

## RACE EQUALITY AND ANTI-RACISM IN CURRICULUM FOR EXCELLENCE LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT\*

### Purpose

#### 1. To:

- provide the Curriculum and Assessment Board with an overview of work underway across the Scottish Government Learning Directorate and Education Scotland to consider the extent to which the current curriculum framework and resources are meeting the needs of teachers and young people, and our statutory and equality policy duties;
- consider the potential impact of that work on both curriculum content and curriculum and assessment delivery within the context of the discussion on the UNCRC implications; and
- invite Curriculum and Assessment Board members to note the information and to advise that a paper covering the substantive issues will be prepared for discussion at the March 2021 meeting.

\* Note: this paper deals with the impact on the curriculum framework and practice only, and does not address wider activity underway regarding the operation of schools more broadly, for example workforce diversity, policies and procedures on bullying, arrangements for learner voice and participation, professional development to teachers, and other matters associated with the broader operation of schools and the education system.

### Context

2. Over June and July 2020, the Scottish Government Learning Directorate received over 1,000 emails and letters on the subject of teaching Black history, race equality and racism in Scotland's schools. In September, the Government's Expert Reference Group on COVID-19 and Ethnicity recommended that Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) be updated to include specific references to Black history and heritage in Scotland globally and to demonstrate how this manifests in present day Scotland.
3. Responding to these concerns, John Swinney, Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills, issued a statement in July and committed to meeting stakeholders to discuss these issues:  
<https://blogs.gov.scot/education/2020/07/14/Black-history-in-scotlands-curriculum/>
4. In advance of that meeting, officials in the Scottish Government's Learning Directorate, and Equality Unit and Education Scotland established three discussion sessions held over late October and early November to bring together key people and organisations from the race equality and education sectors to consider the range of issues raised in the correspondence and to be discussed further with Ministers. All three sessions featured young people of colour sharing

their experiences of education in Scotland. The report of the issues raised at the sessions is attached at Annex A.

5. The Programme for Government 2020 committed that 'In response to the Black Lives Matter movement, and one of the recommendations made by Scottish Government's COVID-19 Ethnicity Expert Group, we will engage with relevant stakeholders to better enable our children and young people to learn about Scotland's colonial and slavery history and the real need today to challenge racism, eliminate racial discrimination and advance equality'.

### **Legal and policy framework for race equality and race discrimination in education**

6. The Equality Act (Scotland) sets out the overarching requirements on public sector bodies in Scotland, and specifically in relation to education, the Scottish Government, Education Scotland, Skills Development Scotland, the Scottish Qualifications Authority and Local Government Education Authorities. This is reinforced by the UNCRC legislation and the Committee on the Eradication of Racial Discrimination. The Race Equality Framework sets out the Scottish Government's approach to promoting race equality and tackling racism and inequality between 2016 and 2030. As part of this, we are taking forward the Race Equality Action Plan (REAP) which contains more than 120 actions, 26 of which relate to Education and Lifelong Learning. The current iteration of the REAP concludes in 2021 and will report to Parliament in March. The next iteration, which will run from 2021-25, is currently being developed by the Equality Unit.
7. In addition to the legal requirements, Ministers have been clear that equalities – with a particular focus on race equality – and human rights must be at the heart of the Scottish Government's approach to all aspects of its work, in light of the disproportionate impact which Covid-19 has had on Black and some Minority Ethnic communities. Listening and responding to the voices of those with lived experience will be a core component.

### **An appraisal of current curriculum content**

8. An initial appraisal of curriculum content and the frameworks that underpin them show that CfE includes references and expectations supporting the learning and teaching of Black history, minority ethnic history and anti-racism, particularly as part of the social studies and health and wellbeing curriculum, for example:-
  - *'As I explore the rights to which I and others are entitled, I am able to exercise these rights appropriately and accept the responsibilities that go with them. I show respect for the rights of others.'* **HWB 0-09a / HWB 1-09a / HWB 2-09a / HWB 3-09a / HWB 4-09a**

- *'By comparing the lifestyle and culture of citizens in another country with those of Scotland, I can discuss the similarities and differences'. SOC 2-19a*
  - *'I can describe the factors contributing to a major social, political or economic change in the past and can assess the impact on people's lives'. SOC 3-05a*
  - *I have developed a sense of my heritage and identity as a British, European or global citizen and can present arguments about the importance of respecting the heritage and identity of others'. SOC 4-02a*
  - There are also opportunities to study Black history in the National Qualifications for History at National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher.
9. Education Scotland have reviewed the social studies Experiences and Outcomes and benchmarks and are confident that these provide opportunities for teaching and learning about Black history and about race equality in Scotland today. They have also developed a quick reference guide to key resources for practitioners to support investigations into Scotland's Black history and teaching about Minority Ethnic heritage and culture as well as the slave trade and Scotland's role in it. To better support schools to make diverse choices about how they approach the curriculum, Education Scotland officials are in the process of working to exemplify how race equality can be addressed through whole-school approaches which seek to build and champion diversity throughout all aspects of the ethos and life of the school, as well as across all curricular areas and not just Social Studies.

### **The impact of the UNCRC on curriculum and assessment delivery**

10. Consideration is underway on how CfE should be updated in the context of the UNCRC to ensure all children and young people learn about their rights in the context of the wider human rights framework and how to promote and defend them. This could also be an opportunity to consider some of the changes requested by LGBTI+ and Race Equality groups – a focus on equity would be a useful context for a review, and would also complement the Scottish Attainment Challenge.
11. CAB members will be aware that in line with Professor Priestley's independent review of the National Qualifications 2020 experience, the Scottish Government has asked SQA to work with the Commissioner for Children and Young People to continue to embed equalities and human rights best practice in the development of qualifications.
12. **The Curriculum and Assessment Board is invited to note the issues above and that a plan, expanding on the issues above, developed in partnership with stakeholders and Black and Minority Ethnic young people themselves, and informed by meeting with Ministers, will be on the agenda for their March 2021 meeting.**