



## **Unite response to the Maurice Smith Review into the protection against the promotion of racism in schools and colleges**

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**This response is submitted by Unite the union. Unite is the UK's largest trade union with over 1.5 million members across the private and public sectors. The union's members work in a range of industries including manufacturing, financial services, print, energy, construction, transport, local government, education, health and not for profit sectors.**

1. Within its membership, Unite represents thousands of workers in schools and colleges across the UK in support and technical roles as well as school nurses. Unite welcomes the review that you are conducting into the provisions to prevent the promotion of racism in schools and in particular the investigation into whether membership of an organisation that promotes racism is compatible with the duties and behaviours expected of teachers and support staff and whether affiliation to a group that promotes racist views provides grounds for barring employment in that environment.
2. Unite has long taken a principled stance reflected in our rule book that membership of a far right political party or organisation that promotes racism and believes in only representing the interests of one part of the community is incompatible with its own objectives. It feels equally strongly that such membership is incompatible with the duties and behaviours expected of public servants. Unite supported the decision by the Prison and Police services to bar from employment those who are members of political parties and other organisations that promote racial discrimination and subscribe to a racial ideology.
3. The general duties in the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 place public services, and as a consequence public servants, under a duty to eliminate race discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity and good relations between people of different groups in carrying out their functions. Unite does not believe that it is possible for those that have taken the step of joining a political party or an organisation that promotes a racist ideology to protect children and young people from discrimination and political doctrines that advocate racism.

4. Recent court cases in the UK that have addressed this issue and have created a precedent which in the view of Unite provides no obstacle to a similar approach being adopted in other areas of public service including schools and colleges.
5. Unite fully supports the government's objective to promote community cohesion and whilst that concept covers a wide range of issues, clearly it requires schools to operate within a defined equality strategy that embraces race equality as part of community cohesion.
6. Unite has adopted a strong policy which recognises that the British National Party (BNP) is an organisation which has at its roots an approach which is both racist and fascist and has adopted policies based on hate. Unite strongly supported a motion at the TUC Congress earlier this year which called on the TUC to support measures that make BNP membership incompatible with regulated public service jobs, such as police staff, teachers, doctors, nurses and others as appropriate.
7. It is against this background that Unite has no hesitation in urging that everything possible is done to protect children and young people from racially motivated discrimination and the promotion of political doctrines which advocate hatred and promote racist views. Schools and colleges are public bodies and are subject to the provisions of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. If they are to meet the requirements of those provisions then they must ensure that those responsible for teaching and guiding and supporting young people are not members of racist organisations such as the BNP.

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