



Monday 1st June 2020 - Community Assembly

People



I hope you had a chance to take some rest and spend good time with your loved ones over the half-term period. It seems a little odd, during these different times, to be referring to usual things, like half-term. And yet it is so important to use language as a means to take control and frame our experiences when circumstances have become so unusual.

There has been much mention of and discussion about a 'new normal', as we continue to navigate through all that this public health reality has brought. On many sensible levels I understand and accept this notion, with different ways to work, shop, access services, etc. On these functional matters, a 'new normal' makes sense; but won't it be so wonderful when they are no longer needed.

However, on a fundamental level I think a 'new normal' has no place and no defence: the drive for us to stay in touch, to help one another and to support each other. Some years ago, when I was devising a professional development approach for teachers, I noted that my guiding objective was going to be to protect colleagues from the noise of externally-imposed initiatives to create space for teachers to talk to teachers about teaching. I still hold to the power of and the place for common sense energy like this. The noted linguist, philosopher and commentator, Noam Chomsky, refers to the Cartesian common sense of people, as he reflected on the important insights of the seventeenth-century French philosopher, Rene Descartes.

With our current circumstances, my experiences, whether at home, work, etc. have demonstrated that people will find a way to keep in touch with people because they want to connect with people. This biologically-driven instinct and spiritually-

necessary impulse will always find a way - it will bulldoze its way through any externally-imposed situation. Whether it is an animated conversation in person or one framed by an online platform, we will gather, we will talk and we will laugh.

As we move into the second part the Summer Term, we will continue to work hard and well to make sure that what is treasured by us - the people in our community - are safe, supported and stimulated to move forward, emboldened by a shared commitment to timeless values and inspiring traditions, because this place is made, sustained and refreshed by its people.

Mr Lawlor