

MBR Message to Students Wednesday 13 May 2020

"So never lose an opportunity of urging a practical beginning, however small, for it is wonderful how often in such matters the mustard-seed germinates and roots itself." Florence Nightingale

Dear Blackfen students

A good morning to you all.

Yesterday was the 200th "birthday" celebration for Florence Nightingale. I wonder what she would have thought about the current situation? If you are not aware of the contribution that Florence Nightingale made to modern day nursing, alongside others, aim to do some research to find out more. Her birthdate is remembered each year through International Nurses Day. During our lifetime so far we would have had many encounters with nurses, probably starting on the day we were born! I know some of you, due to ongoing health concerns or an underlying condition, will know some nurses very well. Many young people leave Blackfen to go into nursing and midwifery as careers, and many parents/carers are nurses. Ms Morris, one of our staff, is also a nurse and she has been doing many additional shifts over the last few months. As a society we are full of admiration and appreciation of the work of the nursing profession. We thank them for their work, care and dedication.

Over the last few months I have written to you about this journey we are on. It is clear that we are starting to move slowly to a so called new normal. In a sense we are now at this practical beginning. The steps may be small and, over the last few months, your growth and development may have been difficult to notice. Why? Because all of your efforts have been in laying down a strong root system to support what is to become. Without those strong roots, we cannot embark on this journey. So, take up this opportunity now, make the most of the support around you, and be ready for the next stage in this journey with strength in your roots to boost you forwards.

But where are we actually at with this "real" rather than metaphorical journey? You would have heard a great deal this week about young people returning to school at some point in the future months. What is clear is that the priority, if it is safe and the science tells us that we can, will be to allow students in years 10 and 12 to have some experience of being in school this term in support of their learning. The document states, " Secondary schools and further education colleges should also prepare to begin some face to face contact with Year 10 and 12 pupils who have key exams next year, in support of their continued remote, home learning." What is not clear is a more specific date from when this will happen. We are presently starting to think about what this might look like based on a range of guidance that will be provided for us and will be in touch with you and your parents/carers over the coming months. However, the learning journey continues and you must do all you can to access the work, ask for help if you need it and support one another as we enter the next phase of this tough journey for us all. Keep moving forwards and keep your head up. For, if you keep your head up, you can see far more than the ground at your feet.

My best wishes to you and your family at this time.

Matthew Brown
Head Teacher