



Hair Equality Report 2019

“More than just Hair”

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Executive Summary

This is a report in response to the OFSTED Education Inspection Framework 2019. World Afro Day has conducted - The Hair Equality Report to raise awareness about the hidden problem of hair discrimination in UK schools.

This is the most significant research to date, addressing cross generational bias, against Afro hair in UK schools. This report draws on academics, organisations, campaigners and case studies, plus a survey of 1000 respondents in a united voice; calling for Afro hair equality in the education system (See Appendix 1 for a list of supporting organisations and contributors' statements).

There has been an overwhelming need to evidence the consequences of hair discrimination and this report has finally filled the vacuum. The specially commissioned School Hair Survey has captured the collective experience of a thousand respondents, representing children 0-18 years and adults 19-70 years. The findings reveal that black and mixed-race children are under constant pressure to fit into a school and a society that doesn't understand or value their Afro hair. This has been a generational burden, that needs to be lifted. The problem is largely unrecognised in society and many without Afro hair, have never heard of hair discrimination.

School is the number one environment that has an influence on attitudes. 41% of children with Afro hair want to change their hair from curly to straight. The survey results show that 1 in 6 children are having a bad or very bad experience at school connected to their Afro-textured hair and identity. Worryingly, anti Afro hair policies had risen 66.7%. Adults who had experienced problems at school, only 27% said that hair policy was an issue compared to 46% for today's children. There needs to be more investigation as to why some schools have been creating harsher environments for the identity of black children. How many of these schools are breaking UK Equality law with discriminatory hair policies?

1 in 4 children have shown signs that they want to change their hair and identity by mimicking straight Caucasian hair by putting objects on their heads and role playing. These can be a range of items to simulate the swing of straight hair e.g. towels, scarves, wigs, tights, clothing and skipping ropes etc. This has an impact on Identity, wellbeing and performance; which are all closely linked.

The findings have also revealed a clamour for change, from adults wanting things to improve for the next generation. 95% of respondents are calling for an end to anti Afro policies in schools. The research also shows that the most common negative experiences towards Afro hair have not changed much from generation to generation. The popular mantra of "Don't touch my hair," has largely been ignored over successive generations. Touching hair without permission is still the most common micro aggression. People have finally had enough and 95% of respondents want to see UK equality law updated to specifically protect against hair discrimination. Although Afro hair is a protected characteristic under the 2010 Equality Act it is clear from the cases of child exclusions, that there is a growing disparity between the law and school policy and practice towards Afro hair.

Changes Required

The World Afro Day organisation is calling for an audit of how many schools are not following equality guidelines, with respect to uniform policy and acceptance of Afro hair. What percentage of schools are mistreating black pupils because of Afro hair? Does 1 in 6 Black children in this research, represent thousands of schools? We recommend a review of all school hair policies to see how many may be breaking the law. Plus, we want the government to send a clear message to the whole of society by updating the 2010 Equality Act to include greater protection for Afro hair. This will educate people that hair discrimination will no longer be tolerated in society. Similar moves in New York and Los Angeles, America are already proving that change can happen.

Introduction

1. The Hair Equality Report conducted by World Afro Day CIC is in response to The Education Inspection Framework 2019. This document seeks to set out the case and provide evidence for a call to eradicate hair discrimination in UK schools. The principles and recommendations of this report applies to maintained schools, academies, non-association independent schools, further education and skills providers and registered early years settings in England and the rest of the UK.
2. World Afro Day (WAD) is endorsed by the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. World Afro Day is a global day of change, education and celebration of Afro hair, culture and identity. We have been raising awareness globally, about hair discrimination since September 2017. Our message has reached an estimated 10 million plus, people globally. (See Appendix 2)

Opening Statements from WAD Directors

“There is an urgent need to change the historical and current expectation in some UK schools that Afro hair and African hairstyles should be modified or altered to comply with a Western standard. Afro, Caucasian and Asian are the three main hair types but Afro hair has long been considered, inferior to the other two. However, historical evidence of the cultural and societal significance of African hairstyles date back thousands of years to pre-dynastic Egypt. Many of these styling techniques are still in use today, yet they can often be discouraged and discriminated against in English/UK schools.

There is a growing global movement to have Afro-textured hair recognised, accepted and treated as equal in a modern context in both schools and in society. The New York City Commission on Human Rights (USA), recently passed a law protecting Afro hair and hairstyles from racial discrimination. Hair type is intrinsic to specific racial groups and is also protected under the UK Equality Act 2010. However, in practice, some schools in England do not observe the Act and families are forced to comply, leave or fight the policies that penalise Afro hair. This hostile school environment can be the first time that a child experiences hair oppression, exclusion and racism from the State. The system that should be nurturing and protecting black children, can sometimes be guilty of stripping their identity as soon as they walk through the door.

Afro hair discrimination can become a life-long sentence, repeated in the workplace, the arts and sport, with an added burden on black females to meet Western beauty ideals. The pain and struggle have gone unrecognised for far too long and the time for change is now; starting with education and children, which will benefit the whole of society.”

Michelle De Leon, Founder and Director of World Afro Day CIC

‘Can institutional racism be found within the UK school system?’

“That is one of the many questions that has been raised each time another story emerges in the media, about the humiliation and isolation that children with Afro hair suffer as a direct result of the policies that are implemented.

Institutional racism is evident from the systems and policies that exist within an organisation or setting, that discriminate against a specific group of people. What the Hair Equality Report brings to the surface is the reality of the negative experiences that these policies have created for children (and adults) with Afro hair. Institutional racism can be created and controlled because its existence is a result from systems and policies that have been created by people.

The Hair Equality Report has created the platform for the voices of over 1000 people to be heard through its School Hair Survey. Furthermore, it is also an opportunity to prompt more research and discussion. This is not a case of "conscious vs unconscious bias" and nor is it about using institutional racism carelessly as a term. This is about calling for the need to hold school settings accountable, while being measured and monitored by the Ofsted framework. If not now, then when?"

Denese Chikwendu, Director of World Afro Day CIC

Aim of the study

The Hair Equality Report aims to provide evidence to quantify the problem of hair discrimination in schools. How pupils are affected by it and what can be done to change it? The aim is to provide robust evidence so that the problem is no longer hidden and creates a motivation and impetus for change. The report will look at how this area of inequality has changed over time by comparing the current generation of children’s experiences to previous generations. The report will make recommendations and call for changes to address this discrimination.

The Rationale

The report is needed because there is a lack of awareness about this problem within governing bodies, school authorities and the general public. Hair discrimination has gone unrecognised for decades and needs to be addressed. Evidence was needed to support the calls for change and to educate people about the problems. Afro hair bias has been a global topic, gaining momentum but some of the key flash points, have been discrimination against children.

The School Hair Survey 2019

World Afro Day conducted a School Hair Survey online, targeting black adults, particularly women with Afro hair. Plus, any parent of children with Afro hair. We consulted researchers at De Montfort University and did a pilot study prior to the launch of the official survey. The pilot was held to ensure a clear understanding of each question, which was deemed as essential to ensure a strong response rate.

The School Hair Survey was also researching how significant the school experience is in comparison to other influences in people's lives e.g. the media. The survey was very well received with several respondents remarking how good it was. In the space of one week, 1000 people participated. People were engaged with the subject matter and felt it was an important topic to be addressed.

The survey was promoted online and was divided into two parts: one for adults and the second part for parents. Parents and guardians were encouraged to answer questions, along with their children. The survey was open from Tuesday March 26th to Tuesday 2nd April 2019.

Key Findings

Adults Respondents

- 1 in 4 adults (24%) said they had a bad or very bad experience at school with their Afro-textured hair and identity. Plus 68% preferred to have straight Caucasian or Asian hair when they were children.
- 86% of respondents with Afro hair, believe that Afro hair is a God created design.
- 95% want similar protection in the UK to the law passed by the New York Human Rights Commission, which bans discrimination by employers, schools and other public places, based upon hairstyle (specifically natural styles for Black people).
- 95% believe current hair policies in schools, which penalise Afro-textured hair should be removed or made more inclusive.

Parents on behalf of children

- 16.6% (1 in 6 children) of parents said that their children have a bad or very bad experience at school with their Afro-textured hair and identity, compared to 24% of Adults when they were young.
- Out of the children with bad experiences 46% of parents said that their children's school policy penalised Afro hair, compared to only 27.6% of adults saying that this was a problem, when they were at school.,
- Of those with bad experiences, parents said 82.9% of their children experienced touching hair without permission, which was in the same region for the adults 88%.

- 41% said their children preferred/wanted to have straight Caucasian/Asian hair, compared to 68% for the adults when they were young.
- Over 36.7% of parents said that their children indicated that the school environment (including pre-school) most influenced their desire to change their hair type from curly to straight? Which is slightly better than 40.5% for adults when they were young.
- Out of the 16.6% of children having bad experiences. 51% were not taught anything about Afro hair in biology and 54% were not taught techniques to draw Afro hair.

Discussion

There are some key indicators, which haven't changed for a generation. The school environment is still the number one influence on whether a child wants to change their hair from curly to straight. This means that black and mixed raced children are still under pressure at school to look like their classmates with straight hair. Clearly school is a key time for all children to receive positive messages about Afro hair.

Worryingly, for respondents who have had bad experiences, the most common micro aggression is people touching children's hair without permission. Over 80% of adults and children today said that this happened to them. Despite people being told 'don't touch my hair,' which is a well-known slogan in the black community. The reality is people aren't listening. Too many children have to experience this invasion of their privacy and dignity.

On one level, there has been some improvement with results showing that children are having less bad or very bad experiences at school, compared to previous generations. Down from 1 in 4 previously to 1 in 6 children today. However, the survey shows a rise in negative hair policies from previous generations 27% to 46% today.

For the 1 in 6 black children today, who are having bad experiences, the picture is bleak. 46% of the schools that they attend, have policies that penalise Afro hair. While attending school, nearly 82.8% are experiencing touching hair without permission, 58% are experiencing name calling or negative behaviour and 59% are experiencing uncomfortable questions about their Afro-textured hair. These children are clearly having a hard time at these schools but on a national level, who is aware of these problems? Further research needs to be done into the rise of negative Afro hair policies. Are Academies and Free Schools more likely to have negative hair policies, which might explain this rise? The results suggest a problem with leadership in certain schools and a lack of awareness of how anti Afro hair policies can affect children.

There is clearly a need for more inclusive teaching and research about what children are taught about Afro hair at school. The results show a lack of teaching about Afro hair at relevant parts of the curriculum, this creates a lack of normalisation of Afro hair in the school system. Over half of these pupils received no teaching about Afro hair.

There are some very powerful findings demonstrating the strength of feeling for change. 95% of respondents want to see negative hair policies that penalise Afro hair at school, removed or updated. 95% similarly want the landscape to change for adults in society with the introduction of new laws to specifically protect Afro hair from discrimination, like the law recently introduced in New York.

Lastly the survey has found new evidence that could improve protection for people with Afro hair under the Equality Act regarding belief. 86% of respondents with Afro hair, believe that Afro hair is a God created design. Could this mean that they are entitled to extra protection for belief as well as race?

Summary

The survey has clearly demonstrated that there is a problem for 1 in 6 black children with hair discrimination in schools and that no one in authority is talking about this. This was a hidden problem that has been highlighted through this much needed UK research. The survey has also indicated that if nothing is done about hair discrimination, it will continue in schools from generation to generation. However, black people are aware of this inertia and complacency and are strongly calling for policies to change in schools.

There is clearly still a problem with how Afro hair is treated between pupil to pupil, because the curiosity to touch Afro hair starts in school and continues into adulthood. Better teaching about Afro hair, should create a more inclusive environment and create a less uncomfortable and alienating experience for black children. This survey has established that for many black pupils, there is not yet hair equality in schools and that the school environment is the most significant place that erodes their confidence about their own Afro hair. The evidence is now here for OFSTED and other authorities to become more aware about this overlooked area of discrimination and the need for it to be addressed.

Response to the proposed Ofsted Framework

A force for improvement

“10. Ofsted exists to be a force for improvement through intelligent, responsible and focused inspection and regulation. (Page 4 of the Education inspection framework document)”

- This is an ideal opportunity to make a ‘force for improvement’ become a ‘force for inclusion’ of Afro hair.
- This part of the framework should be used as the measure for schools to improve dress code/hair policies in a manner that ensures that pupils with Afro hair do not experience discrimination.

Helping to protect learners

The evidence from the School Hair Survey reveals that 1 in 6 children with Afro-textured hair are having a bad or very bad experience with their hair and identity in the school system. Many schools across the country, could be responsible for creating a climate that could be detrimental to the wellbeing and performance of black children. How will OFSTED improve this situation, now that it has evidence?

The Equality Act 2010

“Inspectors will assess the extent to which the provider complies with relevant legal duties as set out in the Equality Act 2010 and the Human Rights Act 1998.” (Page 5 of the Education inspection framework document)

This is a statement from the Equalities Commission, which echoes our concern about the existence of hair policies that do not comply with the law:

“Overly restrictive school uniform policies risk discriminating against some pupils. No child should ever feel isolated or be excluded because of a uniform policy they cannot comply with. Any policy which impacts disproportionately on pupils with particular protected characteristics is likely to be unlawful, unless it can be shown to be necessary and for a good reason.”

**Melanie Field,
Executive Director at the Equality and Human Rights Commission**

The evidence from the School Hair Survey also found that over 86% of the respondents with Afro hair, believe that their hair is a God created design. No pupil with a kippah, turban and hijab are asked to change these appendages of their beliefs, which they are not actually born with. Yet a pupil with Afro hair is expected to modify the hair that grows from their scalp in a way that satisfies a standard, not compatible with their race and beliefs. This is no longer justifiable.

The UK is not alone but part of a global problem of hair discrimination in schools, which has not yet been tackled by national authorities. Recent cases in England, New Zealand, USA, Jamaica and South Africa illustrate how widespread the problem is. However, England has the opportunity to be the first country to eradicate this in schools nationally. The ability for each Headteacher to set their own hair policies, has failed to ensure compliance with the 2010 Equality Act. How many schools are failing in this regard? Does the DfE know? Surely OFSTED and the authorities should? Greater enforcement of the current law is needed but also an amendment to the Equality Act is required for greater protection of Afro hair. This conclusion was overwhelmingly supported by 95% of respondents in the survey.

Quality of Education

- There is yet to be provided any evidence of the benefits of hair policies in schools for children generally and black children specifically. In fact, there is evidence that hair does have an impact on performance and when you feel bad about your hair, you have less confidence and perform at a lower level. (Appendix 4 “Bad Hair Days” Study Professor Marianne LaFrance, Yale University).
- The Macpherson Report recommended: ‘That consideration be given to amendment of the National Curriculum aimed at valuing cultural diversity and preventing racism, in order better to reflect the needs of a diverse society.’
- Twenty years later, this Hair Equality Report calls for the national curriculum to reflect the fact that this is multicultural, multi hair-textured Britain. From the respondents who experienced negativity at school towards their Afro hair: nearly 83% of adults and 51% of children said they had not been taught anything about Afro hair in biology.

- Art lessons are also a concern because representing the human race is a key aspect of art and these skills are one of the earliest elements that are taught to children in the Early Years setting. From the respondents who experienced negativity at school 78% of adults and 54% of children said they had not been taught techniques to draw Afro hair in art. A standard lesson using the below technique (in the link) would benefit all students to give them confidence in drawing people of all races. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rPt8cjWmihM&t=404s>

Behaviour and Attitudes

If the average Headteacher has minimal knowledge about Afro hair, why are they given maximum control over the Afro hair of their pupils? Surely leading the school uniform policy from a place of ignorance is detrimental to pupils with Afro hair.

- Some of the anti Afro hair policies in schools have been so damaging and discriminatory, that both pupils and families have experienced bullying by the school. (See Appendix 3: Case studies of pupils).
- Dreadlocks are potentially the most maligned and misunderstood of Afro hairstyles. Modern laws in the Americas have specifically been introduced to control it. The natural state of Afro-textured hair is far more prone than any other hair type to develop, locked elements. There is new evidence that some children are naturally born with dreadlocks in Nigeria and are referred to as Dada children. (Appendix 4, University of Nigeria, 2017)

Leadership and Management

The survey findings reveal that there has been a 66.6% rise in policies that penalise Afro-textured hair, from one generation to another. There is clearly institutional bias in some schools against Afro hair, that in the worst cases are racist bullying. Judging children based on how they look and making them feel bad about how their hair looks because it doesn't fit into the dominant group is bullying. The fact that these are institutions and the negative behaviour is demonstrated by teachers towards pupils, exacerbates the discrimination. Headteachers have the authority to punish that child and the family. This is not 'inclusive education' and OFSTED and other governing authorities should be aware of those schools which fall into this category.

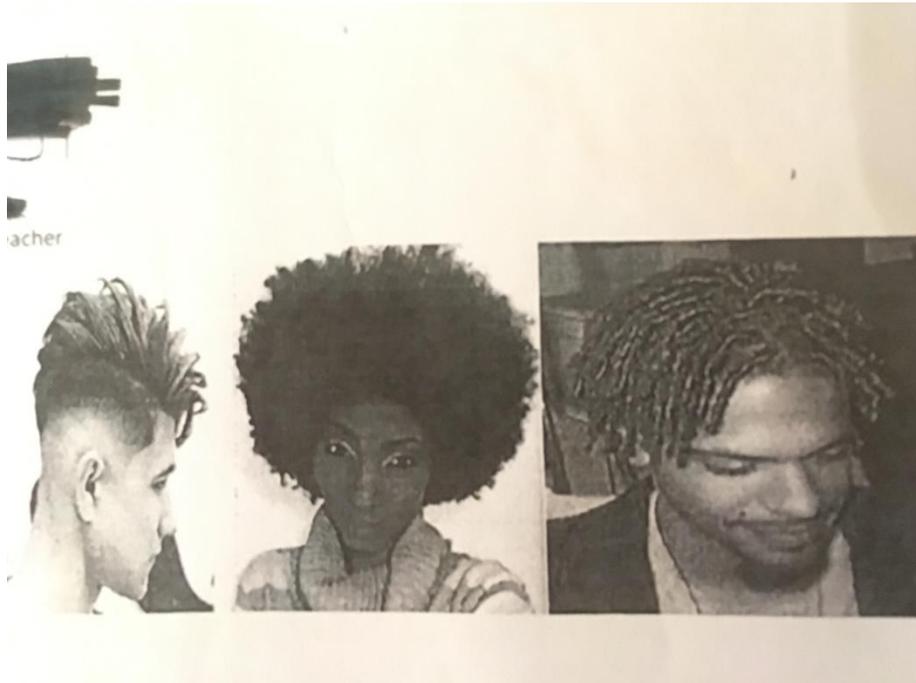
Currently leadership in these schools, reward assimilationist behaviour; as Sivanandan suggests, "If you are here, be like us if you cannot, go home." (Sivanandan 1982, pg136).

Evidence of Poor Practice within the School Setting

An extract from a discriminatory letter, from a Secondary Academy School:

“In order to ensure a stress-free start to the term, make sure that any hairstyles/cuts are in line with our policy i.e. no shaved sides/lines, stepped or exaggerated styles (see below). The pictures represent a guideline and not an exhaustive list.”

The pictures below show a black woman with a large Afro and a man with a medium short twist or lock style. Both photos are not exaggerated hairstyles for Black people but very normal.



Other evidence regarding bias against Afro hair

While writing this report, a current issue in the Dominican Republic has emerged.

“the debate surrounding discrimination in Dominican Republic’s public and private schools has been a major topic of discussion following a case of discrimination against a girl who wore her Afro-textured hair to a school in the eastern region of the country. Subsequently, the firing of the Ministry of Education’s Director of Gender Equality for creating a video in support of natural hair also sparked outrage among local organizers and activists...”

There was massive social action taken in response to these events:

“Let’s put a stop to racial discrimination, for that reason this Monday April 1, wear your Afro, your natural hair to school or work without fear,” Cero Discriminación RD said in a post on their Instagram page. “We too have the right to equality.” (See Appendix 4)

USA research

An in-depth study into hair bias in 2016 by the Perception Institute surveyed over 4,000 participants to measure the explicit and implicit biases people feel against afro-textured hair. The majority of participants, regardless of race, 78% of people instinctively prefer smooth hair. (See Appendix 4)

“More than just Hair”

Hair for people of African descent has always been a human rights issue. The right to wear their hair in their own choosing was first removed in slavery. This historical context is very apparent to people of African descent but not to people in authority, who currently exert modern oppression. This survey reveals very strong responses to seeing injustice inflicted on children. The biggest emotional reactions were:

- 68.6% - Anger
- 67.7% - Reminds them of injustice against black people globally

7% of people cried, which although relatively small it still shows they were significantly affected by these situations of racial discrimination.

The fact that this report is needed to defend and protect black children in England and the UK is a sad indictment of pervading attitudes in society, against Afro hair. The school is the frontline of oppression by creating rules and attitudes that tell black pupils and families, that their hair does not fit into society. This battle for hair and identity starts in the school system and is exemplified by the case of Josiah Sharpe a five-year-old boy responding to his mistreatment at an English school: ‘he didn’t want to be black anymore_because school disliked his hair.’ (see Appendix 3 Case Studies)

This is the reality of how the impact of strict hair uniform policies are very different for black and mixed-race children, compared to other students. Hair is inextricably linked to race. The only universal hair policy equitable to all children is no artificial colours. Once you get into grooming and maintenance, these stipulations are determined by hair type but Headteachers seem to be ignorant to the fact, that one uniform policy cannot be ‘fair’ to all hair types.

This historical hair discrimination has been around for centuries and black people want it to stop now. This is reflected by 95% of respondents who want to see the New York law (which bans discrimination by employers, schools and other public places, based upon hairstyle) brought to the UK. Equally 95% of respondents to the question of hair policies which penalise Afro-textured hair in schools, want them to be removed or made more inclusive.

Workplace and Society

Some Headteachers have justified their biased hair policies by saying that they are preparing children for the workplace. Unfortunately, this is true, they are actually preparing black children for more bias in the workplace but this an attitude that needs to be challenged not reinforced. (See Appendix 4)

Recent Laws Regarding Hair

15 September 2016, the US State of Alabama passed a law which allowed employers to deny jobs and promotion to people with dreadlocks. This date is marked annually by World Afro Day to raise awareness about Afro hair discrimination.

New York Law - On 18th February 2019, the targeting of people based on their hair or hairstyle, at work, school or in public spaces, will now be considered racial discrimination.

LA Law - Led by the Crown Coalition, the proposed legislation will ensure protection against discrimination in the workplace based on hairstyles by prohibiting employers from enforcing purportedly “race neutral” grooming policies that disproportionately impact persons of colour.

This growing global movement for legal recognition, protection and equality for Afro hair is reflected in the survey results.

Conclusion

Hair is just one aspect in which black children can be disadvantaged in the UK Education System. However, it is probably the most simple and easy to rectify, with very little additional resources. This report has removed the excuse of ignorance from people in authority, which has historically led to black pupils’ exclusion and alienation. The survey also provides clear evidence of the overwhelming strength of feeling, among adults that they want action on hair uniform policies. The time is now for leaders in government, authorities and OFSTED to have ‘ambitious vision’ for eradicating this problem from the school system, for now and for future generations.

Educating children is a starting point but equally teaching adults about hair equality, will require a change in the law. The World Afro Day organisation thoroughly supports the 95% of respondents in our survey in calling for an amendment to the 2010 Equality Act to specifically recognise hair discrimination in its own right. This type of discrimination disproportionately affects black and mixed-race people. Historically, the attitudes behind this discrimination have become embedded in society as norms so the only way to tackle this is to create the law and educate the public as to why it is needed.

Key Recommendations

This report recommends the following for Schools:

- The removal of all school hair uniform policies and practices, that directly or indirectly discriminate against pupils with Afro-textured hair in English/UK schools.
- An immediate audit of all school hair policies to establish the number of schools with hair policies that do not comply with the 2010 Equality Act.
- A warning to all schools found with hair policies that do not comply with the 2010 Equality Act to urgently remove or update them in line with the law.
- All future OFSTED inspections should check that hair policies are compliant with the law. During parent consultations, hair uniform policy should be included.
- A review of relevant curriculum areas and teaching elements that include hair e.g. Biology and Art, should positively reflect the three main hair types: Afro, Asian and Caucasian as standard elements and equal in value.
- There should be Early Years teaching of all three hair types as standard, which is carried throughout all subsequent years to support consistency of learning.
- OFSTED inspects schools in relation to their Public Sector Equality Duty with “the need to eliminate discrimination, to advance equality of opportunities and foster good relations.’ Schools should be providing evidence and publish their PSHE strategies and most significantly their annual activities so that they are not dormant policies.

This report recommends the following for the Government:

- A government commitment and process to eradicate hair discrimination from the School system.
- Amendment to the 2010 Equality Act to specifically include Afro hair discrimination and suitable protection for Afro- textured hair and Afro hairstyles.
- Ensure that the Ofsted Inspection Framework includes compliance with the above recommendations with respect to hair uniform policies
- Independent regulation of hair disputes between families and schools to prevent an undue burden of legal action placed on families.

Appendix

Appendix 1: Supporting organisations; supporting statements from academics, teachers, health professionals, Afro hair advocates, community and arts.

Statements from Academics

Statement	Contributor
“There is an urgent need for this ground breaking World Afro Day initiative to help all children (and adults) understand the unique place of Afro hair in society. These ready to use lessons and activities are a brilliant down-to-earth enjoyable teaching resource which aims to teach children about 'difference' in a way that creates empathy	Dr Jacqueline Harding, Vallance, MA, Cert Ed, neurophysiology cert, SFHEA.

<p>and respect. Creating social inclusion and community cohesion is dependent on the positive development of identity and self-esteem and these are important issues for all children. Learning about the value of afro hair in a fun way will undoubtedly benefit society as a whole!”</p>	
<p>“Hair has great cultural significance. Sadly, at times innocent cultural expression through hair has been misunderstood or curtailed by dominant groups - who with subjective rather than objective reasoning, have the freedom to diagnose and impose what they define as an acceptable set of norms, which in effect demonizes or degrades others as inferior, rebellious, or unprofessional. Even worse, this adversely affects certain ethnic groups. As a seasoned industry professional and scholar, I have witnessed how these actions impact on the educational experiences, employability and career progression of a number of ethnic minorities who feel pressured into a scenario where their thriving cultural heritage is viewed as second class and a barrier to progress, forcing them into making drastic decisions. I believe that now is the time to revise policies that reinforce outdated notions of acceptable appearance, and to embrace what has been celebrated historically and is a continuing practice.”</p>	<p>Professor Jonathan A.J. Wilson PhD; Professor of Business and Marketing, Partner at Dragonfly Black</p>
<p>““The diversity of human geographic ancestry cohabiting in the same places is one of the defining features of the modern world. Huge potential is locked up in this diverse profile of people, especially kids, for the benefit of all humankind. For this potential to be realized we have to become much better at seeing that this value is not predicated on how diverse our appearance is. Changing world demographics alone (including migrating populations and greater admixture of groups) necessitates school systems to acknowledge current transitioning from Eurocentric view of appearance norms. I would suggest not to do this via even more identify politics than currently en vogue as this can set groups against one another. That said we should foster positive and inclusive role models and examples for all of us.”</p>	<p>Professor Desmond J. Tobin PhD, FRCPath, FRSB, FIBMS, FIoT</p>
<p>“I think organisations like World Afro Day are very essential to educating the entire world about the beauty of natural hair and also to try and dispel any types of myths and negative stereotypes and associations with locs, braids and Afros.”</p>	<p>Professor Wendy Greene, Visiting Professor of Law at Washington and Lee University School of Law (USA).</p>

<p>“One of the most powerful tools for combatting discrimination, including race discrimination related to hair, is education. And, it’s not only important to educate children of color about their hair texture and structure and to instil pride in their hair, in their whole being. For them it’s also important to educate white children that their own hair texture and structure is not the baseline for everyone else in society and that every person’s hair and being must be respected and valued equally. Children are the future employers and leaders of the world, and if they grow up with these lessons, they are much less likely to repeat our mistakes and engage in discrimination, both explicit and implicit discrimination, against others.”</p>	<p>Dean and Professor Angela Onwuachi-Willig, Boston University School of Law</p>
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Statements from Teachers

Statement	Contributor
<p>“Roundhay School was delighted to help launch World Afro Day Schools in 2018. We believe that in order to allow our students to be as successful and happy as possible we must remove all barriers so that all students are able to be ready to learn. Through amazing projects like this, we believe that we can support our students to be more responsible and resilient people which will provide them with the skills that will allow them be the best that they can be.”</p>	<p>Tom Clements Leader of History and Government and Politics Roundhay School</p>
<p>“I have worked with Rastafarian pupils throughout my career and have developed a broad and deep understanding of individual needs, cultures and religion. Discriminated against by some organisations, by adults and other peers, World Afro Day is a great initiative to help raise awareness and end the discrimination.</p> <p>Schools with archaic uniform policies need to get real. Of course, there is a clear line between extreme breaches of school policy and those which are subjective and/or breach the Equality Act of 2010, but I do question if these types of policies are ‘out-of-touch’ with the modern world – freedom of speech and preparing pupils for the real world – and are perhaps discriminating against some pupils.”</p>	<p>Ross Morrison McGill - BAEd, MA, FRSA, FCCT, Former Deputy Headteacher and Founder and CEO at @TeacherToolkit Ltd.</p>
<p>Our school Mission Statement reminds us that ‘We celebrate and rejoice in the uniqueness of every child’ and we aim to hold this at the heart of all that we do at St William of York Catholic Primary School. World Afro Day is an opportunity to reflect on our pupils’</p>	<p>Sharon Lynch Headteacher St. William of York Primary School</p>

<p>individuality and how they may express their personalities, heritage and culture in the way they choose to style their hair.</p> <p>As a global movement, World Afro Day has enabled our pupils to connect with young people and role models across the world and grow in understanding of themselves and others. Our involvement has enabled us to challenge stereotypes and develop an understanding of all ethnic backgrounds, so that we can promote equality and acceptance for the benefit of all of our pupils.</p>	
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Statements from Health Professionals

Statement	Contributor
<p>“Afro hair discrimination must be eradicated from the school system in the same way that any other form of discrimination should be. Children and families should not feel any pressure to alter or adapt a child's hairstyle in order to conform with school uniform or other policies. We are seeing epidemic rates of mental health problems in children and young people and something as absurd as discriminating over hair is one thing that could potentially impact on a child's mental wellbeing. As a healthcare professional I fully support this report requesting that OFSTED take rapid action to eliminate any discrimination in the school system.”</p>	<p>DR. ZOE WILLIAMS TV Presenter, GP and Health Expert</p>
<p>“It is now evident from numerous studies that there is widespread discrimination in schools and in the workplace which has had far reaching long term consequences for young people, particularly young black girls who are forming their own identity. New York has now banned hair discrimination against those in school and the workplace https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/feb/20/new-york-ban-hair-discrimination-british-black-people).</p> <p>There is also research to show that policing young black girls and their hair can have a detrimental consequence and reinforce negative stereotypes.</p> <p>Unfortunately, over the years the subliminal messaging has had an effect on how young children perceive their hair as not being as good as Caucasian hair. Although the evidence in my practice is anecdotal in my 25 years of professional practice it is evident from the patients, I see that they have felt pressured to chemically straighten their hair. The main reasons are to be taken more seriously, fit in and/or straight textured hair is considered more professional.?”</p> <p>Self-confidence starts at an early age so I wanted to be a part of WAD to change the narrative from negative to positive around Afro hair. Children should know that they will be judged on their ability and not feel they have to repress their cultural roots and identity.”</p>	<p>Shirley McDonald MIT Consultant Trichologist The Hair and Scalp Clinic</p>

Statements from Afro Hair Advocates

Statement	Contributor
<p>“It was important to be involved in the World Afro Day because not enough is done to affirm the beauty and by extension worth of girls with Afro textured hair, so it was necessary to support an organisation doing just that. Since starting my own platform to promote the positive representation of afro textured hair, I have become highly aware of how the black women are largely invisible in the UK and the rest of the Western world. World Afro Day gives black women the visibility they deserve and the gives black girls and young black women the affirmation they need to feel accepted and belonging to the society they live in. WAD is also important because it is educating children about Afro hair, with children seeing afro hair as normal. WAD is helping to secure a future where diversity and inclusion are expected and given.</p>	<p>Lekia Lee Afro hair Campaigner and Founder of Project Embrace</p>
<p>“Discrimination based on afro hair texture is a form of social injustice that is happening worldwide. Since slavery, black people have been subjected to discrimination based on the hue of their skin, their body shape, their hair texture and more. For too long, black features have been labelled ‘unnatural’ by all nationalities. From the school system to professional working environments, afro textured hair is often seen as unmanageable, untamed, unattractive, and unclean. Afro hair discrimination is racism and must be eradicated from all systems. But it must start with the school system, where children can learn about their culture and other cultures. From a young age we are taught that hair is an important attribute of physical beauty. The more straight your hair, the more beautiful your hair is - this is the false narrative that the western world has given. Why? because people connect straight hair with white people, who are very much seen as the ideal of beauty today.</p> <p>Some black people adopted this way of thinking due to the influence from western beauty standards, it’s the reason why relaxers exist. How your hair looks has the power to dictate how others treat you and how you feel about yourself, by eradicating Afro hair discrimination from the school system, it will help provide better human rights equality within the education system. But it’s not a matter of only changing the uniform policy, teachers will need to be open to relearning and setting an example to the children around them. This will help black children to be more confidence with their natural-born hair as well as helping children to general understand that beauty comes in all forms, and people should not be judged because of their hair texture.</p>	<p>Shirvinna Best Founder of Curly Treats Festival</p>

The last time I relaxed my hair was in 2007. I remember transitioning from relaxed hair back to natural hair, at work I would be called names such as “lion hair” “fuzzy hair” or comments were made such as “I’ll get you a comb for Christmas” and “I did not realise it was so soft”. There were misconceptions about afro hair and the way I was treated due to proudly wearing my hair in its natural state was a lot different from when it was relaxed. Many working environments are not setup for employees to thrive until you blend in and look like the “mainstream” but an ordinary hairstyle for black women and girls is not mainstream, the mainstream is usually very white. We cannot afford for future generations to experience what we have in the past, learning begins from the day we are born, we must improve the school system to improve future generations.

As the founder of CurlyTreats Festival, the UK’s largest natural hair event, I believe it important to work with World Afro Day to improve diversity within the educational system. Schools, colleges and universities are extensions of our society, where diversity should be promoted and celebrating the different cultures that make up our societies is a must.”

Statements from the Community and Arts

Statement	Contributor
<p>“The idea that the hair a child is born with is somehow not acceptable and must be altered in order to "fit in" or groomed in ways deemed as suitable by people outside of that experience is damaging to their confidence, mental health and self-esteem. All hair is beautiful and eradicating discrimination of all types of curly hair and teaching educators an understanding of the different ways of grooming it will not only preserve the children’s dignity but also make sure they feel like they are a valued member of British Society.</p> <p>Parents of children as young as 5 have wanted to have their children given a Brazilian Blow Dry so the children can have straight hair. One client's daughter in particular was asked why her hair did not grow "properly" by a staff member and told it looked like a bush.</p> <p>By the time some girls are in high school they have lost love for their natural hair so much so, they believe they "need" a weave or braids to "look tidy enough" or feel "cute". One result of this is that hair loss in young women is occurring more and more due to traction alopecia resulting in even more psychological issues as they are trapped in a cycle of depending on hairstyles that are not supportive of healthy hair and a positive self-image.”</p>	<p>Dawn Chimba Natural Hair Stylist and Founder Afrotility</p>

<p>“The BFI share many strategic aims with W A D – we understand how important identity and representation are and on-screen representation has a huge impact on society. If you don’t see yourself reflected on screen or only certain tropes or stereotypes, the impact gets magnified. It is powerful to reach out to younger people to address under representation and push back against these tropes and stereotypes in such a positive way. The BFI support W A D and it’s significant work advocating for Afro Hair Equality.”</p>	<p>Jennifer Smith Head of Inclusion British Film Institute (BFI)</p>
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Appendix 2: Overview from World Afro Day Report 2018

<p>World Afro Day (WAD) is a global day of change, education and celebration of Afro hair, culture and identity. The event is endorsed by the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. World Afro Day 2018 raised awareness with an estimated 10 million plus people. (See below)</p> <p>From “10th September to the end of November, World Afro Day reached an estimated 8.6 million people across social media, DOOH, press and programmatic.” (Ogilvy Report)</p> <p>World Afro Day reached an estimated audience September 2018 on ITV Good Morning Britain and various ITV Regional News broadcasts of 2 million viewers.</p> <p>15th September 2018, World Afro Day also appeared on BBC Breakfast, BBC London News and various BBC Radio national and regional shows.</p>	<p>World Afro Day Organisation</p>
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Appendix 3: Case studies of Pupils

<p>Examples of UK discrimination in the Secondary Phase</p> <p>CASE STUDY 1: School discriminated against Rastafarian boy by telling him to cut his dreadlocks</p> <p>In September 2017, Fulham Boys School put 12-year-old Chikayzea Flanders in isolation in his first week of Secondary School and separated him from the rest of his classmates. They objected to his dreadlocks, which he wore as part of his Rastafarian religion. Tuesday his mother, was told by the Headteacher Mr Ebenezar, that if she didn’t cut off her son’s locks, that he would be expelled. The Flanders family took legal action against the school with the support of the Equality and Human Rights Commission and won. However, the case was traumatic and Chikayzea never returned to Fulham Boys School, although he was legally entitled to.</p>
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“Fulham Boys School treated my son Chikayzea in an appalling manner. I was shocked, it was so hurtful and humiliating, I went through every kind of pain I can think of. It was very sad, that a school can go to that extreme to isolate a child because of a religion. It left a very bad taste in my mouth. We should have the right to wear our hair how we feel but I don’t mean, pink blue or any colour. Children follow their parents’ religion: a Jew wears the kabbah, a Muslim, a hijab. When they are older, they can decide for themselves. The school shouldn’t have the power to take that away from parents. I never thought I would ever have to take legal action against a school, especially not in a multicultural country like Britain. No parent should have to take a school to court. We send our children to school and we trust the school system, but all trust has gone.

No School should have any form of policy that discriminates against a child and Fulham Boys still have a policy of no braids and no dreadlocks.”

Tuesday Flanders, Mother of Chikayzea Flanders

Outcome: Chikayzea Flanders and his mother have now reached an agreement with Fulham Boys School, with both sides accepting that the school’s enforcement of its uniform policy and ban on dreadlocks resulted in indirect discrimination.

CASE STUDY 2: School excludes boy from lessons because his hair is too short

According to the Bedford Today online (25th October 2018), Bedford Free School removed Emmanuel Sackey from classes because his hair was too short. Celestine Sackey-Clarke says her son Emmanuel, 15, was left traumatised.

“So on Emmanuel's first day back after the haircut which was a Monday, I finished work at 1800hrs and found a voicemail had been left on my phone saying he was out of lessons that day because of the length of his hair, the message had been left at the end of school by the teacher. I called them on Tuesday after Emmanuel had gone to school trying to understand why he had to be in isolation. The teacher said it was the school rules and they couldn't do anything about it, I said I wanted to talk to the Headteacher and I waited the rest of the day to get a call from the headteacher because she said that the Headteacher was going to call me back. I did not think he would be in isolation on the second day as I thought it was a mistake by someone on the Monday. Emmanuel however got back home on Tuesday and said that he had been in isolation again the second day. He had been told that he was going to stay in there until his hair grew.

The so-called nurture base is a classroom where other isolated children for hair are placed. Emmanuel however didn't stay in there during those two days as there were too many children in there so he sat in front of the staff room on the first day and in front of another room by himself on the second day. When he got home, he refused to go back there.”

She wrote them a letter of complaint but the school had maintained its authority to ‘rule out’ Emmanuel’s hair. In fact, they had added, insult to injury by saying that: “they are encouraging pupils to have hairstyles that are ready for the workplace.” This means, that the school were telling Emmanuel and his mother that, his hairstyle was not fit for school or the workplace!

“I feel the school did not handle the situation right at all, although it has resulted in the change of the hair policy, which is good. However, I feel we needed some sort of apology for them getting it all wrong but all the Headteacher did was to justify their actions.”

Examples of UK discrimination in the Primary Phase

CASE STUDY 3: Schoolboy, five, who has alopecia is banned from playground for 'extreme 'skin-fade hairstyle' because it 'detracts from learning'

Danica Sharpe, Mother of Josiah Sharpe

On 19th January 2019, The Daily Mail (2019) reported that Josiah Sharpe, age 5, was told he couldn't go out and play at Summerhill Primary Academy in Tipton because the back and sides of his hair were shaved.

“We need to combat institutionalised racism. My son {Josiah Sharpe} was 5 years old, when he became a victim of indirect hair discrimination. He lost his playtimes for 2 weeks and was sent home for up to 3 weeks to ‘remedy the breach’. At this tender age especially in 2019, he shouldn’t have to be worrying about why school doesn’t like or understand his hair type, that’s not what he goes to school for. There is a lack of knowledge behind the hair policies in schools. Afro hair has a totally different curl pattern, this therefore will present a different appearance to Caucasian hair. There is nothing wrong with being different. We style to accommodate our hair type, such styles to us are genetically and culturally normal. Due to the European marginal hair standards, we are punished.

My son telling me he ‘didn’t want to be black anymore because school disliked his hair’ was heart-breaking. Schools should be embracing each other’s culture and differences, not making them question it. Punishing a child for the hair that grows naturally, out of their head is wrong. My son’s school in particular has questionable points in their policy. Due to their lack of understanding in making a policy {which} targets children with Afro Caribbean hair types. Schools need to be careful when having policies in place like this, {which can affect} children’s mental health and self-worth. Our children are suffering mentally and emotionally from the poor decisions that schools are making for something natural, that they have no control over.

CASE STUDY 4: Teacher cuts a 6-year-old girl’s hair without permission

Statement from Mother Kay Rose

I have shared my daughter’s hair experience with recent events at her school. I want to raise awareness nationwide on how black Afro hair has been treated within the school system. It makes me sad and confused as to why this had happened and the effect that it had on my daughter and on myself too. I hope that there will be changes from the government that will put a stop to this from now. Children with Afro hair are treated unfairly in the school environment; where they should be made to feel safe, protected and comfortable with any style of their hair.

Discrimination still continues and it has happened to my daughter at such a young age and she lost her confidence within herself a little. I tell Anaya every day: “your hair is beautiful, you are beautiful.”

I was and I still am deeply saddened by what the teacher did to my daughter's hair. By using a sharp object (scissors) and cutting Anaya's hair because her hairband got stuck. It's unprofessional it's a violation to do such a thing. There was no apology or anything from the school or from the teacher for what she did. My question is, why did the teacher not communicate with me via telephone and explain what had happened to my daughter's hair. She didn't ask for permission to cut my daughters hair she took it upon herself to do it and it is hurtful.

At the time my daughter had curly hair it was still visible where you can see her hair was cut, Anaya was so upset the day that it happened. I was so upset and disappointed too with everything and how the teacher went about it and the teacher not seeing and realising what she had done was wrong.

I believe their needs to be some sort of teachers training if they come across a difficult situation with black Afro hair and how it can/should be dealt with. I also believe any professionals (Teachers) should be instantly dismissed from their workplace (School) if they have done anything to any child's hair.

CASE STUDY 5: 8 years old boy, punished with isolation for his haircut

Statement from mother Sakeria Gordon

Names of the teachers have been changed and they are not the real names.

My 8 years old son, Armanno has been attending the nursery at school, since he was a baby. During this time, we have hardly made changes to his haircut, it has always been slightly high on the top, low side and back. In his school photos it has always been an almost identical haircut, sometimes even lower. However, approximately October 2018, I was advised by Armanno's class teacher that his hair was too low and that they do not want to see his scalp. I spoke with the teacher briefly and I was directed to Mrs Maudsley, the Assistant Headteacher; who advised me that it was their school policy and hair should be a grade 2. It was explained to Mrs Maudsley, that his dad is a barber and what they are asking is impossible for his hair type to maintain.

Armanno had the same haircut in March 2019 and when I collected him from school, he informed me that he had to stay inside at break and lunch and sit at the thinking table because of his haircut. I contacted them and spoke with Miss Rose, who advised me that this is the punishment for kids who do not abide by their school policy for haircuts. Please be aware that the thinking table is where they send children who misbehaved at school (advised by Miss Rose).

Armanno is 2 years behind in school, the impact this has had on him is tremendous. At one point he became so upset I was unable to send him to school. His attendance is normally 100%. Miss Rose advised that the policy is to deter skinheads which my son is not. However, she admitted the policy needed changing because it was made a long time ago but until they do, rules must be followed. I had to collect Armanno for break and lunch time or he would be in isolation. The itinerary of his school day was this: breakfast club at 08:00am, school starts at 08:45am he was in his lessons. Breaktime I believe is at 10:20am he went straight to isolation (which is his punishment for his hair cut). Lunchtime if I remember correctly is from 11:45am until 12:30pm. He eats with the other children then goes into isolation. If am able to I collect him, I do so at lunch but not always

at break. So once he stepped foot in school in the morning; he did not go back outside for any fresh air until he was collected at 15:30pm.

Currently we have not cut his hair, he's scared he will be punished again yet at the same time he wants his hair cut. I myself am scared to cut his hair as I cannot collect him from school every day for break and dinner. Armano spent over 3 weeks in isolation, his class teacher has since reported a change in his behaviour, in terms of manners and respect.

Appendix 4: Citation references of evidence regarding the bias against Afro hair

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