

STATEMENT OF CONTEXT AND VISION FOR MAKING WADDESDON AN EXPLICITLY ANTI-RACIST SCHOOL

The *Waddesdon Way* promotes Dignity & Respect for all, irrespective of background, belief and race. We see all people as infinitely valued and cherished. In response to the murder of George Floyd in May, 2020, many sectors of society were galvanised into creating a world free from racism beyond mere words. We believe that Waddesdon School should explicitly uphold the values of anti-racism to enable students to flourish and live life in all its fullness.

Waddesdon is a rural school in Buckinghamshire and has an average number of students who identify as BAME* at 17% of the total student number. In addition, the members of staff who identify as BAME comprise approximately 9% of the total staff number. The attendance rate of students who speak English as an additional language miss more school than their peers in other groups. As a school we believe that it is our moral duty to address this disparity which may lead to issues in connecting and engaging BAME pupils at Waddesdon.

As part of our commitment to making Waddesdon an explicitly anti-racist school, we have assembled a committed group of students who are united in the aim of making Waddesdon an overtly anti-racist school. These students are passionate about de-colonising the curriculum and tackling systemic racism within the education system generally as well as in a way that can be applied to Waddesdon School. The group meet at least once per half term with staff members. Actions already taken include: sharing lived experiences and discussing research to support the establishment of a Student Vision; presenting to year group assemblies on topics such as micro-aggressions, white privilege and gaslighting.

There is a growing realisation that the traditional curriculum can be a barrier to a racially equitable education system¹. Waddesdon is exceptionally fortunate to have assemblies which can be a space for discussions of race, diversity and racism, social justice and identity more generally. But as the Runnymede Trust point out: "We should not let assemblies become the only space for this important work. Indeed, we should also ask why these issues ... are not embedded more fundamentally"². As a body of educators, we believe it is our responsibility to implement an anti-racist curriculum. Certain subject areas take a greater responsibility for this work, most notably History, Citizenship and PSHE, Religious Studies, English Literature and Geography, but all teachers and staff are teachers of anti-racism.

Embracing the challenge of greater racial literacy and decolonising the curriculum is something which will only come through greater staff understanding. We aim to centre anti-racism through staff CPDL to guide staff, especially subject leaders, towards greater racial literacy. Trained anti-bias, anti-racist educators can help to build a culture whereby teachers take responsibility for teaching in ways that promote anti-racism.

Waddesdon School already has stringent policies regarding bullying in which racism features. In addition, the Equality and Diversity requires all staff to 'Deal with incidents of discrimination as well as challenging bias and stereotyping'. We will use these foundations to develop anti-racist policies which will also feature how the school plans to centre an institutional commitment to anti-racism. It will also ensure that none of the existing policies inadvertently discriminate against BAME students.

According to the Department for Education, in 2018, nearly 92% of teachers in England's state-funded schools were white³. In the same report it clarifies that only 3% of head teachers within England's schools were from 'ethnic minority' backgrounds⁴. This lack of representation can leave students without BAME role models - especially within the higher positions at Secondary Schools.

It is our firm belief that a commitment to these principles are vital in ensuring that Waddesdon is a beacon of anti-racism where all students will flourish regardless of race, background and belief.

¹ Runnymede Trust, 2020

² Runnymede Trust, 2020

³ DfE, 2018a

⁴ DfE, 2018b

*While 'BAME' is an imperfect term – particularly because of the way it flattens the ethnic differences between those categorised under the label – it is used in this statement because it is widely used and understood, including in education research and policy

DfE (Department for Education) (2018a) 'School teacher workforce'. www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/workforce-and-business/workforcediversity/school-teacher-workforce/latest#

DfE (2018b) 'Statement of intent on the diversity of the teaching workforce – setting the case for a diverse teaching workforce'.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/747586/Statement_of_intent_on_the_diversity_of_the_teaching_workforce.pdf

The Runnymede Trust (June 2020) *Race and racism English Secondary Schools*.

<https://www.runnymedetrust.org/uploads/publications/pdfs/Runnymede%20Secondary%20Schools%20report%20FINAL.pdf>