



Marden High School

Friday 13th March 2020

Dear All,

Discussion inevitably continues in the media about the spread of the coronavirus and the different responses to it. There is uncertainty about what may happen to schools in the near future, and so we have this week been putting into place our business continuity plan. This will enable us to be clearer about what we may need to do in the near future.

In the event of our school closing we will need to ensure that students can continue with their learning as best as possible. The way that we will set work will be as for exceptional circumstances and work will be shared with pupils through google docs so that it can be monitored by staff.

Parents should note that government advice on absence from work or school has now changed and is that if anyone has symptoms of coronavirus infection (COVID-19), however mild, they should stay at home and not leave the house for 7 days from when symptoms started. Please inform the school attendance office where this is the case so that we can continue to carefully monitor the return to school of students and staff who have been absent. This will help us all to contain and delay the spread of the virus.

We are mindful of making the best decision about upcoming events, and this needs to be based on the most up to date advice and guidance. Given that this is changing on a daily, and even hourly basis, there will be some future events eg Easter revision, parents evenings etc that we cannot yet make a decision on, but will do so as soon as we possibly can.

We continue to monitor the situation carefully and to put in place any measures required following the daily advice and updates that I receive from the Department for Education. Please do let me know straight away if you need to speak to me about any aspect of COVID-19 or our continuity planning.

Conducting learning walks this week it has been good to see excellent focus from students involved in some very creative activities, and demonstrating some real independence in their learning. Ensuring that our students continue to develop the 5Rs of responsibility, resourcefulness, reasoning, reflection and resilience, and using time effectively is key. This is why our school motto, *Carpe Diem*, is so important to us. As the great boxer Muhammed Ali said, "Don't count the days, make the days count."

On Thursday we enjoyed a visit from the Ugandan Singing and Dancing group "The Watoto Choir". This group of students, visiting Cullercoats for two days performed last night, having also performed especially for our Year 7 during Personal Development and also having worked with our Year 7 students in a music lesson. This exciting opportunity to engage with young people from around the world builds on our endeavour to develop global citizens of the future, here at Marden High School.

This week we have been good sports and taken part in various activities to help the Sport Relief fundraising hop, skip and jump up the totaliser. With a walkathon from Land's End to John O'Groats running every lunch time, the students collectively helped raise over £80. Running alongside this, we had a rowathon which made a big splash in the LRC. Staff and students were each taking 10 minute slots to help collectively row from 7am to 7pm on Thursday. That night, there were a number of good sports who were chasing top spot in the Sports Relief Quiz. Though there could only be one gold medal, the runners up all enjoyed a great evening, with the supporting PTA cheering on. With the 'guess the weight of the bowl of fruit' and the 'Wear your PE kit to school' day, the school was full of positive energy and as we reach the finish line of the week, we can be proud of the fund raising efforts made.

The season has now restarted for matches and the U12 football team played Marden Bridge this week. After an exciting start where the team led 3-1 they unfortunately lost the match 4-3. Well tried boys!

The U12 Netball team took part in their first area competition this week. A squad of players went to the event in order to allow students who regularly attend extra curricular netball to switch in and have a game. The players really rose to the occasion and were so impressive winning games against Churchill, Wellfield and Longbenton to reach the section finals, where they were narrowly defeated by John Spence. A very impressive start in their first year.

We enjoy our next POW Night on Thursday evening, next week. These 'Proud of our Work' evenings are opportunities to celebrate excellent work from our students. Over time, we aim to ensure every student has the opportunity to celebrate their achievements during a POW Night and this time, we have Mr Hiscock presenting on supporting learning at home, Miss Laing providing personalised reading lists and Miss Parker promoting an upcoming ICT course for parents and carers.

Unfortunately a number of students have hurt themselves recently when they have caught their false nails on furniture or sports equipment, resulting in painful injury for them. It is for this reason that we are clear that students should not wear false or long fingernails or large, hoop style earrings. Earrings should be restricted to a small pair of studs or sleepers, and there should be no other facial piercings worn. It is important that we can provide a safe environment for our children, and not wearing such jewellery helps achieve this. We appreciate parents' support in helping their children adhere to this, and other uniform requirements, which can be found in each student's school planner.

Thank you for your continued support.



Mr M. Snape
Head Teacher