

29th January 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

This is the most difficult letter I have had to write to you as Headteacher, to date.

Many of you will be aware that yesterday, a video showing two of our students using racist language was circulated online. The use of this racist language has rightly upset many people as its content is disgraceful. I am absolutely clear that discrimination and/or racism of any kind has no place in our school and I know that I have your support in making sure that we are able to tackle this kind of behaviour robustly.

Mr Black and I were made aware of this video by a parent to whom we are very grateful, at lunch time yesterday. By 2pm we had met to discuss the situation, review evidence and alongside the students' Year Leader, had interviewed the students involved before the end of the school day. All students involved, both victims and perpetrators, had received contact from us to discuss the situation before we went home. We have reported the incident to the Police and we are working closely with them to deal with this situation really effectively.

Having met with the students who used this racist language, this morning, I am confident that we have the right balance of sanctions and educational input to support all individuals involved going forward and I will continue to work with these students and their families next week.

I would very much appreciate it if you would take the time to discuss with your child(ren) that the use of racist or discriminatory language is never appropriate. It is absolutely essential that all of our students understand their responsibilities to respect and welcome other people of different nationalities, ethnicities, abilities, sexual orientations and needs. We are one united staff and student team at Holyrood and it is important that all of our students understand that.

I would also appreciate you taking the time to discuss with your child(ren) the impact of recording themselves and posting videos or images online. They need to understand that as soon as a recording is made and distributed online, they lose control of that recording and it becomes something that exists forever. A video such as the one made by the students in this case could affect those students for years to come and could affect their employment and future chances. It is absolutely critical that students understand that they must be absolutely sure that something is appropriate and safe to post online. They also need to be aware that creating and sharing material of a discriminatory nature is a hate crime and will be dealt with as such by the Police.

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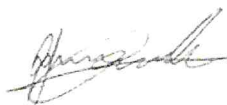
Tina Coles
DSBM



As such, I would ask that all of our students remove this racist content from their devices and social media accounts to ensure that this distressing material is not shared more widely or regularly than it already has been. Please do check your child(ren)'s phone and social media accounts to ensure that they are not distributing this material or material like it.

Thank you once again for your support of ensuring that our school is free of racism, discrimination and bullying. I am committed to ensuring that our students have a school that they are proud of and wherein they are valued and safe.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D MacCormick', written in a cursive style.

Mr D MacCormick
Headteacher