



Letter to parents and pupils of The John Fisher School, Purley

The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Southwark wishes to address a situation that has taken place recently at The John Fisher School in Purley. This relates to an event to mark World Book Day and the cancellation of a visit to the school by the author Mr Simon James Green on March 7th, 2022. This has been a difficult and regrettable experience for everyone involved.

The Archdiocese is committed to promoting all that encourages each person to live in the freedom God desires for us. We strive to foster a vision of what it means to flourish as a human being, living in relationship with a loving God, growing closer to him throughout life's journey. Within this context we also look towards rejecting all that weakens respect for, or diminishes understanding of, the dignity which all human beings possess equally in the eyes of the Lord Jesus.

We are immensely proud of all the young people in our Catholic schools for all they achieve and of our school leaders, staff, and governors. Together we share the responsibility for forming our young people so that they can not only live and work in the world, but also bring Christ's compassion, forgiveness, healing, and love to our society.

Every human being has a value and dignity which we believe comes from our creation in God's image and likeness. Our communities aim to be places of welcome, where each person is respected and loved, and where everyone receives and shares their unique gifts. We are opposed to all forms of bullying in our schools, including on the basis of sexual orientation or gender. We work to ensure our schools are safe places for all our students and staff. In the context of our Catholic faith and teaching, we uphold the dignity of every person.

Some parents and pupils may have been disappointed by the cancellation of Mr Green's talk and book-signing, and troubled by the Press reports of the reasons for the cancellation. Concerns were raised with the Archdiocese by parents who felt that some of the content of Mr Green's books may be inappropriate for those aged 12 – 13 years and that the content did not align with what would be expected in a Catholic school. Having read some of the material, the Archdiocese recommended that the school cancel Mr Green's visit.

Throughout this situation our duty of care to all our pupils has been our priority, and we encourage our young people to talk with a parent, carer, or trusted member of staff within the school community if they have any concerns.

The Archdiocese of Southwark is reviewing this matter and will be exploring constructive ways to continue to work positively with The John Fisher School community.