



#Blacklivesmatter. Be an ally.



5 June 2020

BLACK LIVES MATTER

WHAT IS AN ALLY AND WHY ARE ALLIES NECESSARY?

Allies help to support those suffering injustice. Allies might have more power or privilege than those they are supporting, so they can use this to support others. Anyone has the potential to be an ally. Allies recognize that though they are not a member of the oppressed group(s) they support, they make a concerted effort to better understand the struggles of those who are oppressed.

On May 25th, 2020, George Floyd, an African-American man, was killed in Minnesota USA, while in police custody. This is one of many killings of African-Americans at the hands of the American police. This injustice has outraged and broken the hearts of millions of people around the world, many of whom have taken to protesting to have their voices heard.

At Highlands School, we stand against racism in all its forms, and we do not shy away from broaching challenging topics about injustice and inequality. We aim to ensure that all our students leave school with a strong sense of what it means to be a good citizen and can use their voice, passion, and education to make the world a better place for everyone. We understand that the death of George Floyd will have caused strong emotions within our local community, we are outraged too.

We support everyone in making their voices heard in a peaceful and safe manner that follow the lockdown rules set out by our government. This newsletter gives suggestions on how we can all do this by being an ally, signing petitions, writing to people in positions of power and authority, and being proactive in educating ourselves.

In solidarity with our Black community, we have created this newsletter to encourage dialogue, raise awareness, and to help understand how we can all do more to stand against racism.

An ally is
someone
who

1. Seeks to empathise with the struggles of marginalised/oppressed groups, even if they cannot fully understand what it is like to be oppressed or discriminate.

2. Stands up for issues even though they might not directly affect them.

3. Recognises their privilege and aims to use this in their efforts to stand up for those without it.

4. Might be emotionally affected by the struggle of the oppressed but recognises that they must prioritise the emotional trauma of those directly affected.

No one is born hating another person because of the color of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite.

Nelson Mandela

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5 June 2020

TEACH
THE CHILDREN
THE TRUTH



Hate, it has caused a lot of problems
in the world, but has not solved one
yet.

— *Maya Angelou* —

THE WORK OF AN ALLY

Being an ally is hard work. Many of those who want to be allies are scared of making mistakes that get them labelled as “-ist” or “-ic” (racist, sexist, transphobic, homophobic, etc). As an ally, there is much to unlearn and learn. As an ally, you need to be willing to own your mistakes and be proactive in your education. Just as society will not change overnight, neither will you. Here are some do’s and don’ts that are incredibly important as you learn, grow, and step into the role of an ally.

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO BE AN ALLY

Do be open to listening.

Do your research to learn more about the history of the struggle in which you are participating.

Do be aware of your implicit biases.

Do reflect on how you might inadvertently/unintentionally reaffirm oppressive behaviours.

Do take it upon yourself to use the tools around you to learn and answer your questions.

Do amplify (online and when physically present) the voices of those you are supporting.

Do learn how to listen and accept criticism with grace, even if it’s uncomfortable.





WHAT YOU SHOULD NOT DO

There comes a time
when silence is
betrayal.

Martin Luther King, Jr.

- X** Do not expect those who are oppressed to educate you on their struggles.
- X** Do not participate for the gold medal in the "Oppression Olympics" (you don't need to compare how your struggle is just as bad).
- X** Do not behave as though you know what is best for people who are experiencing oppression and discrimination.
- X** Do not take credit for the labour of those who are marginalized and did the work before you stepped into the picture.
- X** Do not assume that every member of a minority group feels oppressed.
- X** Do not tell or laugh at racist jokes.

- ✓ Understand that black people face struggles that others do not.
- ✓ Be intolerant of intolerance.
- ✓ Confront your stereotypes and misconceptions and be open to being corrected.
- ✓ Be proactive about inclusion in your daily life.
- ✓ Stop making an anecdotal self-experience (I've been there too...) discount what you are learning about a black person's story/experience.
- ✓ Start and encourage dialogues about equality and justice.



WHAT CAN WE ALL DO TO ENSURE WE STAND AGAINST RACISM?

1. Be aware of our unconscious bias.

Unconscious bias is how preconceived ideas about race influences what we expect of someone and how we treat them. Being aware of this is the first step to really being aware of the different ways in which racism manifests. Unconscious bias often results in actions referred to as 'microaggression' – anyone can participate in this unintentionally including Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups.

Examples of unconscious bias. Have you ever thought of or said these things to a black person?

- Why do Black people do that?
- Oh that's not a very Black name.
- You sounded so white over the phone.
- Is that your real hair?
- Look at my tan, I am as Black as you now.
- I love your skin colour.
- Mixed race babies are so cute, I want one.
- Can I give you a nickname or shorten your name? Your name is a bit long.



2. Understanding white privilege

White privilege is not usually intentionally done by individuals and it doesn't mean that all White people are racist. White privilege does not deny struggles that white people might face, e.g. poverty or discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation. White privilege acknowledges the benefits afforded to individuals on the basis of their race. It means that systems in society have been historically set up to give white people an advantage or to suit the needs of white people because positions of power have been held by white men. White people can use their privilege to challenge this unfairness.



Examples of white privilege

- White people dominating the front covers of magazines.
- White actors taking the majority of leading roles.
- White people holding most of the positions of authority and power.
- White young people disproportionately dominating the intake at Oxford and Cambridge Universities.
- White people are less likely to be followed by the police or stop and searched.

3. Be aware of cultural appropriation

This is when someone adopts parts of a culture that is not their own because they think it is cool. While this is not wrong in isolation it becomes problematic when products of the culture are consumed without giving the necessary respect to that culture. Cultural appropriation often makes light of things that mean a lot to the people of one culture – this is often unintentional.

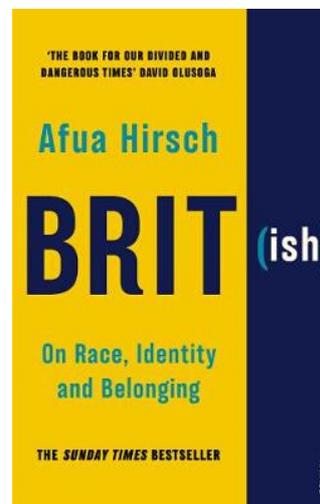
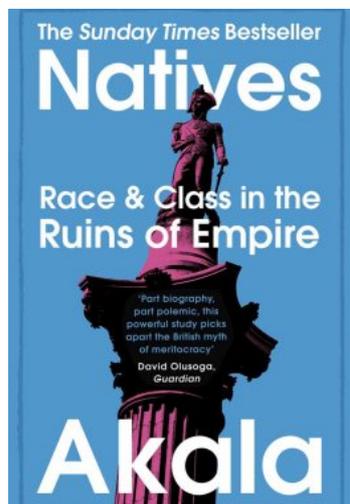
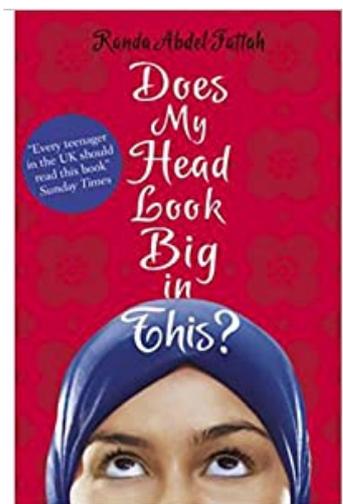
Examples of cultural appropriation

- Wearing traditional clothes and hairstyles from other cultures, without understanding the meaning.
- Wearing religious and tribal symbols when you don't follow that religion.
- Using cultural or religious clothing as fancy dress.

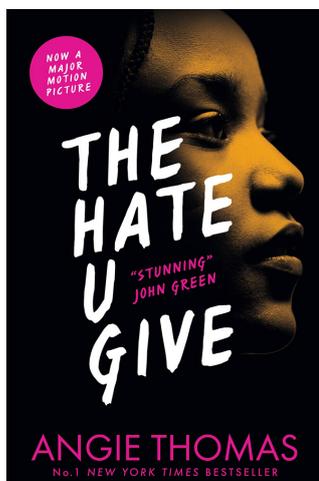




If you would like to do further reading on this topic, here are a few recommended books



'The Hate U Give' is in the form of a book and movie



Black and British: A Forgotten History
 Historian David Olusoga explores the enduring relationship between Britain and people whose origins lie in Africa. From the African Romans who guarded Hadrian's Wall in the 3rd century AD to the black trumpeter of the Tudor courts, David uncovers a history that is as surprising as it is revealing.

15 June 2020 at 15:00, BBC FOUR



FAQs on Black Lives Matter

1

What is the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement?

BLM is an organisation and movement that campaigns against racism and violence aimed at Black people. It is an international human rights movement. It holds protests speaking out against police killings of Black people and broader issues such as racial profiling, police brutality and racial inequality in the US. It is a movement working to achieve civil rights.

2

Is there a BLM movement in the UK?

Yes. The movement also campaigns against the issues raised in the American movement as the same issues face the Black community in the UK. They fight for racial and social justice in the UK.

3

Racism existed two weeks ago. Why are writing about this now?

Unfortunately, racism continues to exist around the world. We have talked about it before and we will talk about it again. At the moment it is in the media almost every day. Protests about it have reached a new peak and the messages of the protests are being shared publicly and loudly in a way that they weren't two weeks ago. We want to facilitate an open dialogue about racism. We want you to feel confident in how and why we always stand up to racism, and we want to keep learning and talking about this. Also, you will have seen in the news that there have been higher death rates in the BAME community from Covid-19. We will also be setting a PSHE lesson this week on racism. Racism is in the news in lots of different ways and we want to talk about it.

4

Why do some people say 'all lives matter' instead of 'black lives matter'?

All lives do matter. When we use the slogan 'Black Lives Matter' it is because we are talking specifically about the massive issue of racism towards Black people. We are recognising that it is a huge problem and we are saying it is not ok. Racism towards Black people, by definition, is only experienced by Black people. Imagine a street with lots of houses where one is burning down. Of course we don't want any houses to burn down ever, but we would shout about the one that is on fire. If we say all lives matter then we are not talking about, recognising, or standing up to racism experienced by Black people.



5

Why has the death of George Floyd gained so much attention?

Lots of reasons. It was completely preventable and senseless, he told the officers that he couldn't breathe and they ignored it. He also did not commit any crime and was suspected of a very minor crime. The Black community have been protesting about police brutality for decades and it has been ignored, and so this death is symbolic of that struggle. It was a very shocking murder. It was videoed by someone. The internet and social media means it spreads quickly. People watch it and share it and it is shocking and frightening to watch. There is no denying the facts of the video, as has often been done in the past.

6

Is this the first case of police brutality in the US?

No, there has been a history of incidences of violence towards the black community by the police. This is really well documented. Treyvon Martin is mentioned in the PSHE lesson, but there have been countless others for example very recently Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, Mike Brown and Philando Castille have all died.

7

What is the Blackout Tuesday hashtag about?

The movement began in the music industry as a "day to disconnect from work and reconnect with our community" and was organised under the hashtag "#THESHOWMUSTBEPAUSED". It spread across social media as people shared black squares to show solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement. The movement became controversial as people used the hashtag #blacklivesmatter which then meant that it removed important posts about protests and made information hard to find and reduced donations to charities and the sharing of petitions that are important.

8

How do I make my voice heard?

There are many different ways to have your voice heard. We support everyone in making their voices heard in a peaceful and safe manner that follow the lockdown rules set out by our government. You can choose to sign petitions, write to your MP or choose a creative way to protest or show solidarity. Use poetry, art or other creative forms of expression to convey your voice so it is heard without breaking any rules or regulations.



9

What can/should I do if I see someone being racially discriminated against?

Know that it is never ok. Always report it. Never put yourself in an unsafe position but tell someone when it is safe to do so. Offer support to the person. If you feel safe to raise it in the moment do, if not, speak to a person in authority who can help you with it. At home this could be your parents or other family members, in the community it could be the police or a community group, at school it could be a teacher or any adult in the school. Do not ignore racism when you see it.

10

What does 'rest in power' mean?

When a person dies we often say 'rest in peace'. Rest in power is a variation of this. It is often used by the Black community, and sometimes the LGBTQ+ community to commemorate a person whose death is considered unjust or wrongful. Rest in power is used as a call to continue a struggle for social justice and as a show of solidarity. It is a way of paying respect to a person who made a difference in the lives of minority or oppressed communities, or someone who has died too soon or senselessly. That is why you see #restinpower next to pictures of George Floyd.

11

What can I do?

You can make a commitment to notice racism and stand up to it. You should never use racist language. You can read about racism and injustice. You can sign petitions, you can write to your MP about issues in the UK. You can listen when someone tells you that you have said or done something that is experienced as racism. Do not immediately say 'I am not racist', or 'I didn't mean it to be racist'. You have grown up in a society where racism exists and so you will make mistakes and do things wrong. You should listen, apologise, and then make sure you don't make the same mistake again.