



St John's Highbury Vale C of E Primary School

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Interim Head of School: Mrs Alice Shaw

Interim Executive Head: Mrs Tonnie Read

Monday 22nd June 2020

Dear Parents & Carers,

I have taken some time to write this as I wanted to ensure that as a school we had time to discuss an approach that we believe would help our school community.

Firstly, I would like to acknowledge the distress and shock many of us are feeling in the wake of the killing of George Floyd in America. I am sure many of you have felt the impact of this and I recognise the importance of people being able to voice their anger and hurt.

George Floyd was somebody's son and a father. George Floyd's life mattered and all lives should matter equally.

There has been an outpouring of upset, hurt and distress in many communities across the world. There have been demonstrations, calling for justice and an end to racism and discrimination. We are aware as a school that some of our children may be feeling traumatised by these recent events. As adults too, we may well have been affected deeply.

Many of the pictures which have been beamed across the world show people of all colours coming together in solidarity with the family of George Floyd, as well as to call for equality and justice for all.

As a school, we take a strong stand against discrimination and injustice. Through our curriculum, we want our children to be thoughtful and reflective about the causes of oppression which can take many forms and have deep historical roots. We want our children to do more than just tolerate 'difference'. We want every single person in our school community to feel appreciated, valued, celebrated and fully respected. We will always respond to unkind and bullying behaviour within the school community, should it occur, swiftly and fully, so that we all feel safe.

As a school, we will be discussing actions we can take to address the concerns that we know inequality has given rise to and as such we will be taking steps to question, review and evaluate what St. John's can do right now and in the near future, these include:

- Reviewing curriculum content to ensure that black history is an integral part of our teaching, drawing on both local and national contexts;
- Ensuring that in doing the above, we do not shy away from the 'difficult' history of Britain, e.g. its role in colonisation and slavery;
- Review teaching materials and resources so diversity is actively promoted;
- Staff will be taking part in working parties to review diversity in all forms at St. John's during the academic year;
- We will also have staff training for everyone to explore the key issues of unconscious bias, racism in a school environment and recognising racism and knowing how to respond to it, in the Autumn term;





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It is important to discuss with your children the many things that they can do to effect positive change such as read widely in order to educate ourselves about important issues in the world. All of our children have a 'voice' to express themselves.

I have attached an excellent, informative document on George Floyd and Black Lives Matters in order to support you with your conversations at home as a family. I hope you find it helpful.

Our children are the future. Let's support them in being the change that we all want to see and the change that needs to happen.

Yours faithfully,

Mrs Tonnie Read
Interim Executive Headteacher

