



05 June 2020

Dear Old Blues,

For some Old Blues, perhaps many, the context for this communication from me will be unknown. For others, it will be known too well. In the course of the letter it is intended that everyone should be better informed of an important set of events this week and feel reassured about them.

On Tuesday 2nd June, in response to events in the UK and in the USA, the School placed a message on its Instagram page about Blackout Tuesday which, on reflection, was unhelpful. The consequence of this was to create offence for some pupils and, indeed, for some Old Blues. A few days have now passed since Tuesday and my first instinct, to let matters mend with time, has created an uncomfortable silence from your School. It is right at this point to put this communication into the silence.

I am deeply sorry that any offence has been caused to any of our pupils or Old Blues by the failures of communication through this week. In the midst of School closure, the Instagram posting earlier in the week was a mistake for which I take full responsibility. Your School is not immune from the difficulties of the times and in managing the School's response to Covid-19, overlaid with thinking about how best to support our pupils through 'Blackout Tuesday', a well-intentioned message on CH's Instagram page was presented to reflect detail which, on reflection, should not have appeared.

The response in the CH community (and beyond it) was strong and, from some, so strong (abusive and/or factually incorrect) that it was my responsibility to remove the original School post, and I explained this action in a letter to all pupils, their parents, and staff. This has subsequently been seen by some as an attempt to silence our pupils and to remove an instrument for carrying opinion. Neither is true (Christ's Hospital's leadership is more than committed to ensuring healthy, responsible communication) and the removal of the Instagram post was a way of protecting the CH community from being subject to continued abusive comment. I understand that some may not trust this narrative but it is right.

Naturally, and allied to the points above, I abhor police conduct which has recently been presented so vividly on our screens from America. I support all legal and reasonable action that has been taken by people here and in the USA to make this clear. Accordingly, Christ's Hospital is committed not just to protecting and encouraging diversity in all its forms but, in its policies and action, the School will continue to support its pupils' right to express opinion about diversity and related interests. It should also be made clear that the School is committed to recognising when and where it is at fault and is constantly engaged in working out how it can improve. I know that these principles are important for many (hopefully all) and they are given prominence in the School.



Finally, in recognising the importance of various public media for expressing opinion, may I ask those who care about Christ's Hospital to be in direct contact with me, if there is a need; or our Development and CHOBAs Departments, members of the CHOBAs Board, or others at the School. My email address is hmsec@christs-hospital.org.uk.

A good deal of the comment which has come our way this week has been fair and we will seek to adjust our communication, policies and structures, accordingly. Some of it has been weighted by perceptions and suppositions about Christ's Hospital operates which are simply wrong.

Either way, under my leadership of this great School, you can rest assured that we will mix clarity of purpose with tenderness and care in supporting all our pupils. We could have done better in this respect this week and to those who have felt concerned about this, my apologies.

My best wishes,

Simon Reid
Head Teacher