



Founded 1922

HERSCHEL  
GIRLS SCHOOL

## HERSCHEL ANTI-RACISM STATEMENT

### 1. WE BELIEVE...

- ... that Herschel is still deeply entrenched within a racially divided, radically unequal society rooted in our nation's past and that its processes and practices have yet to address and adequately heal the wounds arising from generations of trauma and injustice.
- ... that to be passive in the face of injustice is to be complicit.
- ... that race and racism are not well understood – 'race' is a social construct, but race is mistakenly and widely used to denote difference. A simplistic definition of racism, as intentional acts of racial discrimination committed by immoral individuals, obscures the fact that racism is a system of power dynamics into which people are born and socialised.
- ... that it is important to address racism at a systemic level by looking at where it is embedded in our school. Therefore, we understand that anti-racism action is manifested in tangible institutional and behavioural change.
- ... that race inequality cannot be tackled half-heartedly or by sporadic, once-off, disconnected initiatives; Herschel's actions need to be well planned, strategic, sustainable and taken seriously by all stakeholders.
- ... that the labour of racial transformation must not fall to those who have borne, and continue to bear, the burdens of a racist, oppressive past.
- ... that you do not have to be from an ethnic minority background to tackle the causes of racism, but that you do need to listen to the experiences of people of colour and never assume you know what is needed to address the problem.
- ... that identities and experiences of discrimination are multifaceted; young women of colour at Herschel encounter multiple barriers and forms of oppression pivoting not only on race, but gender, class and creed, therefore it is an imperative that Herschel's approach to reversing the injustices of the past is feminist and intersectional.
- ... that the dominant culture of Herschel must consistently further anti-racism through an unashamedly authentic engagement with the legacies of the past in the present.
- ... that there is still much more to be done.

## **2. WE HAVE AS OUR MISSION...**

- ... a healing of the racial divisions of the past, and a future for the school based on equality, unity, peace, democratic values and social justice.
- ... the laying of a secure foundation at Herschel of radical respect for fundamental human rights.
- ... the prevention and alleviation of pain at Herschel rooted in racial strife, hatred, guilt and indifference.
- ... the realisation of a Herschel in which zero tolerance of racism in all places and manifestations fundamentally underscores all policy and protocols.
- ... the building of a learning and working environment at Herschel which protects and celebrates the freedom, identity, uniqueness and dignity of all students, guardians and parents, staff and stakeholders of colour.
- ... the empowerment of the individual at Herschel through representation, and provision of fairness in access, opportunity, experience, and outcome regardless of colour, race, class, belief or gender.

## **3. WE COMMIT OURSELVES TO...**

- ... championing race inclusion and to taking a stand against racism and discrimination, both at Herschel, and in our communities and nation.
- ... ongoing, honest conversation about race and racism, not only at Herschel, but in our communities, nation and the world.
- ... making tangible a culture of deep respect for difference and diversity of experience, needs and desires at Herschel.
- ... ensuring that issues related to race, diversity and inclusivity remain a permanent item on every meeting's agenda and are recorded in its minutes.
- ... ensuring that there are open communication channels and platforms where individuals within the Herschel community will be able to report incidents of racism.
- ... building cultures of trust, where any member of the Herschel community who experiences racism feels secure and confident to report it and speak out against it, safe in the knowledge that they will be listened to in good faith and that action will be taken.
- ... treating allegations of racism seriously and sincerely, and to act with purpose, addressing its causes and consequences.

- ... the provision of safe and supportive spaces for people of colour to meet, where experiences can be shared and unpacked. We are committed to the fact that safe spaces are also required for expression of outrage when injustices occur.
  - ... to resourcing such safe spaces and ensuring that it is supported by Management and the Council of Herschel.
  
- ... actively consulting with people of colour and inviting them to contribute their views from their lived experience both in society and as a member of the Herschel community.
  - ... to resisting the expectation that those who speak out and mobilise against racism will solve the school's racism problem or "teach" the rest of the school.
  
  - ... to requiring members of 'dominant' groups to consistently undertake the personal and collective work required to advance racial justice at Herschel, and in their wider communities.
  
- ... the ongoing creation and delivery of anti-racism curricula which consciously and courageously advances knowledge and understanding of race and racism as powerful forces and dynamics which continue to shape the world into which we are all born and socialised.
  
- ... above all, bringing into being a Herschel in which students and staff feel a genuine sense of belonging.