



HARLOW EDUCATION TRUST (HET) & CONSORTIUM (HEC)

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An open letter from the schools of the Harlow Education Consortium

Dear Parents, Carers and Young People

As a group of schools in the Harlow Education Partnership we have written a joint response to the ongoing events that have been triggered by the death of George Floyd.

We all should play our part in raising awareness of anti-racism. The issues in America have placed a focus clear injustices in our world and promoted the subsequent Black Lives Matter protests. For parents educating at home, and for us at school we have a powerful opportunity to discuss these challenging times with our children. We all know that before we can support a child to understand something then we must ensure we understand it ourselves. We all need to talk about racism with our children. We need to recognise the unidentified biases we all have. The terrible situation in America can be turned into a positive if it becomes the catalyst for an honest and open conversation with our children. It may be uncomfortable, and they will have questions. You don't need to have all the answers, but opening the dialogue is something we can all do. Our reflections above have been paraphrased from the following blog, you may find it interesting to read.

<https://theteacherist.com/2020/06/02/headteachers-letter-black-lives-matters/>

'Black Lives Matter', this is very true. A question a child, or even ourselves may rightly ask is that surely all lives matter. All lives do matter. However, racial bias means that not all lives are affected in such a negative way. It is a sad truth that black people are challenged by our society in a more negative way. This is why we need the stark and simple reminder that 'Black Lives Matter'.

The current anger, fear, and the recognition of such a racial divide resulting from the protests will have a significant impact on many children, as well as adults, in our communities. We recognise how painful racism is for many members of the community. As a school community, it is important for us to continue to commit to the shared values that diversity is a strength and an asset; that every individual has equal human value and that a secure and safe environment & peaceful conflict resolution are essential to learning and to society.

Across the partnership of schools our curriculum aims to provide opportunities to learn about the achievement of all, to discuss racial awareness through various lessons and initiatives. The work we do is not a one-time conversation, but rather a continual process of education through an open and ongoing discussion. We will continue to support our school communities; knowing that together we can provide opportunities for our children to be advocates for peace and effect change which will last for generations.

As a community of schools we aim to foster an environment where all members of our community feel welcome, valued, and accepted.

We stand together.

To support your child you may find the following useful:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/clips/zqvnvcw>

<https://www.premierleague.com/NoRoomForRacism>

<https://childmind.org/blog/talking-to-kids-about-george-floyd/>