



Bishop's Hatfield Girls' School

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Dear Parent/Carer,

In English lessons, your child is currently studying the novel 'Of Mice and Men' by John Steinbeck. As you may already know, this novel deals with a number of controversial and sensitive issues, such as mental illness, sexism and racism. Studying the novel helps the pupils develop the skills needed for analysis of Literature texts at GCSE and they are also examined on the novel in the Year 9 exam.

Many pupils rightly feel uncomfortable with the issue of racial discrimination that is discussed in the novel; in particular, the use of offensive language. Your child's English teacher has already broached the subject sensitively and explained the origins of the language used and also what we have learnt over time from such discrimination. This language will **not** be read aloud in class.

As a multicultural community, I cannot stress enough that teaching this text remains crucial in educating young people about tolerance, racial prejudice, and empathy. The issue of race must be addressed head-on and we deliberately time the teaching of this text to coincide with Black History month so that the girls have the opportunity to see things from a different place and time and just how much society and culture has changed. It also prepares them for studying the civil rights movement in History later in the year.

We believe that providing your daughter with such information is invaluable and so we would like to reassure you that these issues are being dealt with sensitively within lessons. Should you or your child be interested in exploring the subject further, the following is a link to a list of recommended texts which address the subject of Black History: <https://www.waterstones.com/booklist/556112/black-history-month-contemporary-fiction>

Yours sincerely

Ms S Herlock

Head of English faculty

"Pupils flourish and support each other to succeed"

