



Monday 6th September 2021

Dear parents,

I am writing to you as we start a new school year about the importance of equality and teaching the children about treating others with respect and without bias.

Within the aspire community we have children from different backgrounds, cultures and ethnicities. Children and families who speak different languages, and of different religions. We have children with one parent, children living with foster parents, or with a wider family as well as children living with both parents and within blended families.

All of the children are growing up in a world where war, immigration, hate crime and racism are regularly featured on the news. Even a positive event such as England's success within the football world cup was spoiled by the racist comments by some fans. Children are growing up in a digital age where comments made on line can be just as hurtful as those made in person.

I firmly believe that school should be a place of equality and opportunity for all children, where colour, religion, ethnicity, gender, family background are not barriers. Effort, achievement and choices made by the child and parents in how they behave and treat others are what should determine how successful children are in school.

Racism and discrimination of any kind will not be tolerated in any of the aspire schools, and this includes verbal comments, leaving children out on account of their differences, teasing, physical aggression. All incidents of this type have to be reported to Kent County Council and will be taken very seriously by staff.

When I was growing up I was taught ' Treat others as you would like to be treated'. This still stands today, the children within school will be taught about various cultures and religions in school and will discuss friendships and the importance of kindness and respect. Children are naturally curious and will ask questions about the differences between themselves and others. What we need to do is then teach them not to judge.

A person is not defined by the colour of their skin, the God they choose to worship, who they live with, the language they speak or the type of home they live in. Children have no choice as to the culture they are born into, or the family and should be proud of where they come from, their roots. They are defined by the choices they make and the way they choose to treat others.

I am sure many of you have similar values to those of aspire, however you can support the school and your child by answering your child's questions about the children and adults they meet in school without bias and judgement. Teaching your children that equality and respect are all important, and demonstrating it yourselves throughout your daily life. Many families find that watching a child friendly version of the news such as news round allows questions to be answered about why some people do experienced things they shouldn't such as racism, and why our country is ethnically diverse.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter. I look forward to working with you over the next few months

Kind regards,

Emma Hickling
Executive Headteacher
Aspire Federation