



WESTMINSTER SCHOOL

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Dear members of the Westminster School Community,

Last week I wrote to the pupils and spoke in Virtual Abbey about the distressing events in America that have highlighted the systemic problems of racism that persist throughout the world and that affect all of us, and I outlined some specific actions to which the School is committing as we work together to educate ourselves and to improve.

I am now writing with an update for the whole school community on the immediate actions we have taken and to give you some more detail on our plans for combating racism in the weeks, months and years ahead.

It is essential that all members of the school community have their voices heard as we explore, together, how to move forward. To this end, we have established the Challenging Racism Committee. Chaired by two members of the Senior Management Committee and including a Governor, key members of the School's teaching and support staff and pupils, the Committee will meet regularly and on an ongoing basis to facilitate and coordinate discussion and identify actions and responses.

Key to the School's response will be consultation, and engaging with the Heads of School, pupil leadership teams, staff, parents and alumni is a key structural component in developing, monitoring and constantly improving the School's response. Here are some specific ways that we are seeking to ensure that we can encourage and listen to the views of all members of our school community:

- Providing opportunities for pupils and staff confidently to share their experiences both publicly and privately, through Tutorials, House meetings, society discussions, Peer Supporters, the School Counsellor, the Chaplain, the pastoral team, and through other members of staff.
- Ensuring that information is cascaded throughout the School according to a clear structure:
 - Tutorials
 - Heads of Year
 - Year-group fora
 - Societies
 - Pupil leadership
 - Housemasters and Heads of Department
 - SMC
 - Governing Body

Constantly seeking to educate ourselves is another key element of our approach. To that end, we will:

- Promulgate and regularly update a range of educational resources, which we will build into an easily accessible archive of material. To see examples of what is already under way on this front, please visit the intranet home page or see the Library's excellent Instagram stories.
- Identify specific opportunities in the academic and wider curriculum to discuss and address the issue of systemic racism.

As I indicated in my email to the pupils last week, we have also committed to extending the unconscious bias training currently undertaken annually by all teaching staff and by the Sixth Form to include all staff working at the School and all pupils. We are also reviewing our recruitment and admissions procedures to identify ways in which we can ensure a diverse school community that is truly reflective of the multi-cultural city in which we live.

These are challenging questions for us all and the answers are neither easy nor quick. As a first step, through the actions outlined above and through the hard conversations we are committed to having, we will identify clear objectives for introduction in the 2020-21 academic year, as well as a timeline for ongoing review and update thereafter.

We are immensely grateful to the many of you who have already been in touch with us to share your views and experiences and to offer suggestions to help us improve. This feedback is important to us and very welcome. Please do continue to share your views and ideas with us. We have set up a dedicated email address that will ensure all such feedback is passed directly to the Challenging Racism Committee: crc@westminster.org.uk.

In my email last week, I said that we, as a School and as a community, must recognise our privileged position and the duty that comes with it to use our platform to combat injustice and inequality when and wherever we encounter it. We are determined to do this better and, through effective and constructive communication and collaboration, to embed positive and permanent change. I shall write to you again at the end of term with a further update on our work and am in regular contact with my successor, Dr Savage, who will update you further in the autumn as we establish and implement our action plan for the coming academic year.

Best wishes

Patricia Julian
