

Today, we gather in a circle to recognise the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

This day was established by the United Nations in 1966 following the Sharpeville Massacre in South Africa in 1960, when peaceful protesters demonstrating against apartheid laws were killed by police. The day was created as a reminder of the harm caused by racial discrimination, and of the responsibility shared by communities around the world to eliminate it.

The Circle of Unity we stand in today has become a symbol used in many schools and communities to represent that commitment. A circle is a simple shape, but it carries a powerful meaning.

In a circle, no one stands above or in front of anyone else. Everyone stands connected, and are a part of the same line.

And, most importantly, no one should be left outside it.

For many people in communities like ours, racism can sometimes feel distant, like something that happens somewhere else, or something that belongs to another time.

However, racism does not only appear in major historical events or headlines. It often exists in smaller moments: a joke that excludes someone, an assumption about where someone comes from, or a comment that makes someone feel as though they do not quite belong.

These moments may seem small to those who witness them, but they can have a lasting impact on the people who experience them.

And within our own community, there will be people who have experienced this firsthand. Today is also a moment to recognise that reality, and to acknowledge the importance of creating a school culture where everyone feels respected and included.

At Christ's College, we often speak about brotherhood: the idea that we are part of a community that looks out for one another and treats each other with respect.

However, that idea only has meaning if the circle is wide enough for everyone.

The circle we form today represents the kind of community we aim to build – one where people are respected for who they are, where differences are valued, and where no one is quietly pushed to the outside.

Maintaining that circle is not something that happens automatically. It depends on the choices we make – in conversations, in classrooms, on sports fields, and in the everyday moments that shape a community.

And if the circle we stand in today truly represents unity, then it should not end when this moment does. It should continue in the way we treat one another every day.