

# WOOTTON ACADEMY TRUST

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Monday 29 June 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

Like many of you, Wootton Academy Trust has been deeply shocked and saddened by recent incidents of racial disharmony. We have shared in the grief and outpouring of frustration expressed around the world and from within our own school community.

As a Trust, we are proud to be part of a richly diverse community where all cultures, traditions, beliefs and social influences are celebrated. We always strive to provide an inclusive learning environment in which young people feel supported, safe and respected. This work has been received positively by students, but we accept there is always more to do together to challenge racism and hatred in society. We have been greatly encouraged by the willingness of students to engage in student leadership at the Trust to affect change. It is our intention to set up a consultative group with students to help shape work around further improving inclusion and diversity.

Recent events have made it necessary to remind our school and college community that the Trust does not tolerate discrimination of any kind at its institutions. We take any such allegations extremely seriously and will investigate all incidents robustly.

Some of you may be aware that discussions have taken place online in the wake of the Black Lives Matter protests. We are very proud of our students who have contacted the Trust to tell us how they have been affected by recent events, including a small number who have raised concerns about experiences they have had in the school and college. We have been inspired by their commitment to affect change. Already they have taken a leading role in preparing PSCHE materials for Kimberley College students.

The welfare of our students remains our highest priority and we understand the profound emotional impact international and national events may have had on some students. In response, we have put in place appropriate support services to protect mental wellbeing, including emphasising these during the face-to-face conversations last week. We can assure anyone wishing to access these services that they will be treated with sensitivity and understanding.

I would like to make it clear that as an organisation, we stand in full solidarity with the rest of the world against racism and any form of discrimination. We would urge anyone, whether teacher, parent or student, who is aware of a racist, or other hate incident, to contact the Trust swiftly and responsibly at the earliest opportunity where the matter will be treated appropriately. We firmly believe no-one should suffer in silence.

For those preferring to talk to someone not employed by the Trust we have set up a phone line which will be answered by an independent person, engaged by the Trust specifically to receive information confidentially – the number is **07761 236684**. Responses will be shared with the Trust – with the caller's permission - to help us shape further work on improving our community for all.

These are immensely difficult and upsetting events, taking place at a time of national challenge and uncertainty. The Trust would like to thank you for your continued support in making our institutions a safe, secure and fulfilling environment for all. If you wish to discuss any of the issues raised, please contact your child's Year Leader in the first instance.

Yours sincerely

Michael Gleeson  
**Executive Principal**  
Wootton Academy Trust

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Kimberley 16-19 STEM College  
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