

Thursday 2 November 2023

Dear Parent(s)/Person(s) with Parental Responsibility,

I am writing to let you know how the school is supporting students to process the deeply distressing situation in the Middle East and offer some advice about the support young people can access if they need help with their wellbeing.

### Sarah Bonnell School Vision and Values

Our school vision is to ‘**Work together to provide our students with an inclusive and equitable experience of school which empowers them to achieve ambitious qualifications, powerful knowledge, effective communication skills and the resilience to promote social justice for the better of all.**’ Our school values : **Be Proud, Aim High, Work Hard, Be Kind and No Excuses**, reflect this vision and our commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion and justice. Each of our five values has four strands which describe the norms expected regarding Learning, Self, School and Others. Our school response to the events of recent weeks is based on the ‘Others’ strand of our Sarah Bonnell Way: the behaviours and attitudes we expect students to show to other members of our school, local and global community.

<b>OTHERS</b>	I am proud to belong to a community that promotes <b>diversity</b> and <b>equality</b> as part of a wider British society.	I am united with my fellow students in a <b>sisterhood</b> supporting each other as <b>influential</b> 21st Century citizens.	I <b>collaborate</b> and work well as part of a team listening to others and <b>working together</b> .	I am <b>kind</b> and treat others in the way I would like to be treated, in person and online.	I act with <b>integrity</b> , and consideration towards others in school and in the wider community.
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Over the next few weeks we will be focussing on this strand of the Sarah Bonnell Way as we continue to work together to support students to understand their role as global citizens, know who they can talk to in school and express their views on issues like this.

### PSHCE Curriculum - developing students as Global Citizens

The curriculum at Sarah Bonnell is designed to give students an understanding of their role as global citizens. We plan lessons to ensure that students see their history, culture and experience celebrated, reflected and recognised in the learning they are doing in school. Part of our approach is to ensure that students have a safe and mutually respectful space to voice feelings and opinions on things that are important to them. In line with this, as part of our PSHCE curriculum, all our students had an opportunity, before half-term, to reflect on the news coming from the Middle East. During this Form Time session we :

- asked students to reflect on our school commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion and social justice
- discussed the meaning of the words Islamophobia and Anti-semitism
- reminded students that there is no place for racism or hatred of any kind in our school.
- reminded students of the potential for bias in the way events are reported in the news and in social media.
- gave students a chance to reflect on their role as global citizens and write messages of peace

Our approach to this issue, as with other similar political issues, is in keeping with the national standards for teachers and the DfE guidance on impartiality. This guidance makes it clear that

*‘teaching about political issues, the different views people have, and the ways pupils can engage in our democratic society is an essential part of a broad and balanced curriculum. It is an important way in which schools support pupils to become active citizens who can form their own views, whilst having an understanding and respect for legitimate differences of opinion.’*

That respect for differences of opinion is of course very important in our school community, and we will always encourage pupils to consider carefully the potential impact on others of how they express themselves. (Continued)

## **The wellbeing of our students**

Young people have had a great deal to cope with over the last few years and there are growing numbers of young people nationally who need extra help with promoting their mental health and wellbeing. At Sarah Bonnell we prioritise our students' wellbeing through the high quality pastoral support we provide. In school we have reminded students to take care of their own mental-health and well-being by taking breaks from social media and the news and talking to a trusted adult, at home or in school.

We recently took part in World Mental Health Day in collaboration with Young Minds and ITV for the 'Britain Get Talking' Campaign. As part of this campaign, students were set a homework task to encourage them to talk about their thoughts and feelings. To find out more about how you can support your daughter, please visit the link <https://www.itv.com/britaingettalking/> or visit <https://www.youngminds.org.uk/parent/>.

There is also a useful link here to a guide produced by the United Nations called 'How to talk to children and young people about war and conflict' [How to talk to your children about conflict and war | UNICEF Parenting](#)

## **A message from the Mayor of Newham Rukshana Fiaz**

The school has also shared with our students this message from the Mayor of Newham, Rukshana Fiaz:

*"I know that in our borough, and across the entirety of London, thousands of people will be deeply concerned about the humanitarian crisis unfolding in Israel and Gaza; and the impact it will have on community relations in our country as people protest. The right to protest is the cornerstone of our democracy in our country, but not at the expense of fuelling hate. In Newham, we will continue to stand resolute in the face of antisemitism and Islamophobia that seeks to divide our community. Our strength is the diversity of our people and our community bonds. In partnership with faith leaders and community organisations, we will strengthen our resolve to deepen understanding and respect."*

## **Finally**

Our school will continue to do everything possible to maintain a safe and positive environment for all members of the school community. Please get in touch if you have any questions or ideas in response to this letter.

Yours faithfully,



Rae Potter - Headteacher