

June 4, 2020

To our King David Community,

For the last week I have been watching, to use the description of our Prime Minister, “in horror” at what has been happening south of the border. This has been a topic of ongoing conversation at both work and home, and it has raised many questions. Primary among them is when must we, as a school community, take a public stand that is outside our students’ classroom realm?

It’s not difficult to see injustice is everywhere, happening daily, and at completely unconscionable levels. What is our school’s role in responding? What is our obligation, as a Jewish School and knowing the pervasive history of discrimination and persecution of the Jewish people that still continues today? I find myself in unfamiliar territory as to how to respond.

I believe we need to be unequivocal. Systemic or institutionalized racism is wrong. That George Floyd died at the hands of those sworn to serve and protect him is beyond comprehension. That murders of this type have happened repeatedly to countless people of colour is also reprehensible. We mourn the losses the many families and loved ones are experiencing.

How would I advise our students and our community to make sense of this “horror”? My instinct as an educator is to have conversations with our young people. My advice is to listen, to learn, to seek understanding and to exercise compassion. I know our teachers have been helping our students consider the news they watch and the tweets they read. Our Friday program this week will focus discussions for our students so that they can begin, or continue, to unpack how they internalize and respond to a video and a reality that cannot be excused.

As Jews we talk about “never again”. As a child of a Holocaust survivor, I know these words and I must believe that this obligation extends beyond borders, ethnicity and skin colour. We all have a role to play; call it social responsibility, menschlichkeit, or empathy, it’s all rooted in caring and kindness. It’s the commonality we must seek; it’s about striving for a humanity of which we can all belong equally.

On behalf of our King David School Community,
Russ

Resources:

I encourage you to do your own research but as a place to start, [click here](#).

Russ Klein
Head of School