

28th September

TO BE READ OUT DURING REGISTRATION

Dear Students,

As always, I would like to thank the overwhelming majority of you for continuing to behave in the appropriate way and for your continued support of the 4 Cs. It has been a really positive start to the academic year. You are a credit to yourselves and your school. We are a wonderfully diverse school and we are very proud of this. We want all students to feel supported and celebrated for who they are. When students and staff join HWS, I always say YOU Highgate Wood because you are excellent and the most important people in the school. You and all of the brilliant and committed staff members who support you are what makes this school so great to work in.

Unfortunately, over the first three weeks in school, we have had several examples of discriminatory behaviour from peer to peer. These are behaviours that we do not want in our school. Discriminatory behaviour of any kind hurts people and damages the beautifully diverse culture of our school. HWS does not accept any form of discrimination. It has no place in our school and anybody who does not respect this will be dealt with seriously. As a school, we are about respect, consideration and celebration. We believe it is important to be kind to each other.

Discriminatory Acts or Incidents

As a school, our definition of **Discrimination** is the following:

Discrimination is when a person is treated differently because of some aspect of their identity. It is the unfair or prejudicial treatment of people, groups or an individual person based on characteristics such as ethnicity, nationality, race, gender, religion, age, disability or sexual orientation. It is comments and/or behaviour intended to hurt someone emotionally or physically with a focus on a specific characteristic.

At HWS, we consider discrimination to be unacceptable. Any language or behaviour of a discriminatory nature is not ok, and this includes students of the same characteristics listed above being discriminatory to each other. For example, at HWS:

- It is not ok for anybody to use the N word, even if you are black.
- It is not ok for anti-gay jokes, even if you are gay.
- It is not ok for anti-Islamic sentiments to be conveyed, even if you are Muslim.
- It is not ok to joke about anti-Semitism, even if you are Jewish.
- It is not ok to make fun of people with disabilities, even if you are someone working with your own
- It is not ok to be sexist, whether towards the opposite sex or your own. It is not ok to make fun of anyone regardless of how they choose to identify themselves.

Discrimination is not a thing to joke about – it is hurtful, and divisive. We will treat incidents of discrimination the same. As far as we are concerned, racism is no different to sexism. Homophobia is no different to religious hatred. Anyone responsible for such behaviors, attitudes or languages will be treated in the same way. Being the same race, gender, religion, sexuality, etc. of the person that you are being discriminatory towards will not be a protection – it is still unacceptable at HWS.

What happens if someone reports an act of discrimination?

- After an investigation, anyone involved in a discriminatory act towards a student or member of staff for the first time will serve a one-day Internal Isolation in the Internal Isolation Room
- After an investigation, anyone involved in more than one discriminatory act towards a student or member of staff will serve a more serious sanction, potentially including a fixed term exclusion
- Anyone involved in repeated acts of discrimination, despite all of the support they will receive to change could face a permanent exclusion

We have worked really hard at improving on our inclusive and celebratory ethos as a school and demonstrating consistently just how good we are when out and about in the community – and you as students have done a magnificent job in representing our school positively (although we know there is still much to do).

If you witness an incident which you deem to be discriminatory (as described above), then you must let someone at school know. Don't let others harm our wonderfully diverse and inclusive school or hurt the feelings of other students or staff. I promise you that we will take action on any information that I receive.

Please take this message seriously and continue to be the best that you can be by showing the outstanding behaviour that you are capable of!

Mr Cozier