



KINGSWORTH
INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL



WELCOME TO KINGSWORTH NEWS

Dear Parents,

I have just been reading about pupils at the Simon Langton grammar school in Canterbury; they have written an open letter, complaining about the decision to ban former pupil, Breitbart's Milo Yiannopoulos, from giving a talk at the school, owing to his "reputational issues".

Yiannopoulos, who was banned after pressure from the Department for Education, with his racist and sexist views ("America has a Muslim problem"; feminism is "like cancer"). However, the Canterbury pupils say they don't need to be protected from "indoctrination" and are being vetoed from what they have called the chance to "interrogate rhetoric". They said that silencing Yiannopoulos gives his ideas substance, and that it reinforces the idea that our present society is against free speech.

I am certain we all have views on the rights and wrongs to speak out in public and I can only underline that

although his view are tinged with odd and disparaging remarks, the only way they can be “handled” is through debate. Allowing him to come to his old school and be confronted by high-schoolers is the ethical and sensible way out, rather than driving him with his ideas underground.

We seem to wish for a safe space of protection - but isn't this an illusion? Don't we want smart, switched-on children, able to confront and challenge ideas that are after all based on judgements and pre-conceived notions of what a “Muslim is” or what “feminism does to people”? Of course, it is dissonant and incompatible to us at times to allow such unorthodox views to be given air but do we not need it in these very challenging times?

It was refreshing to experience a frank and open discussion with my Year 12 class following the American elections, especially as the class was quite divided on the subject. Equally, in my M.U.N. class today, I shall start by a quick-fire debate on the above issue: Should we allow freedom of speech to those that we do not necessarily agree with? Should be interesting. I shall be reminding them of the “safe space” concept, naturally. I will try to keep you posted on this.

On that point, could I get your feedback on whether this newsletter could become a blog, allowing for feedback from you the parents who might wish to respond? When penning my thoughts, I get the impression that some of you might well wish to respond. I know I would. Or am I wrong? Let me know please. You can always email me directly at my Kingsworth address or through info@kingsworth.fr.

Last point – I would like to welcome Mathieu Moulin to Kingsworth International School. Another new Year 12 student, I am sure he will enjoy his last two years of schooling with us before he flies off to university.

Effloresce nobiscum.

Stephen Jankowski

Kingsworth School Fair

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