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Dear Sam, Martha and Anna,

Thank you for your letter. I'm sorry it has taken me some days to respond; with the challenges of COVID closure and remote learning all continuing, we've been pretty flat out. We discussed many of the issues you raise in your piece yesterday at our online Student Council, with passionate opinion from just down the road, London, Hastings, France and Palestine, to name a few, all converging in an established consensus that, as a place of learning and valued self-expression, we can indeed do more to 'engage in educating its students about the history, culture and influences of racism'. Abi Wharton joined us for Student Council, and shared that she will be convening a BLM steering group of current students, OBs and parents, across all three schools, which will lead a Bedales response to the current situation and the issues underlying it. We won't wait until the new school year to do this, but will get on to it straightaway.

I think Bedales has probably moved on significantly even since you left. We introduced a consistent Wellbeing (PSHE) curriculum across all Blocks from last September, delivered by a subject specialist, and annually Block 4 will be covering racism and discrimination. Through Wellbeing we will have ethnic minority speakers coming to Bedales to share their experiences, and LGBTQ+ is also covered, as are gender and class inequalities, in the curriculum. We haven't had a full year cycle of this subject yet because of school closure, but it will be a powerful agent of change for the future.

You mention many subject areas in your letter. We will have a special edition of the Saturday Bulletin (the main way we communicate school stories to students and parents) dedicated to BLM and giving Heads of Department and other academic and support staff an opportunity to highlight the areas of their subject curriculum that offer students time to learn about 'systems and structures of injustice'. They will also, of course, signal too their planning and intentions to do more and differently in the future. I am happy to include your letter in the Bulletin edition. I think that this will be a better way of giving you a representative picture of present and future practice, and it can be a shared and public piece.

Coincidentally, my 6.2 university bridging course, which is now in its sixth week, has been looking head-on at the moral stain of slavery in the US and UK. Referencing [The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn](#) and [Absalom, Absalom!](#) I've talked about miscegenation laws in the US, Loving vs Virginia (which, eye-wateringly, was a 1967 ruling, so only as old as me!) and linked what is happening now on the streets of Atlanta, Richmond and Washington and around the world, with the historical narrative of 1861-65 in the US, which doesn't appear much now on UK history curriculums. In an act of unwitting prescience I mentioned Colston, and Bristol's prominence in the slave trade, just a day before his statue was toppled.

Thank you for getting in touch and sharing your feelings. I've only been at Bedales less than two years, as you know. But its liberal credentials are authentic, I believe, and in 'work of each for weal of all' the final word is the most important.

With kind regards,



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