



June 2020

Dear members of the Tormead community,

The recent protests in the United States in response to the murder of George Floyd on the 25th May, which rapidly spread across the world, have drawn a renewed and intense focus on the issue of racism in civil society, government and private institutions and the way that nations' histories are portrayed and memorialised. With millions of people taking to the streets in solidarity with George Floyd's family and the Black Lives Matter movement, it will not surprise you to know, that we have also been asking what we can do, as a Tormead community, to contribute to the important national discourse taking place in the UK and the education sector as a whole. In doing so, we have taken some time to consider our response, meeting as a Governing body, with both the current and future Heads of the school.

At the outset, we want to thank current girls and alumnae who have reached out to us in great numbers, either through social media, or by writing directly to the Headmistress, or to the Governing Board. We feel incredibly proud of the constructive way you have engaged with the school, with a sincere intent and positive suggestions.

At Tormead we are very clear that racism has no place within our community and are committed to creating a school environment that is intolerant of prejudice and discrimination, in whatever guise it presents itself. We are proud of the fact that one of Tormead's core values encapsulates this spirit, "We treat everyone with respect and dignity", and were pleased that in the school's last inspection this was recognised, "Pupils are tolerant, and respect diversity".

However, we recognise that there is still progress to be made in increasing the representation of BAME students and staff, and are committed to further improving diversity and inclusivity across the school. We want all girls to feel that Tormead is a place in which they can learn and grow, and our staff enjoy teaching and working, irrespective of their background or ethnicity; and we want to play our part, as a leading educational establishment, in the creation of a more inclusive society.

We have therefore asked David Boyd, our incoming Head from September 2020, to form a group of staff, current students, school leaders and other members of our extended community, as a Diversity and Equality committee, with the remit of exploring ways that we can increase the representation of BAME students and staff at Tormead, and ensure our school remains an inclusive environment for all. We recognise that we are in a privileged position, as a school entrusted to prepare this generation of girls for life beyond Tormead, and want to give our girls the tools to counter discrimination in the wider environment.

We will also continue to look at areas of our curriculum, such as the range of writers in English, or ensuring the teaching of European colonialism and its global impact, and more specifically Black histories are covered appropriately. Our teachers are gathering resources and looking at how we can use PSHCE lessons, assemblies and tutorial sessions to engage current students of all ages, with the events of the last few weeks, and the broader societal issues they have raised.

Many of the images from protests in the United States that have been widely distributed across news channels and social media have been deeply upsetting and challenging, and any girls who have been affected or have questions, can always speak with their tutor, Head of Year or

Mrs Foord directly. We also encourage any BAME students who want to talk about their experience and any observations that they may have on how we can better respect their heritage to contact Mrs Foord or Mr Boyd.

We want this letter to be the start of a genuine dialogue between all sections of our school community and I look forward to updating you in the months ahead on what progress we are making to implement meaningful change towards greater diversity and inclusivity.

With best wishes to you and your families at this time.

Rosie Harris
Chair of Governors