

June 15th, 2021

Robin Appleby
Head of School
The American School in London
One Waverley Place
London NW8 0NP

by email to: robin_appleby@asl.org

Dear Robin,

Re: Institutional racism at ASL

We are a group of current ASL parents. We write to express our grave concerns about the approach that ASL has taken in response to the tragic murder of George Floyd last year and the spotlight it has shone on contemporary race relations in the USA, UK and elsewhere in the world.

In our view, ASL's approach is deeply counterproductive; has sought to indoctrinate our children and other ASL students into a controversial and divisive political ideology known as "Critical Race Theory", which we regard as racist and fundamentally at odds with our values; has promoted a partisan, extremist and antisemitic organization, Black Lives Matter (which is distinct from the noble and unimpeachable sentiment that "black lives matter") whose tactics and objectives we consider deeply offensive; has created a culture of fear at ASL in which we and our children no longer feel safe; is harmful to our children's mental health; risks sparking a divisive and destructive culture war within the school; and is very likely in breach of UK law.

We firmly believe that ASL should be an open and inclusive school and one that actively welcomes all members of its community on an equal basis, irrespective of their sex, ethnicity, physical characteristics, disabilities, sexual orientation, gender identity, religious faith, socio-economic status, country of origin, or any other traits that define their identity. We also believe that ASL should set and enforce clear expectations that all members of its community should uphold, honor and cherish this philosophy of tolerance, equality and inclusiveness.

It is also right, given the killing of George Floyd, the protest movement that it inspired, and the widespread civil unrest and political violence that ensued, that ASL should help students to understand and contextualize these events by teaching them, on an age-appropriate and apolitical basis, about the history of slavery, Emancipation and Reconstruction, Jim Crow laws, the Civil Rights Movement, and contemporary race relations from both a US and global perspective.

However, the approach that ASL has taken has failed to live up to these principles in the following respects:

Critical Race Theory indoctrination:

A number of recent media reports – such as [this one](#) by former New York Times and Wall Street Journal op-ed editor, Bari Weiss – have documented the institutional efforts by a number of prominent,

private, American schools to indoctrinate their students into what is known as “Critical Race Theory” (also known as “Anti-Racism”), a controversial and divisive political ideology that we regard as profoundly-racist and fundamentally at odds with our values. We are deeply concerned that ASL appears to be following in the footsteps of these other schools.

During the 2020-2021 school year, ASL students were required to watch during regular class time a nine-minute YouTube video entitled "[Uncomfortable Conversations with a Black Man](#)". In the video, American football player and TV commentator, Emmanuel Acho, promotes a series of views that are core elements of Critical Race Theory. In particular, in the video, Acho:

- 1) makes the racist and divisive allegation that, "The white person is [the black person's] problem, only the white person can be the solution";
- 2) dishonors the extraordinary achievements and sacrifices made by Martin Luther King Jr and the movement he led during the Selma marches of 1965 by claiming, despite the clear historical record to the contrary (notably, the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and its subsequent amendments that led to the enfranchisement of millions of black Americans), that they achieved no reduction in systemic racism or improvements in racial equality in the USA;
- 3) asserts that he, as a black man, was justified in intentionally driving his bicycle into a white woman from behind – conduct that would very likely amount to the crime of racially-aggravated assault under the laws of the United Kingdom – merely because the white woman was unable to hear him demand that she make way for him, and further cites this as allegorical justification for the extensive rioting, looting and political violence that has occurred over the past year in the name of Black Lives Matter;
- 4) promotes the controversial and disputed concept of "white privilege", which we regard as racist;
- 5) makes the racist, divisive and unfounded claim that all white people are the "oppressor" and all black people are the “oppressed”;
- 6) suggests that all white people should be suspected of being racist towards black people; and
- 7) promotes the racially-divisive and demonstrably-false fictions that, "When a black person commits a crime, they go to jail; when a white person commits a crime, they get off," and, "Right now, black people are dying at the hands of white people".

We regard this video as overt, racist, anti-white propaganda. We are shocked and disturbed that ASL required our children and other students to watch it. By casting all white people, irrespective of their values, personal circumstances and conduct, as “the problem”, “the oppressor”, “the privileged”, “the killers of black people”, the video fails Dr King’s famous litmus test for racism: that we should judge individuals by the content of their character and not by the color of their skin. The video was presented to ASL students as factually-accurate, when it is demonstrably not. No alternative viewpoints that challenge or contradict the video's racially-divisive, ideological stance were provided. The strong impression was conveyed that any student who didn't blindly-accept the controversial and racist assertions made in the video is, themselves, a racist.

The presentation of this video to ASL students could, perhaps, be excused as a one-off, albeit-profound, lapse of judgement. However, there have been numerous other recent examples that suggest that, although it has not (yet) officially stated it, ASL has now adopted a formal policy of promoting a Critical Race Theory / “Anti-Racist” agenda to students:

1. ASL has recently established racially-segregated school clubs, referring to them as “affinity groups”. As the Bari Weiss article documents, these racially-segregated affinity groups have also been instituted in many schools that are actively promoting a Critical Race Theory agenda.

We are horrified by this. We regard racially-segregated school clubs to be just as offensive and immoral as racially-segregated lunch counters and racially-segregated water fountains. More to the point, segregating students by race is fundamentally-counterproductive to the worthy and important goal of promoting racial-inclusiveness at ASL.

2. In addition to in the Emmanuel Acho video, ASL has actively promoted to students the controversial and disputed concept of “white privilege”. For example, during a Middle School assembly purportedly in recognition of Martin Luther King Day on January 18th 2021, a presentation promoting Black Lives Matter was shown to students that called on them to “reflect on [their] privilege”. Our children have also reported that the concept of “white privilege” has been promoted repeatedly by their teachers and in required reading in various classes, as has the notion that all white people are “oppressors” and all people of color are “victims”.
3. That same presentation instructed students that it was not acceptable to merely be a “non-racist” and that they should, instead, embrace “Anti-Racism”. As has been widely-documented in the media (including in the Bari Weiss article above), the term “Anti-Racism” has been co-opted by the Critical Race Theory movement to refer specifically to its own agenda and ideology. This is a remarkable use of Orwellian doublespeak, given that Critical Race Theory is inherently racist, in our view.
4. As we note in detail below, ASL has frequently and actively promoted to students the Black Lives Matter political organization, which is the most high-profile partisan arm of the Critical Race Theory movement.
5. ASL has admonished students to not engage in “cultural appropriation”, referring to the wearing by an individual of clothing and hairstyles and adoption of other cultural trappings that are not associated with their own ethnicity. The concept of “cultural appropriation” is another controversial element of Critical Race Theory, and one that is inconsistent with our values. It is absolutely right that ASL should prohibit any attempt to mock or denigrate people of other ethnicities by mimicking their styles and fashions. However, cultural exchange has been a positive and defining force in human civilization for millennia. The wearing of clothing and hairstyles associated with other cultures can signify admiration, respect, and solidarity. In such cases, it is a positive activity that should be encouraged rather than proscribed.
6. ASL has recently announced the appointment of Dr. Mirangela Buggs to the newly-created role of Director of Institutional Equity. Dr Buggs previously held the role of Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at the Dwight-Englewood School in New Jersey. A review of the Dwight-Englewood School’s [Anti-Racism and Equity Engagement Action Plan](#) – which was developed during Dr Buggs’ tenure – reveals that Critical Race Theory has been heavily-embedded in the school-wide curriculum there. On June 8th 2021, Dana Stangel-Plowe, who had taught English at the Dwight-Englewood School since 2014, resigned her position in protest against the school’s indoctrination, under the DEI leadership of Dr Buggs, of students in Critical Race Theory and the harmful consequences it was having on the students there. She wrote, in a scathing [open letter](#), “I believe that D-E is failing our students. Over the past few years, the school has embraced an ideology that is damaging to our students’ intellectual and emotional growth and destroying any chance at creating a true community among our diverse population. I reject the hostile culture of conformity and fear that has taken hold of our school ... The school’s ideology requires students to see themselves not as individuals, but as representatives of a group, forcing them to adopt the status of privilege or victimhood ... In my classroom, I see up close how this orthodoxy hinders students’ ability to read, write, and think ... In my professional opinion, the school is failing to encourage healthy habits of mind, essential for growth, such as intellectual curiosity, humility, honesty, reason, and the capacity to question ideas and consider multiple perspectives.” In response, John McWhorter, a black

professor of English at Columbia University [tweeted](#) that, “Truly antiracist parents, in the name of love of their kids, should pull them from the Dwight-Englewood school as of next fall.” We can only surmise that ASL’s appointment of Dr Buggs is a harbinger of a more aggressive and formal implementation of Critical Race Theory in ASL’s curriculum that will resemble the one at Dwight-Englewood that Dana Stangel-Plowe assails in her resignation letter.

We object in the strongest terms possible to any and all attempts by ASL to indoctrinate our Children into Critical Race Theory. We do so for the following reasons:

1. Critical Race Theory makes gross generalizations and value judgements about people based solely on the color of their skin and without any regard to their conduct, character or personal circumstances. Critical Race Theory is, therefore, overtly-racist and fundamentally-contrary to the values of inclusion, empathy and “colorblindness” to all people with which we wish to raise our children. By promoting a Critical Race Theory agenda, ASL has become institutionally-racist, in our view.
2. Critical Race Theory’s insistence that all aspects of society must be viewed and interpreted primarily through the lens of race places an unhealthy and counterproductive emphasis on what divides us rather than on what unites us.
3. Critical Race Theory’s obsessive focus on race above-all-else also frustrates the analysis of and development of effective solutions to the complex and varied causes of socio-economic disparities, much of which have little to do with race (or racism), in our view.
4. Based on numerous press reports over the past year, it is evident that the Critical Race Theory movement is hostile to rational scrutiny and responds to it with vicious ad hominem attacks, slurs, and aggressive attempts to “cancel” anyone who dares to speak out against it. This is the behavior of fundamentalist zealots, not liberal, free-thinkers. When any belief system responds in this way to reasonable criticism, it is almost certainly because it lacks the intellectual substance to defend itself with logic and facts.
5. Critical Race Theory prioritizes subjective “lived experience” over objective facts and evidence as the basis of its ideology. This approach is fundamentally incompatible with the Enlightenment principle of rational inquiry, which is a cornerstone of the values we wish to instill in our children.
6. Critical Race Theory is a disputed ideology (and, it has been rejected, resoundingly, by many people of color in both the [US](#) and [UK](#)). A singular focus on promoting Critical Race Theory at ASL denies students the opportunity to become aware of and consider alternative viewpoints regarding contemporary race relations and effective solutions for rebalancing socio-economic disparities.
7. It is wholly inappropriate for ASL to be actively seeking to indoctrinate our children into any contested ideological beliefs. ASL’s educational mission should be to teach our children how to think, not what to think.

Promotion of the Black Lives Matter political organization:

ASL has actively endorsed and promoted to students a partisan, extremist and antisemitic organization, Black Lives Matter. The sentiment that “black lives matter” is a noble and unimpeachable one. However, the organization that calls itself Black Lives Matter is a political entity whose objectives extend well-beyond seeking an end to racial discrimination and include goals and tactics we consider deeply offensive. These include:

1. Black Lives Matter is an antisemitic organization. This has been documented extensively in multiple media reports including [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#). As [this](#) article documents, Black Lives Matter co-founder, Patrisse Cullors, has been a staunch and vocal advocate for the “Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions” movement, which has been designated as antisemitic by the [Anti-Defamation League](#) and the [Simon Wiesenthal Center](#). Joshua Virasami, one of the leaders of the UK branch of Black Lives Matter, [publicly defended](#) a tweet from the official Black Lives Matter account on Twitter that had been [widely-condemned](#) as antisemitic. Antisemitism is just as abhorrent as any other form of racism. We regard it as completely unacceptable for ASL to actively promote and endorse an antisemitic organization to students.
2. Black Lives Matter is a Marxist organization that seeks to overturn the modern, free market capitalist economic system. The co-founders of Black Lives Matter [describe themselves](#) as “trained Marxists”. Black Lives Matter co-founder, Patrisse Cullors, [cites](#) Karl Marx, Vladimir Lenin and Mao Zedong as her primary intellectual influences. The UK branch of Black Lives Matter has publicly [stated](#) that one of its goals is to “dismantle” capitalism. Joshua Virasami, one of the leaders of the UK branch of Black Lives Matter, has written in [an article](#) in the Guardian newspaper that, “Anti-racism is anti-capitalist, and vice versa. There are no two ways around it. To be an anti-racist must demand a complete rejection of business as usual. An end to racism demands transformation of the global political-economic setup.” ASL actively promoted and endorsed this article to ASL students during a presentation at a Middle School assembly on January 18th 2021. However, we regard free market capitalism as an [economic miracle](#) that has reduced the percentage of the global population living in extreme poverty [from 95% to less than 10%](#) over the past 200 years, with corresponding reductions in malnutrition, infant mortality, unsanitary living conditions, and illiteracy. By contrast, every single attempt, so far, to implement a communist state has resulted in widespread poverty, extreme privation, chronic malnutrition, a complete loss of democratic freedom, egregious and widespread human rights violations, and, in many cases, genocide. In addition, the most extreme instances of systemic racism over the past 100 years have all occurred under socialist rather than capitalist regimes, including the extermination of the Jews by the German National Socialists, Joseph Stalin’s murderous and oppressive campaign against the “rootless cosmopolitans” (Jews) in the USSR, and the Chinese Communist Party’s persecution and ethnic cleansing of the Uyghurs today. Indeed, Karl Marx, himself, the founder of the Marxist ideology that takes his name, was a [notorious racist](#). We also point out that an exclusive, private school such as ASL simply would not exist without the wealth-creation engine of free market capitalism to fund it. For all of these reasons, we are astounded that ASL would actively endorse and promote to our children and other students an organization that seeks to overturn free market capitalism and replace it with communism.
3. In keeping with its Marxist orthodoxy, Black Lives Matter, in its own words (albeit ones [it has now sought to hide](#) from public view), seeks to “disrupt the Western-prescribed nuclear family structure” and replace it with a communal system of raising children. However, we believe strongly that children prosper and thrive the best when being raised by dedicated, loving parents (of any gender) who are deeply-invested in their own children’s happiness, fulfilment and success in life. Again, we question why ASL has actively promoted and endorsed to our children an organization that seeks outcomes that are so fundamentally incompatible with our values.
4. Black Lives Matter [seeks to abolish](#) the police. But, the police are essential for the proper functioning and preservation of the rule of law, which is a foundational plank of any democratic system. We believe that there is a strong need for fundamental reform of the police in order to substantially-reduce the incidence of unreasonable uses of force and other rights violations.

But, without the police, society would very quickly descend into widespread lawlessness and violence. And, that is not a world in which we wish to live or raise our children.

5. Over the past year, Black Lives Matter activists have [routinely engaged](#) in looting, property damage, intimidation, and political violence – including the physical assault of innocent bystanders. This has resulted in the deaths of at least 19 people and caused property damage estimated at \$1 billion - \$2 billion in the USA, alone. The right to protest against injustice is an essential element of any democratic society. However, unequivocally, the right to protest does not include the right to threaten or harm others or their property. Black Lives Matter is an appalling role model, in this regard. ASL's promotion of Black lives Matter to our children and other students is a tacit endorsement of the extreme and violent tactics employed by the organization's activists. We regard this as wholly inappropriate.

More broadly, ASL should not endorse or promote any partisan organization to our children or other students.

Examples of ASL endorsing and promoting the Black Lives Matter organization to students include:

1. On January 18th 2021, all Middle School students were required to attend an assembly ostensibly in honor of Martin Luther King Day. During the assembly, students were made to view and listen to a slide show presentation, entitled “MLK to BLM” and which included a 15 minute documentary video. We regard the presentation as a full-blown political advertisement for the Black Lives Matter organization. Almost every page of the presentation, including its cover, was adorned with three parallel yellow or black stripes, which is the official corporate branding of the Black Lives Matter organization. The presentation featured quotations – intended to be “inspirational” – by Black Lives Matter co-founder, Patrisse Cullors, and one of the leaders of the UK branch of Black Lives Matter, Joshua Virasami. One slide of the presentation featured the headline “CALL TO ACTION” alongside the official logo of the Black Lives Matter organization and a link to the official web site for the Black Lives Matter organization. No alternative viewpoints that challenge or contradict the extreme, partisan stance of the Black Lives Matter organization were provided to students. The strong impression was conveyed during the assembly that any student who didn't blindly-support the Black Lives Matter organization is a racist.
2. ASL teachers have displayed posters that promote Black Lives Matter in prominent positions on the walls of their classrooms.
3. ASL teachers have included the Black Lives Matter logo on every page of certain in-class teaching materials for academic topics for which the logo bore zero relevance.
4. ASL teachers have frequently promoted and endorsed Black Lives Matter in verbal remarks to students.

The creation of a culture of fear:

Some members of our group of concerned ASL parents are Jewish, as are their children. Within living memory, two out of every three Jews living in Europe were exterminated by the Nazis. Among those many millions of Jews who were murdered, some were family members of ours. Sadly, the evils of antisemitism continue to prevail today. Within the past month, Jewish people have been openly and brazenly attacked on the streets of London, New York and Los Angeles, and a convoy of cars has driven through St Johns Wood – very close to ASL – blaring out hateful, antisemitic messages such as “f**k the Jews, rape their daughters”. Against this backdrop, by openly promoting and endorsing an

antisemitic organization such as Black Lives Matter, ASL is sending a strong and clear message that it is not a safe space for Jewish children or families.

Our children report to us that much of ASL's teachings about race relations over the past year have felt wrong to them, particularly with regard to making gross generalizations about different races and casting everyone as either a "victim" or "oppressor" based on the color of their skin. However, they have not felt safe speaking their conscience and expressing their disagreement with what they are being taught about race at ASL because they have feared sanction by their teachers and the school. They report to us that, instead, they parrot the ideological views that they believe their teachers wish to hear, in order to receive favorable grades on their school assignments.

Our entire group has been following the issue of the ideological indoctrination of students into Critical Race Theory at other private schools in the US. We have heard directly from friends with children at those schools about parents who have attempted to engage with their school's administration in order to express the same reasonable concerns that we set out in this letter, only to be publicly vilified, branded as "racist", required to withdraw their children from the school, and blacklisted from application to other private schools in the area. We have read the Bari Weiss article to which we refer above and that describes these same scenes taking place at prominent private schools throughout America. We have read the extensive [media coverage](#) about Paul Rossi, who was fired from his job as a math teacher at Grace Church High School in New York after he spoke out publicly against the school's promotion of Critical Race Theory to students (even as Grace Church's Head of School, George Davison, was [caught on tape](#) admitting privately that the school's "Anti-Racism" agenda was "demonizing white people for being born"). We have read the extensive [media coverage](#) about Andrew Gutmann, who was compelled to withdraw his daughter from the Brearly School in New York after an open letter that he sent to other parents in which he expressed his concerns about the school's Critical Race Theory agenda was publicly branded as "deeply offensive and harmful" by Brearly's Head of School, Jane Fred.

The unavoidable conclusion from all of this is that many schools that have adopted a Critical Race Theory agenda are deeply hostile to reasonable criticism of that agenda. And, they respond to it in the same way that the Catholic Church responded to Galileo when he had the audacity to suggest in 1610 that the Earth was not at the center of the universe: public vilification and excommunication (or what is known in modern parlance as "cancelation"). And, so, we – as will all other ASL parents who share our concerns – now live in fear. We are aghast that ASL is indoctrinating our children in an ideology that we regard as racist, harmful and fundamentally against our values. But, we fear the repercussions of expressing any opposition to it. We fear that our children – who share our values – might inadvertently say something out of place about it at school. We fear that our children's educational opportunities and future prospects might be harmed materially and irrevocably, as a result.

This is an intolerable situation. Hence, we write to you to express our concerns and seek remedial action. However, we do so anonymously in order to protect us and our children from potential retribution for doing so. The very fact that we feel the need to do so should raise a major red flag that something has gone horribly wrong at ASL.

Harmful to our children's mental health:

One of our children returned home from ASL recently in a deeply-upset state. They begged to have their DNA tested. When asked why this was so important to them, they replied that they "need to see

what percent ‘victim’ they are. They then explained that they had been taught at ASL that a person’s race determines whether they are a “victim” or an “oppressor”. The child felt immense anguish at the thought that they might be an “oppressor” and, so, was desperately hoping that a DNA test would reveal that they were not. Any reasonable person must surely be able to see that there is something fundamentally wrong with an educational environment that causes a child to think and feel this way.

Others of our children have expressed similar, recurring feelings of shame, guilt and low self-worth about the color of their skin because they have been taught by ASL that it means that they are either an “oppressor” or a “victim”.

Echoing these sentiments, a student from the Dwight-Englewood school has written in an [open letter](#) in reference to the “Anti-Racist” curriculum devised there by Dr Buggs, “Those teachings made me feel like horse sh*t, like worthless scum undeserving of living.”

By asserting that their status as “victim” or “oppressor” is intrinsically-linked to the color of their skin, ASL has robbed our children – and all other students – of their individual agency over moral outcomes. If all white people are “oppressors” and, therefore, “bad”, then no amount of good deeds and virtuous conduct can change this. If all people of color are “victims”, irrespective of their personal circumstances, then hard work, achievement and success cannot alter this. In both cases, the message that ASL is sending students is that they are completely helpless to affect how they are perceived, valued and judged in life. This is an appalling, harmful message to impart to children.

Those of our children who are Jewish have expressed recurring feelings of fear and anxiety that arise whenever they are present in the ASL campus (or Zoom calls during periods of distance learning) due to ASL’s promotion and endorsement of the antisemitic Black Lives Matter organization. Every time they see the Black Lives Matter logo on a classroom wall or in teaching materials, they see a symbol of hatred of them and all Jewish people. Every time the school lionizes leaders of the Black Lives Matter organization who are known-antisemites, like Patrisse Cullors and Joshua Virasami, they feel that ASL must also share those leaders’ hatred of them and all Jewish people. But, they also know that they are not free to express these feelings at ASL. Because, to do so would invite outrage and condemnation of them, given the highly-charged, partisan and racially-divisive environment that ASL has fostered during the past year.

A divisive and destructive culture war:

The Dalton School in New York serves as a cautionary tale about the adverse consequences that can arise when schools fail to keep contested ideology and politics out of the curriculum and the classroom. Dalton has, for a number of years and under the leadership of now-former Head of School, Jim Best, explicitly stated its pursuit of an “Anti-Racist” agenda based on Critical Race Theory. This has included racially-segregated “affinity groups” like at ASL, “unconscious bias” training for faculty, mandatory “Anti-Racist” training for parents, the re-writing of the schoolwide curriculum so that every class was taught from an “Anti-Racist” perspective, and the implementation of Pollyanna, a controversial pedagogical system that seeks to indoctrinate younger students in elements of Critical Race Theory.

Evidently, these initial steps gave oxygen to and sufficiently-emboldened proponents of Critical Race Theory at the school that they issued a memorandum to the school community – signed by 129 faculty members and which [came to public notice](#) in December, 2020 – in which they made a series of 24

demands as preconditions for returning to in-person teaching. If implemented, they would have almost-certainly resulted in the total collapse of the school. Among their demands, they called for:

1. 50% of all giving to the school to be forwarded on to the New York public school system.
2. A “leveling-down” of academic standards by eliminating AP and other advanced courses from the curriculum in the event that the participation in and performance of black students in those courses was not in parity with non-black students by 2023.
3. The expansion of the school’s Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion to include at least 12 full-time positions; the hiring of an additional, full-time staff member outside of the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion whose sole role would be to support black students with complaints about the school or facing disciplinary action; and, the hiring in every division of the school of a psychologist with a specialization in psychological issues affecting ethnic minority populations. (And, all of this, for a school with a student body smaller than ASL’s).
4. The establishment of a committee of students, faculty, parents and trustees – at least 50% of whom should be black – with the power to veto any and all investments within the school’s endowment portfolio. (The population of New York City is 24% black. No explanation was provided for why the percentage of black participants in the committee should be more than double this.)
5. Mandatory diversity plot lines in all school plays.

This, in turn, prompted an anonymous group of concerned parents at The Dalton School – similar in composition to our own group, we imagine – to issue [an open letter](#) to the entire Dalton community in January 2021 in which they decried the “obsessive focus on race and identity” in the school’s “Anti-Racist curriculum” and the demands set out in the memorandum from 129 faculty members. In the open letter – which mirrors our own sentiments about ASL – they wrote, “Many of us do not feel welcome at Dalton any more. That really hurts to write. This ideology is extremely exclusionary to those families (perhaps a majority of the Dalton community) who don’t identify as part of an oversimplified racial dichotomy in a beautiful and diverse world, or those who choose not to make their racial identity the centerpiece of their family life or their children’s education ... This new “Anti-Racist” obsession with race is incredibly exclusionary and hurtful to many children and their families, and many are considering leaving. Why would anyone voluntarily send their children to be taught that they are guilty regardless of their decency and kindness? A school where they are constantly reminded of the color of their skin, not the content of their character. What Black parent wants the other children to feel sorry for their kid and look at them differently? We have spoken with dozens of families, of all colors and backgrounds, who are in shock and looking for an alternative school for their children.”

The publicity surrounding these events at Dalton has been extensive, unflattering, and, no doubt, unwelcome by many in the Dalton community. A few examples are [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#).

The fallout has been seismic. Dalton’s Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Domonic Rollins, [left the school](#) in February 2021. Dalton’s Head of School, Jim Best, [abruptly stepped-down](#) from his role in April 2021.

The Dalton School now faces an uncertain future. The 129 faculty members who signed the memorandum demanding that the school adopt an even more aggressive Critical Race Theory agenda seem unlikely to back down in their efforts. Many parents believe that the school has already gone much too far and have either already undertaken or are actively considering steps to transfer their children to other schools. Admissions and in-take will, no doubt, be compromised by all of the negative

publicity, as will advancement and giving. And, amid all of this, the school is now rudderless and without executive leadership.

In our view, Dalton is a perfect case study for why matters that provoke strong feelings on either side of an ideological, political or religious issue have no place at all in a school's curriculum and are best left to families to address with their children at home and according to their own values and beliefs.

Alas, Dalton's dire, existential crisis very likely represents the "Ghost of Christmas Future" for ASL, if ASL continues along its current path with regard to the promotion of a Critical Race Theory / "Anti-Racist" agenda.

Breach of UK law:

ASL's promotion of Critical Race Theory and endorsement of the Black Lives Matter organization are not just wrong. They are also very likely against the law.

It is a violation of the Education and Skills Act 2008 and The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 for any independent school in the UK, such as ASL, to promote and endorse contested ideologies and partisan organizations (with parallel legal prohibitions for state / maintained schools contained in the Education Act 1996).

The UK Equalities Minister, Kemi Badenoch (herself, a woman of color), made this perfectly clear in her [address](#) to the House of Commons on October 20th, 2020, in which she said, "I want to be absolutely clear that the Government stand unequivocally against Critical Race Theory. Some schools have decided to openly support the anti-capitalist Black Lives Matter group, often fully aware that they have a statutory duty to be politically impartial ... We do not want teachers to teach their white pupils about white privilege and inherited racial guilt. Let me be clear that any school that teaches those elements of Critical Race Theory as fact, or that promotes partisan political views such as defunding the police without offering a balanced treatment of opposing views, is breaking the law."

In addition, ASL's racially-segregated "affinity groups" very likely amount to unlawful discrimination under the Equality Act 2010.

We have direct access to the relevant ministers in the Department for Education and the Government Equalities Office and we have been advised that, following Kemi Badenoch's remarks to Parliament in October last year, they are actively seeking test cases to prosecute for promoting a Critical Race Theory agenda and Black Lives Matter.

The applicable legislation provides for a range of potential sanctions against schools that break the law, including fines and permanent closure.

Remedies:

We believe strongly that it best serves our, our children's, the broader ASL community's, and ASL's interests for the matters that we set out in this letter to be to addressed and resolved directly, privately and anonymously.

We are deeply invested in ASL's success as an academic institution. Apart from the concerns that we raise in this letter, we are highly-supportive of ASL and take pride in its tradition of academic excellence and position as one of the leading international schools in the world.

Therefore, we very much hope for ASL to avoid the same public acrimony and adverse press coverage that have arisen (so far) at Dalton, Brearly, Grace Church and Dwight-Englewood. Those outcomes would have been the likely result for ASL if we were to have issued this as an open letter to the entire ASL community, invited the UK government to investigate ASL for breaking the law regarding impartiality and discrimination, initiated civil legal proceedings against ASL for the same, or shared the details of this letter with the broadcast and print journalists in our network whom we know to be sympathetic to our concerns and who would have an interest in covering this story, particularly given ASL's profile.

We also hope that these matters can be resolved to our satisfaction without anyone having to lose their job, as has happened with Jim Best and Domonic Rollins at Dalton and, now, seems unavoidable for George Davison at Grace Church.

We do not doubt that the key decision-makers responsible for incorporating such positive treatment of Critical Race Theory and Black Lives Matter into the teaching environment at ASL shared a sincere belief that, in doing so, they were acting in the best interests of students and the broader ASL community. You and the ASL Board of Trustees might well disagree strongly with the unfavorable views that we have expressed about these topics. If that is the case, we don't ask you to change your minds. But, at the very least, you must accept that Critical Race Theory and Black Lives Matter are, respectively, a contested ideology and partisan organization that, for the reasons we have set out above, have no place in ASL's curriculum and classrooms.

As such, we ask for ASL to take the following actions as a matter of urgency and no later than the start of the 2021-2022 school year:

1. Distribute this letter to ASL's full Board of Trustees.
2. Provide a written response acknowledging receipt of this letter and confirming that it has been distributed to the Board of Trustees no later than Friday, June 18th, 2021.
3. Establish a formal, written policy that the school, including administration and faculty, shall, as required by UK law, not engage in any activities that involve the promotion or endorsement of any contested ideological beliefs (including, but not limited to, any element of Critical Race Theory) or partisan organizations (including, but not limited to, Black Lives Matter) to students.
4. Provide workshops and training sessions at least once per school year for all members of ASL's administration and faculty to ensure that they are fully-cognizant of their obligations under UK law and the aforementioned ASL policy to not promote or endorse any contested ideological beliefs or partisan organizations to students.
5. Ensure that teachers and administrators at ASL do not teach as fact or promote to students any controversial and disputed elements of the Critical Race Theory agenda (including, but not limited to, the concepts of assigning "victim" or "oppressor" status by race, "inherited racial guilt", "generational trauma", "lived experience", "white privilege", "white fragility", "de-centering whiteness", "unconscious bias", "microaggressions", "intersectionality", "lived experience", and "cultural appropriation").
6. Disband all racially-segregated "affinity groups" and replace them with a single school club that is devoted to promoting racial inclusiveness and that is open to participation by all students.

7. Update the school's suitable attire policy to eliminate any reference to "cultural appropriation" and, instead, replace it with a prohibition on any attempt to mock or denigrate people of other ethnicities by mimicking their styles and fashions, while also permitting the wearing of clothing and hairstyles associated with other cultures when the intention is to signify admiration, respect and solidarity.
8. Ensure that teachers and administrators do not promote or endorse Black Lives Matter to students.
9. Ensure that no materials that promote or endorse Black Lives Matter are displayed anywhere on campus (including on classroom walls, in teaching materials or in presentations) or in online teaching resources provided by ASL.
10. Provide and enforce clear instructions to Dr Buggs that her activities in her new role as Director of Institutional Equity at ASL must not in any way draw on or promote a Critical Race Theory or "Anti-Racist" agenda.
11. In order to provide a balanced treatment of opposing ideas (as required by UK law) on the topic of contemporary race relations and to give students the opportunity to learn about alternative views and proposed solutions to socio-economic disparities, arrange for an organization that is led by people of color who actively disavow Critical Race Theory and Black Lives Matter to give at least one presentation (and, ideally, more) to assemblies of the High School and Middle School as early as possible during the first semester of the 2021-2022 school year. These presentations should include rebuttals and counter-arguments to the specific elements of the Critical Race Theory / "Anti-Racism" agenda and Black Lives Matter that ASL has promoted and endorsed to students. We recommend the UK's [Don't Divide Us](#), which runs an educational outreach program specifically for this purpose, or the US's [Foundation Against Intolerance and Racism \(FAIR\)](#).
12. Provide a written response no later than July 30th, 2021 confirming ASL's intention to implement the actions that we set out above.
13. Provide a written response no later than September 1st, 2021 confirming that ASL has fully-implemented the actions that we set out above.

In the event that ASL fails to take the actions that we are seeking and within the timeframes that we set out above, or if ASL makes any attempt to investigate our or our children's identities – which we would regard as an act of bad faith – we fully reserve all rights to pursue the remedies we seek via all other lawful means, including the right to refer this matter for investigation by the UK Department for Education and Government Equalities Office.

Sincerely,
Concerned ASL Parents