can also be made directly to a teacher, counselor, SINC, or administrator, who is then responsible for completing the form or reporting to an administrator.
- If a student does not feel comfortable filling out the form themselves, they report orally to a trusted adult, who will report on their behalf.
- The form will be available in multiple languages.

What Happens After Submission

- The reporter receives an email notification within 24 hours confirming that the report has been received.
- Confirmation states: follow-up will occur within 5 school days by a site-based administrator
- If investigation or data received indicates a major or escalating event, it is escalated, and an appropriate Discrimination or HIB report/intake is completed.
- Students are informed if their report may lead to parent/family notification, so they are not surprised
- The building's counselor or Family Resource Advocate may be brought in, if needed, to support the student and/or family in accessing community resources.

Guardrails

- Anonymous reporting is always available — this reduces barriers for students and families who fear retaliation or immigration-related consequences. Notifications regarding the limitations of anonymous reporting will be included.
- Some multilingual students and families may have a fear of formal systems — in-person check-ins and paper forms should always be offered as alternatives
- A student who reports should never be penalized or retaliated against — this must be stated explicitly in any forms and communications.
- If a family raises a racial concern they heard about secondhand, the same protocol applies — the form is filled out, and the process begins.

Data Use

- All report data is tracked and presented annually to the Cabinet and the School Board
- Data is used as a decision-making factor for training, resource allocation, and protocol refinement

Step 2 Immediate Response

The first 24–48 hours set the tone for everything that follows. The person who experienced harm must feel heard, believed, and safe. The speed of the response signals that the harm is real and that the district takes it seriously.

When Harm Occurs: The Adult in the Room

- Any adult who witnesses or becomes aware of racialized harm must address it immediately
- Speak Up protocol: Interrupt, question, educate, echo — (we are looking into training for this)
- Report to the administration (principal, assistant principal, supervisor) the same day

Within 24–36 Hours: Administrator or Designee

- Communicates to all essential parties that they are aware of the issue and will investigate.
- Any safety plans or follow-up information are included in that communication.
- The person who experienced harm is contacted and given a dedicated safe space if needed
- The person who experienced harm is told that their harm is real, that it is being taken seriously, and that these are the next steps.

What the Person Who Experienced Harm Needs

- To feel that they have a voice and that their experience is believed.
- Validation — not minimization, not “both sides.”
- Mental health leave time for the rest of the day and/or the following day after the incident — this is available to both students and staff
- Empowerment, space, and support — from a counselor or other trained staff member
- Clear information about what happens next and on what timeline

What the Person Who Caused Harm Needs

- To be spoken to separately, not in a joint meeting, at this stage.
- To have the harm named clearly and specifically — what was said or done, and why it was harmful.
- To understand this is the beginning of an accountability process, not the end of one.

Guardrails

- A student-to-adult harm scenario must be addressed using this same protocol — the protocol applies regardless of who caused the harm.
- If the person who caused or suffered harm is a staff member, union representation may be requested from the first conversation onward.
- Retaliation against anyone who reports must be addressed immediately if it occurs.

**The staff-to-staff, administrator-to-staff, staff-to-administrator, and student-to-staff incidents were identified as missing scenarios in this protocol. Future iterations will address it explicitly.*

Step 3 Communication Norms

Communication must be clear, consistent, and confidential. A common language should be used across buildings. Families and affected parties are kept informed without revealing confidential information about individuals or the process.

Who Communicates What

- Incidents may be reported to the administration by email, reporting form, or in person.
- A teacher or trusted adult may provide initial communication to students or families, but must include administration.
- Administration may convene a team to review next steps, confirm required communications, and ensure consistency.
- If the incident involves staff and administration, a district-level contact must be notified and included.
- For incidents with broader community impact, a counselor, administrator, or designee may provide student information, lessons, or support.
- Administration or a designee will review outgoing communication for accuracy and consistency.

Language Principles

- Use simple language: “The incident has been reported, and we are investigating.”
- State facts — do not characterize the incident in ways that prejudge the investigation
- Multilingual families must receive communication in their home language
- Maintain confidentiality: refer to “a student,” “a staff member” — not by name
- Communication continues even if parties do not agree — disagreement is not a reason to stop communicating.

Communicating the Process Without Revealing the Outcome

- Families of the person who experienced harm are told what steps are being taken, what timeline to expect, and how to follow up.
- Families are **not** told what consequences the person who caused harm received — this is confidential.
- If a student does not want family notified, this must be weighed against legal and policy obligations — in most cases, this is not an option (contact your supervisor if you have questions). Students must be informed in advance that family notification may be required.

“While I can’t tell you what happened to Student A, I can tell you that when a student experiences this kind of harm, we do the following. I can assure you that we follow this process.”

Special Considerations

- Multilingual families must receive communication in their home language
- If a family raises a racial concern they heard about secondhand, the same protocol applies — the form is filled out, and the process begins.
- Some students may not want family involved. Schools must balance this with mandatory notification requirements and communicate this tension transparently to students

Step 4 Repair & Follow-Up

Repair is not a single event. It is a process that is offered, not imposed, on the person who experienced harm. It requires trained facilitation. It is differentiated by the type of incident, the parties involved, whether it is a first or repeated offense, and the developmental level of those involved.

The restorative conversation between the person who experienced harm and the person who caused harm must never be forced on the person who was harmed. This is a non-negotiable guardrail. No timeline should override this.

Student-to-Student Incidents

- Administrator contacts families of all parties within 24 hours
- The administrator speaks with each student separately; joint conversations are reserved for restorative conversations and follow-up.
- Staff are made aware and check in with the student who experienced harm: do they want follow-up? Do they want reinforcement of school expectations with the other student?
- Within 3 days, counseling services are offered for support to any party who wants it
- If the student who experienced harm agrees, an opportunity is created to reinforce school expectations with the student who caused harm

Student-to-Staff or Staff-to-Student Incidents

- The administrator contacts the student's family within 24 hours.
- The administrator speaks with the student separately.
- Administrator speaks with the staff member separately - contacts HR for support.
- A staff member may invite a union representative to any meeting.
- Within 5 days following the conclusion of the investigation and related communication, attempt to have a restorative meeting for all parties, if the student and family agree

Staff-to-Staff Incidents

- The administrator speaks with each staff member separately first
- The administrator facilitates a discussion between staff members, with the possibility of a union representative attending.
- Within 3 days following the conclusion of the investigation and related communication, schedule a discussion and facilitate as soon as possible.

What Repair Requires — For the Person Who Caused Harm

- Education, not only a consequence: the person who caused harm must understand — specifically — why what they said or did was harmful.
- For first incidents: direct conversation, named impact, clear expectations going forward.
- For repeated incidents: education goes deeper— through a community repair project, a research assignment, or a presentation on the history and impacts of racial harm.
- Escalating accountability is not punitive — it is the mechanism by which behavior actually changes.
- **Racism must be explicitly named as part of the education, not just the behavior.**

*If a staff member is involved, they must complete additional training about racism or impacts of racial harm beyond all staff foundational required trainings as part of the repair process.

What the Person Who Experienced Harm Needs

- Mental health dismissal or leave is available for the rest of the day and/or the following day.
- Empowerment, space, and support from a counselor or trained staff member.
- Control over whether and when they participate in any restorative process.
- Regular check-ins with the admin and/or counselor after the incident.
- Assurance that retaliation will be addressed immediately.

Facilitation Requirements

- Any restorative conversation must be facilitated by someone with specific training in racial harm (the District will identify and train individuals for this). A generalist restorative practices background is likely insufficient — race-specific training is required.
- An untrained facilitator can cause additional harm in this process.
- Site-based administrators must ensure the restorative actions are not overlooked or skipped.

Community Repair

- For incidents with community-wide impact, repair extends beyond the individuals involved.
- Community education sessions, structured conversations, or schoolwide teaching may be appropriate
- Families should be invited into the repair process, not only notified that it happened
- EAACH and community organizations can be invited to support different phases of repair

Step 5 Accountability & Documentation

Accountability is not an event. It is an ongoing condition. Documentation creates the record that allows the district to learn from what happened, identify patterns, ensure consistency across buildings, and hold itself accountable for follow-through.

Documentation

- All incidents are documented at sites and centrally.
- Each report captures: the type of incident, parties involved (by role, not necessarily by name), steps taken, the timeline of steps, the outcome, and the follow-up status.
- Once an investigation is complete, the report is formally closed, similar to a HIB formal response.
- Reporter can request the status of their report at any time.

District-Level Monitoring

- Data is reviewed biannually.
- Data is presented annually to the Cabinet and the School Board
- Review includes: Are timelines being met? Are steps being followed consistently across buildings? Are there patterns by school, incident type, or demographic?

What Accountability Looks Like for the Person Who Caused Harm

- Regular check-ins with the admin and/or counselor after the incident.
- Documented follow-up: is the agreed-upon learning or repair project being completed?
- For repeated offenses: documentation of escalating accountability measures.

What Accountability Looks Like for Leadership

- The administrator sets and communicates clear expectations for all staff about this protocol.
- District leadership publicly commits to 30-, 60-, and 90-day implementation milestones.
- District leadership communicates progress to the people who participated in co-design and to the broader community.
- If the protocol is not followed, there is a named accountability mechanism, including training.

Forms, Tracking & Access (still in development)

- Because accountability is the final step, completion of the formal accountability form is the responsibility of an administrator — not a classroom teacher
- All staff are accountable for initiating and following the reporting steps — but to guard against bias toward students, teacher access to the final form and outcome record is limited
- Families receive a formal follow-up report modeled on the HIB process — including what steps were taken and how to follow up if they have questions or concerns

Cabinet & Administrator Accountability

- The district provides active support to ensure all schools know how to implement the protocol — the district does not release the protocol and leave buildings to figure it out alone.
- Periodic check-ins as an administrator group — not only individual building review — allow principals to problem-solve together, surface common barriers, and hold each other accountable.
- This protocol directly supports the district's goal of belonging and is part of its core work.

Trend Tracking, PLC Integration & Peer Learning (still in development)

- *Data is reviewed with guidance annually by administrators — including who is reporting, what types of incidents are occurring, which buildings have gaps, and whether trends are improving or worsening over time*
- *Peer-to-peer learning is built into the review process — administrators share how they are addressing incidents across buildings, what is working, and where they need support (structured as PLC or training)*
- *Annual trend review identifies systemic gaps — patterns a single building cannot see but the district can — and informs the following year's training priorities*
- *Accountability review is embedded in existing PLC and admin group structures wherever possible — it should not require a new separate meeting, but it must be a named agenda item with time protected for it*

Table Host notes were summarized with the assistance of Claude (Anthropic), an AI language model. Original notes can be [found in this table host notes folder](#).