

GARRISON FOREST SCHOOL

300 GARRISON FOREST ROAD • OWINGS MILLS, MARYLAND 21117

Dear parents and families,

This has been a challenging year in so many ways, and we are so proud of the ways our students have demonstrated resilience and supported one another, finding ways to connect whether in person or virtually. We know that many members of our community have been closely watching the trial of Derek Chauvin and are now not only working through the verdict and results of that trial, but processing the pain and grief that came with reliving the circumstances around George Floyd's tragic murder. This is an important moment for us to acknowledge the work we can do to continue bringing our community together. As a school community, we are committed to supporting all of our students as they process the outcome of the trial, as well as the trial itself and the ongoing national conversations around race, bias and social justice.

All of the work we do with students, and the supports we have in place, are grounded in our school's mission and statement of respect, most specifically being a community that is "concerned for the well-being of all people" and one that "aspires to promote the understanding of all people." We know that everyone, and especially young people, process events and experiences in different ways, and our goal is to offer several options to support and care for our students. We have found one of the most effective forms of outreach is to provide safe spaces for students to decompress and unpack their emotions, ask questions and connect with their peers and faculty mentors. Examples of what this looks like for students are our SDLC (Student Diversity Leadership Councils), Each One Reach One, student affinity groups and our recently formed Upper and Middle School Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Boards, including student leaders of identity-based clubs at GFS; and our knowledgeable divisional counselors, who frequently lead individual and group sessions around many different topics. We will continue offering these spaces, as well as other support, to all members of the GFS community throughout the school year.

In addition to dedicated meeting spaces, we would like to provide a few resources below if you would like some additional information on helping your child, or yourself, process difficult situations. This is not a comprehensive list, but a place to start.

Resources

[Parent Resource: Talking to Kids About Race and Justice](#)
[Talking Race With Young Children](#)
[What To Say To Kids When The News Is Scary](#)
[Having Difficult Conversations with Kids](#)

Whether it is specifically around current events or just processing this year or their experience in general, we are here to support your child and your family. Please do not hesitate to reach out to your divisional counselor, your Division Head, or Carolyn Lewis, Director of Community Life and Inclusion, if there is additional information we can provide or other support we can offer.

Sincerely,



Chris Hughes
Head of School



Carolyn Lewis
Director, Community Life and
Inclusion



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