

Black Lives Matter

The Norwood School:

Black Lives Matter – Our Pledge

‘As an inner London Community School, we strive to engage and reflect our diverse intake through our educational provision and remove all barriers to personal, social and academic growth’.

This is our intention but it is no longer enough. When our students and staff return to full-time education in September we should commit to becoming a more overtly anti-racist school community - a commitment that is non performative, sustainable long term, and demonstrated in everything that we do.

As an Arts School there can be no excuses. We believe in using the Arts as a tool to create an empowered, empathetic, culturally confident, visually literate and creative school community. We use the Arts to build cultural capital to create changes and widen access to opportunities. We specialise in developing strong communication skills. We provide numerous experiences to foster tolerance, empathy and understanding. But our curriculum provision must reflect this with more urgency. It must be more strategic and targeted; more representative and receptive. Recent events have appalled us and we must do more.

If our school community is to be truly tolerant and empathetic then we must understand the history of racism and the impact of racial injustice on the black community, on past, current and future generations. We have never shied away from dealing with important, controversial or sensitive issues but never has it been more important to talk. The staff at Norwood must lead the way on breaking down barriers caused by racism and unconscious bias. It is our duty.

The importance that we place on discussion, debate and learning from others must be demonstrated by supporting and encouraging members of our black community – staff, students, parents and governors – to voice their feelings and share their lived experiences. We must understand the sadness, pain and anxiety that a lifetime of self-censorship creates. We must listen and learn, think, reflect and act.

Our culture must be such that the classroom is a place where individuals can ask questions, openly and honestly to improve their understanding of black history, perspectives, achievements and culture. Our staff must believe that our young people will never understand social inequality and injustice if they cannot talk about these issues and be encouraged to do so in their lessons.

Norwood's workforce is diverse, passionate and determined to make a difference. It is our duty to ensure our young people master the knowledge, skills, social confidence and moral conscience to recognise and challenge racism effectively. We must instil in everyone the belief that ‘every voice raised against racism chips away at its power. We cannot afford to stay silent!’ Renni Eddo-Lodge.

And we won't!

Denise Webster, Headteacher
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