

Croydon High School, Old Farleigh Road,
Selsdon, South Croydon CR2 8YB

Headmistress: Mrs E Pattison

Head of Juniors: Mrs S Raja

www.croydonhigh.gdst.net



Croydon High School
for girls aged 3-18yrs

GDST
GIRLS' DAY SCHOOL TRUST

9 June 2020

Dear Alumnae, Pupils, Parents and Friends of Croydon High

This morning I received an open letter signed by a number of our pupils, alumnae and parents. A copy of this letter is attached to this email and I thank those involved for sending it to me.

I welcome this excellent communication which calls for a review of anti-racism education at Croydon High School. I understand that the letter has been inspired, in part, by the horrific death of George Floyd in Minneapolis on 25 May 2020 and also by the campaigning efforts of the Black Lives Matter movement across the world.

I know that this call comes from a deep rooted sense of justice, a desire for equality for all and the belief that voices are powerful. This is something that I witness amongst our Croydon High community every single day. It makes me immensely proud. My initial reaction on reading this communication is also one of pride. I am proud to be part of a community that is prepared to stand up and call for change; peacefully, reflectively, with thought and with insight. But also with strength and determination.

I wish to acknowledge that what you are calling for is right, it is needed and it is overdue. Like you, I have been intensely moved and equally energised by events and reactions we have witnessed in the last two weeks. This has caused me to reflect upon my own beliefs and how they translate to my actions and particularly my leadership of the school. I know I can do more, we can do more...and we must.

Discussions are already taking place amongst our SLT, the wider staff body and my counterparts at other GDST and non-GDST schools. I have had a number of individual conversations that have inspired and informed me, but there is a long way to go and I recognise that this is a journey that we need to take together. Some progress has already been made prior to this catalyst; we are in the midst of curriculum review in both Junior and Senior schools, we have improved student representation and an analysis of our pastoral support has been discussed over the past year. However, I recognise that what you are communicating is a real sense of urgency. Consultation, listening and understanding are at the root of all meaningful change; and it is meaningful change that I am proposing.

Our community is calling for a commitment from the school's leadership and this is what I wish to give here.

- To review our academic curriculum, across all key stages, with the goal of ensuring it is as richly diverse as the school body it serves.
- To instigate a call for a fundamental review of the qualification system, involving examination boards and others in positions of educational influence, with the goal of positioning diversity at the heart of the process both in terms of examination curriculum and delivery.
- To enable our student body to fully research, understand and raise awareness of the causes that matter to them, supported by appropriate resources, with time dedicated to informed discussion in both curricular and co-curricular environments.
- To ensure our staff body is fully trained to meet the needs of all our students, from both an educational and pastoral perspective.

Juniors

Tel: 020 8260 7508

Email: juniors@cry.gdst.net

Seniors & Sixth Form

Tel: 020 8260 7500

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GIRLS' DAY SCHOOL TRUST

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- To continue to actively encourage recruitment of staff, invitation of external speakers and engagement with alumnae and other members of school community, who reflect both the aspirations and the diversity of the student body.
- To actively seek involvement from those within the school community, staff, students, alumnae and parents, who wish to be involved in the process outlined above, to contribute to its evolution and to hold us to account as we seek to move forward.

Our school was founded by a woman who simply would not accept inequality; for herself, but more importantly for her pupils and for the generations that followed them. I know that I am fully supported by my Senior Leadership Team, our governors and by our outstanding staff body, when I say that it is our duty to continue her legacy.

Today I will forward your communication and this response to our pupils and parents. The Senior Leadership Team and Chair of Governors have asked to be signatories to this response and I will also be inviting staff and governors to do the same. By doing this, I wish to make our commitment to instigate change public, to encourage engagement and to ensure that we can be held accountable for our progress in what I regard as the most important challenge facing our school community in its history.

Yours faithfully

Mrs Emma Pattison
Headmistress

Mr David King
Deputy Head (Pastoral)

Mrs Sophie Bradshaw
Deputy Head (Sixth Form and Operations)

Mrs Sarah Raja
Head of Junior School

Mrs Fran Cook
Director of Marketing

Dr Philip Purvis
Deputy Head (Academic)

Mrs Emma Webb
Assistant Head (Co-Curricular)

Mr John Nelson
Director of Finance

Miss Laura Threadgold
Deputy Head Junior School

Mr Anthony Spiro
Chair of Governors

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