

January 7, 2021

To the Cheshire Academy Community,

Writing to you this evening from campus, I am still rattled by the incidents of the past 36 hours, disturbing events that took place in our nation's Capital. I am reaching out now, as we prepare for the start of the second semester, because it seems an appropriate time to remind us all that we stand strong in the face of adversity and remain resilient in hard times; a theme that has been echoed all too often during the past year.

At Cheshire Academy, the [Eight Pillars of Bowden](#) articulate the core values by which we live, learn, and work together as a community. Respect, above all, is the guiding principle in all that we do. Wednesday, the world witnessed what happens when respect, civility, and citizenship are lost and are, instead, replaced with disrespect, desecration, and anarchy. The violent raid on the Capitol Building—a symbol and chamber of our democracy—endangered the lives of legislators, civil servants, police officers, and other innocent bystanders. The insurrection has sparked fear and anxiety within our country. It also threatened the freedoms and institutions we hold dear.

Our priority at this time is to offer support for those who need it in comprehending the unrest. As educators, we strive to provide a greater understanding of the world, hope and a sense of stability amid chaos, and clarity and care where there is confusion and concern. Our faculty and staff understand this responsibility and take on roles that go beyond teaching classes. As a school community, we value and encourage civil discourse. In fact, just last fall, we issued an important statement on this topic. (Please see more below.)

Unequivocally, we value diverse perspectives and condemn violence. Our community welcomes open dialogue and supports myriad opinions. We are here to support our students and one another, as we strive to understand what was witnessed, how we reached this point, and how our country moves forward. Among other steps, we are planning a series of listening circles for our students, facilitated by Dr. Aleehsa Grier-Rogers '90, to offer a safe space for sharing reactions, thoughts, feelings, and suggestions. Further details will be forthcoming.

As we prepare for a return to remote schooling on Monday, please take solace in knowing that despite the scenes we saw played out on television and social media, democracy did indeed prevail. Congress returned to session and finished the task with which they were charged. As a country we have been wounded; as a nation, we will work together to heal, and Cheshire Academy will return to the good work of caring for and educating our young people. Healing starts here at Cheshire Academy.

Sincerely,



Julie M. Anderson, P'19, '23

Head of School

October 2020

Civil Discourse

As reflected in the Eight Pillars of Bowden, Cheshire Academy strives to foster citizenship and responsibility among students by encouraging curiosity for and participation in the political process. We believe that the capacity to listen to others with opposing viewpoints builds empathy, understanding, and awareness. With this in mind, we encourage engagement in conversations where diverse viewpoints can be shared—also known as civil discourse.

Cheshire Academy’s diversity is one of its greatest strengths. Developing the ability to show respect for others—even those with whom we disagree—helps to create a more inclusive climate. When engaging in civil discourse, all members of the CA community are expected to adhere to the Pillars of Respect, Caring, Civility, Morality, and Fairness. Demonstrating mutual respect and regard is especially warranted when engaging in subjects such as race, sex and sexual orientation, gender, ethnicity, religious affiliation, ability, and other aspects of people’s identity.

Our community is committed to combatting bias, racism, and prejudice in all forms, including in speech. Words can have the power to harm others. While we encourage civil discourse, Cheshire Academy prohibits any speech that discriminates, attacks, disparages, demeans, intimidates, or deliberately mischaracterizes an individual or group for any reason, and particularly because of their identity. This includes the use of such speech in person, in remote classrooms, by phone/text/email, or via social media. Offensive speech can take many forms, including but not limited to negatively biased categorical statements, racial/ethnic/gender-based slurs, stereotypes, and epithets. Aligning with the Pillar of Responsibility, our school strongly promotes allyship.

Therefore, we encourage all members of our community to identify incidents of offensive speech when they occur. We also recognize that not all participants may feel comfortable doing so. Any member of the community who would like to report an incident of offensive speech may contact Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Dr. Aleesha Grier-Rogers at aleesha.grier-rogers@cheshireacademy.org.

Civil Discourse Key Points

Do's	Do Not's
Do remain open and respectful by allowing others to voice different perspectives and opinions.	Do not cut others off or speak over them.
Do show respect for individual differences by recognizing that the opinions, perspectives, and beliefs of others may differ from yours.	Do not try to force others to share if they are not comfortable doing so.
Do always use respectful language. Topics such as race, sex and sexual orientation, gender, ethnicity, religious affiliation, ability, and other aspects of people's identity are especially sensitive.	Do not personalize your statements or use profanity, slurs, put downs, attacks, or generalizations to demean a particular group.
Do help create a safe campus climate by reporting incidents of bias, racism, and discrimination.	Do not ignore your role in creating a positive campus environment.