

CAERPHILLY COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

DATE: 2ND NOVEMBER 2015

SUBJECT: HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY 2016

A PURPOSE OF REPORT

To inform SACRE of Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) 2016.

B BACKGROUND

Holocaust Memorial Day is an annual event that takes place on 27th January and was established in the UK in 2000. The first HMD was held in January 2001. 27th January marks the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz - Birkenhau concentration camp by Soviet troops in 1945.

Holocaust Memorial Day seeks to change the future by learning from and remembering the past. Schools are encouraged to participate in Holocaust Memorial Day in order to remember the victims of the Holocaust and more recent genocides. It provides a framework to explore issues of morality, human reactions, individual experiences, responsibilities and larger questions of the role of governments and democracies. The government, including the Welsh Government, encourages schools and LAs to commemorate this event in some way.

The Holocaust Memorial Day Trust produces materials specific to the theme of Holocaust Memorial Day. The theme for 2016 is "*Don't Stand By*". The Holocaust and subsequent genocides took place because the local populations allowed insidious persecution to take root. Whilst some actively supported or facilitated state policies of persecution, the vast majority stood by silently – at best, afraid to speak out; at worst, indifferent. Bystanders enabled the Holocaust, Nazi persecution and subsequent genocides.

Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel has written powerfully about the impact of bystanders:

"I swore never to be silent whenever and wherever human beings endure suffering and humiliation. We must always take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented".

Further information about the theme and free educational resources containing material suitable for primary to post 16 students is available online at www.hmd.org.uk/content/for-educators.

C RECOMMENDATION

That the Local Authority write to schools reminding them of HMD and to circulate the information on HMD referencing the website for appropriate resources (www.hmd.org.uk).