



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

PUBLIC PETITION NO.

PE01840

Name of petitioner

Debora Kayembe on behalf of The Freedom Walk

Petition title

Addressing racism in Scottish education

Petition summary

Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to urgently address racism in the Scottish education system by—

- implementing anti-racist education in the classroom;
- delivering anti-racist training to all school staff and;
- record, monitor and address racist incidents in schools

Action taken to resolve issues of concern before submitting the petition

We have contacted our local councillors, MSP and MP. We have received support from Colin Beattie MSP and the local councillor.

Petition background information

The Freedom Walk Campaign is a civil rights movement which aims to lobby and campaign on behalf of citizens by promoting social reforms, racial justice and community harmony.

In 2020, we became aware of a situation in a school where a class were shown a video of a dance in the hope of teaching pupils about slavery. The song used contained graphic lyrics and haunting imagery about the lynching's of black people in the American South under the Jim Crow laws which enforced racial segregation.

We understand that both black and white pupils were uncomfortable because the video was not empowering, but inappropriate and misguided. but didn't want to say that they were uncomfortable. The incident escalated as the dance was shown again. It became clear to pupils how insensitive the video was.

The pupils felt uncomfortable and it felt wrong to them, believing they should never have been put in this position. Several students highlighted how uncomfortable they felt about how inappropriately the school were treating historical events like slavery.

rent, about how inappropriately the school were treating historical events like slavery and lynching at a time that was deeply troubling for them.

Despite acknowledging the hurt caused, the teacher insisted that it was only a portrayal of the roles and not real life.

Following the incident we had numerous phone calls and correspondence with the school in order to provide support materials and referral to anti-racist education programs namely: the Education Institute of Scotland (EIS), the Anti-Racist Educator and the Scottish Association of Minority Ethnic Educators (SAMEE).

We believe the school involved has been in touch with these groups for support but it is crucial that a consistent approach is taken by all schools in Scotland when it comes to delivering anti-racist education.

The Freedom Walk campaign is aware of a far deeper and more worrying problem of institutional racism. Since hearing of the pupil incident, we have become aware of several other complaints about racism in education in Scotland with no action being taken to address this.

We believe this incident highlights a wider issue across Scotland which is that teachers at all levels of education are not receiving adequate training in this area and therefore are not well-equipped or confident in delivering anti-racist education.

Barriers identified to delivering anti-racist education include a fear of getting it wrong or offending; potential backlash from parents; and not being confident of support from school managers/employers. As a result many schools are reactive rather than proactive, seeking out support only when there is a complaint or an incident within the school.

Research carried out in Scotland suggests that while most teachers can identify overt racism, many do not have an awareness of how more subtle racism (e.g. micro-aggressions) can occur or its impact. This would indicate that many teachers require a more in depth understanding of the structures of power and oppression; unconscious bias and how this influences behaviour; and how lessons learned can be applied to delivering anti-racist education.

We want to protect pupils from racism in the classroom and to provide adequate training to teaching staff to protect them from participating, however unwittingly, in delivering insensitive and/or racist portrayals of BAME people in the classroom. One way this could be achieved could be for the Education Secretary to work with the EIS to develop policies to record, monitor and address racist incidents in schools.

It's time for a change. We must stop our children from being exposed to racism in the classroom. Our teachers should not be delivering activities or 'education' in the classroom that reinforces racism. We must protect our pupils and teaching staff.

Therefore, the Freedom Walk campaign is sending this petition to the Scottish parliament in order to address racism in Scottish education.

Unique web address

<https://www.parliament.scot/GettingInvolved/Petitions/PE01840>

Related information for petition

We have a link to the community involved in this matter

<https://www.change.org/p/scottish-parliament-addressing-racism-in-scottish-education>

Do you wish your petition to be hosted on the Parliament's website to collect signatures online?

Signatures online?

NO

How many signatures have you collected so far?

0

Closing date for collecting signatures online

N/A

Comments to stimulate online discussion