

QUEEN ELIZABETH'S GRAMMAR SCHOOL

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19th June 2020

Dear QEGS students, staff, parents and carers

Equality at QEGS and in our Society

I hope that you are all safe and well. The green shoots of 'normality' are beginning to appear and the face-to-face meetings that have been held this week with Year 10 and 12 have been very well received and have really helped school plan ahead. The alert level has been dropped to '3' today and I look forward over the coming weeks and months, to seeing more students, more staff and more parents when able and permitted to do so.

Many things over the last few months have heightened our awareness, emotions and feelings. In particular, events and actions around inequality, prejudice and discrimination. People and society seeing and/or perceiving inequality is not acceptable on any front and there have been many efforts, initiatives, laws and strategies over recent times to ensure there is fairness and equality for all. One of the key milestones in this effort was in 2010, when the Equality Act became law to protect all people in Britain from discrimination, harassment and victimisation. Under the Equality Act, there are nine protected characteristics, which we all have:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race
- Religion and belief
- Gender
- Sexual Orientation

Unfortunately, recent events such as George Floyd's death and the 'Black Lives Matter' movement have shown that the 2010 Equality Act and other measures, have not yet removed concerns or acts of discrimination for many people in our society. This includes long-standing initiatives from sporting bodies, charities, employers and the education sector. Therefore, we all have to accept that this has not yet been enough and it cannot be 'business as usual'.

At QEGS, this has always been a commitment and will form the key driver behind the approach going forward. All staff, students and visitors to QEGS should feel welcome, safe, proud, should be treated equally and fairly and should challenge any action which breaches these key principles. Where this has not been the case, it is accepted that there is more still to do.

The academic and pastoral curriculum is continually developing, with staff adjusting and evolving their content and methods to ensure there is relevance, to stimulate thinking and learning around the key values of caring, questioning, exploring, giving and succeeding. Whilst many of the subject areas and the pastoral teams already cover the teaching around equality. The recent events around racial concerns have meant that it is right and proper for the existing strategy to be reviewed.

Many aspects of school life will be looked at, including curricular representation of all protected characteristics, career pathways and role modelling, guest speakers and policies and protocols. Most importantly, a stakeholder working party will be established before the summer break to ensure actions are fit for purpose, avoiding tokenism and include representation from as many quarters as possible.

I am sure that all of my staff, governors, students and parents would agree with the commitment of 'equality for all'. The difference of opinion is more evident when looking at 'how' best to achieve this and at QEGS it is accepted that this will be challenging. However, it is the school's duty, students' and parents' duty and the community's duty to ensure our society is safe, fair and inclusive for all, regardless of gender, race, religion, age, disability and any other protected characteristic.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'S Garrity', written in a cursive style.

Scott Garrity
Headteacher