

Anti-Racism Statement

Anti-racism Statement

The Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship acknowledges the injustice and discrimination faced by people of colour in the UK and around the world over multiple generations. We recognise the immense damage this has done and the impact such discrimination continues to have on the members of those communities as regards being treated equally and pursue their hopes and dreams in life freely.

It is fundamental to the ethos of Steiner Waldorf education that we be engaged in a continual process of enquiry, self-education and self-reflection both as individuals and as organisations. At SWSF we have been going through such a process in discussing issues of racism. This statement is a result of this process.

Being anti-racist

SWSF acknowledges that racism permeates much of society and is committed to being an anti-racist organisation. This means we will take conscious steps to identify, address and oppose racism and racist activity.

Rudolf Steiner

Rudolf Steiner provided insights, indications and understanding of child development that form the basis of Steiner Waldorf Education as it has developed in the UK today. It is an education philosophy that puts at its heart respect for the unique nature of each human being. However there are some statements in Steiner's work which we acknowledge are racist and we wholeheartedly repudiate them. They sit in contrast with the bulk of Steiner's work which puts at its heart the equal value, dignity and potential of each human being and do not reflect the values of this organisation or the wider Steiner Waldorf Education movement in the UK.

Our responsibility to bring change

We acknowledge that we have a responsibility to do all we can to address issues of racism particularly in our work with schools and the children and families they serve. Any effort to exclude or disparage specific groups of types of people, including through unconscious action, is contrary to the fundamental ethos of Steiner Waldorf Education.

We recognise that our own organisation and the Steiner Waldorf education movement in the UK lack diversity. We are working to change that situation and undertake to monitor and regularly review our progress in doing so. We are committed to becoming an inclusive organisation and will support schools to take on and develop ways of promoting equality and diversity in all aspects of running a school.

We will also support schools to incorporate anti-racist and inclusive approaches throughout the curriculum and in their work with families. We will encourage them to include pupils in this process, integrating knowledge, understanding and recognition of racism and how to build an inclusive society as part of their education.

We realise we will make mistakes but we will endeavour to listen, be open and learn. We will seek partnerships that will support this work and encourage people to come forward with feedback and suggestions. We recognise that this will be a continuing process and that fundamental change takes time.

This is a statement which reflects our values, intentions and actions. It is a living document and we encourage debate and discussion regarding the issues within it and invite feedback and welcome comment from any person.

Actions taken by SWSF to promote a more diverse and inclusive school movement in the UK include:

- Three-day teachers conference held in April 21 on the theme of Diversity and Inclusion brought together 500 delegates from the UK and around the world to discuss solutions for creating a more inclusive movement. Sessions included “Experience Decolonising the Waldorf High School Curriculum” and “Developing a Culture of Anti-bias in Steiner Waldorf Early Childhood Programme”
- Presentations and workshops from the teachers conference are available to schools to use as a resource for training and consciousness raising
- All schools asked to create Racial Equality and Diversity Leads to champion and support anti-discrimination work in each schools, including in the curriculum
- An SWSF Network Group for Racial Equality and Diversity Leads supports the work in schools with regular meetings, training and initiatives
- Development of a new MACRO curriculum which provides the basis upon which schools can decolonise their MESO and MICRO curricular. A resource hub is currently under construction that will provide specific ideas and guidance
- Training delivered by Equaliteach (ongoing)
- Development of a resource hub for teachers covering race and other diversity issues

Steiner Waldorf Education Worldwide

The Steiner Waldorf Education movement has grown exponentially across the world and exists in over 90 countries including India, Kenya, China, Taiwan and the Middle East. Schools thrive in an array of diverse cultures and spiritual beliefs and bring people together. Waldorf Schools were some of the first schools in South Africa to educate white and black children in the same class. In the Middle East the Ein Bastan school on the West Bank brings together Arab and Jewish colleagues to work side by side educating Arab and Jewish children together. In Northern Ireland the Holywood Steiner School was the first school to teach both Catholic and Protestant children together.