

5th June 2020

Dear Headmaster/Governor/CEO

We, the parents of the African Caribbean Education Network (ACEN), a collective of over 300 parents whose black and mixed ethnicity children attend private and grammar schools, add our support and voices to the open letter addressed to the nation's independent schools.

The original letter was penned by a collective of black, privately educated children and young adults, a copy of which is in The Independent article below.

We have been asked to contact your school by one or multiple parents in our group who have children currently in attendance. Specifically, they would like confirmation that the school acknowledges the current political and social climate, as well as the ways in which overt, covert, societal, and institutional racism presents itself. They would also like you to commit to your own further learning and direct action on ways to overcome it in your own environments.

For some schools, this is the first contact you have had on this issue. For others, you have already received individual letters from students and/or parents and your response has been openly identified as missing or unacceptable. Alternatively, parents have found your response to past reports of racism distressing.

Suggested actions:

1. Introduce unconscious bias training as standard for all staff, as well as provide workshops for students across all year groups
2. Talk to your black students about their experiences and take the time to understand what they are
3. Listen to their recommendations and create an open channel of communication to explain when those recommendations will be adopted or the reasons that they cannot be.
4. Hire a workforce that accurately represents your communities. We ask for all schools to review their hiring process and commit to becoming equal opportunity employers.

5. Ensure access to BME counselors for students. Where possible, these should be from, or as close to, the racial groups of your minority students.
6. Create, or facilitate the ability for your students to themselves create safe, private spaces so they're able to share and celebrate their individual make-up, in places of sanctity.
7. Adopt a distinct and specific racial code of conduct, with a clear set of non-negotiable consequences in response to racialised and racist incidents.
8. Commit to following through with these punishments with the victim as a priority, not the perpetrator – see the letters section on the 'burden of proof'.
9. Make a tangible commitment to diversifying the curriculum and seeking the voices of the minority group when seeking ways to do this.
10. Appropriately diversify your governing boards.

A record of the schools that have replied will be shared on request, as will their responses.

Some notable senior schools have shared their responses publicly, and we urge others to do so in an act of solidarity and support for your black students.

To date, **Westminster, Sevenoaks, Haberdashers' Aske's** have done, and at least 22 more have confirmed that their statements are in the process of being put together.

Please find a copy of the original letter attached and some press coverage below.

1. <https://www.tes.com/news/racism-black-pupils-tell-n-word-abuse-uk-private-schools>
2. <https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/letters/racism-black-students-schools-george-floyd-death-protests-coronavirus-a9542441.html>

Yours sincerely

The parents of ACEN (African Caribbean Education Network)