

31 July 2015

Shalom Kehilla,

Rarely do I write to our Bialik community to pass comment on events beyond the College, but such is the situation at the moment with regards the inclusion of members of our community that I feel obligated to write.

It is with horror that we turned on our computers this morning and opened our newspapers to learn of the knife attack at the Gay Pride event in Jerusalem. The attack appears to have been perpetrated by a member of our own community and this makes the situation all the more shocking.

The Jewish people are a mosaic of difference. Whether we are Orthodox or Progressive, Ashkenazi or Sephardi, practising or non-practising, gay or straight we are all members of klal Yisrael, the people of Israel.

The rainbow spectrum of our community, and I use the term 'rainbow' deliberately, is something that we should celebrate. The idea of inclusion of those whose lifestyles are different to what may be seen as mainstream, but contribute positively to the community without impinging on the freedom of others, is a fundamental tenet of modern liberal Jewish values.

As the Jewish Community Council of Victoria debates on Monday whether to include Keshet, a group representing Jews who may not identify as heterosexual, I would like to express my personal view as Principal of a cross-communal pluralist Jewish school that the inclusion of such members of the community in our institutions should not be a matter of debate but simply a matter of fact.

Having just commemorated Tisha B'Av, the date when so many calamities have befallen the Jewish people and when we bemoan 'baseless hatred', now is the time to come together as a community and make a positive stand for inclusion.

Shabbat Shalom,



Jeremy Stowe-Lindner
Principal