



Marden High School

Friday 27th March 2020

Dear All,

Now that we are at the end of the first week of doing things very differently, we have no doubt all started to understand some of the challenges facing us on a daily basis. We know that working from home is not easy, and we don't want anyone to get stressed about not getting school work done, or having the feeling of falling behind. As long as students are doing what they can and making the effort to do some work and establish routines, then that is all that anyone can ask. Teachers may contact parents or carers if students have not submitted any work, and this is simply to help parents and carers to be aware of what their children are and are not doing. In this situation they are best placed to have conversations with them about the work they are doing at home, and parents and carers are encouraged to make contact with staff should they need further advice. Unfortunately we are not in a position to be able to distribute paper based work given current government restrictions and the work that our staff are already dealing with.

As a community we are all used to being able to respond to the individual needs of each student on a daily basis through the interactions we have. Now, because of the circumstances we have been thrown into, we are in a situation where it is far more difficult to do that. However, we are still here to support everyone, but it is more difficult for us to respond to that individual need and so this is where students are going to need to develop their independence and resilience and to look after themselves mentally and physically.

It is important to be reflective and to re-prioritise on a regular basis, and I have found that the following questions can be very helpful at times. What is the most important thing for me to do now, for the next hour? Shall I stress and get angry about what I can't do? Where will that get me? How can I contribute to a cooperative and pleasant atmosphere in the house? What's the best way to do that? If in doubt, put the kettle on for a cup of tea. Even if you don't want one, somebody will!

Here is a great tip from US Navy Admiral William McRaven to help keep going. “If you make your bed every morning, you will have accomplished the first task of the day. It will give you a small sense of pride, and it will encourage you to do another task and another and another. And by the end of the day, that one task completed, will have turned into many tasks completed.”

We are all missing being in school and having that daily contact with our community, and so we've put together a short video to say hello to everyone. You can see this by logging into the school website. We hope you enjoy it!

Next week, the House Challenge is coming home. The House Challenge is altering to ensure that all students can partake in our exciting challenge whilst they are either at home or working independently at school. Next week's challenge is from the RE department, followed by Easter challenges and then weekly with challenges which can be completed with family whilst we work together to stay safe and, as much as possible, stay at home. Mr Richards will let students know what the challenge is on a Monday morning and across the week there will be information relating to the challenge on the website and via email. We look forward to students earning House Points, making positive contributions and continuing to belong to our brilliant House System and school even when things feel more distant.

There is still ongoing support from the Connexions Advisers who will be providing a telephone and email guidance service to all young people. Young people can use the general number 0191 6436965, and email ConnexionsNT@northtyneside.gov.uk. Advisers will be proactive in contacting those students who are due to leave school to ensure that they have offers of learning and intended destinations, and they will ensure that young people are given advice and information on the range of post sixteen options and support with application processes and transition planning. Advisers can be contacted as follows:

Helen Bishop – 07583 225747 – helen.bishop@northtyneside.gov.uk

Carol Myers – 07964 017069 – carol.myers@northtyneside.gov.uk

In addition to support for leavers, Connexions Advisers will be able to provide careers guidance to all year groups from year 9 onwards. Parents may wish to encourage their children to use some of their time at home for career exploration. Connexions can provide a range of resources, information and learning tasks to support, as well as over the phone careers guidance.

The latest update on the exam situation from the Department for Education and Ofqual is as follows: "We will outline by Easter the process we will follow to make sure grades are fair across schools and colleges, as well as our proposals for appeals. We will also say more as soon as possible about the arrangements for additional exams in the new academic year." I will of course let you know of any other updates as they are announced. In the meantime, Year 11 students need to continue with their work so that their teachers can be as accurate and as up to date with their grades as possible.

The Local Authority and Headteachers are currently planning for phase 2 of this school closure, which is the Easter holiday period. The numbers and issues are such that the current thinking is to try to keep support for key worker families and children with EHCPs local, and for each school to continue to look after its own students. I think this makes good sense for community relations and safeguarding, and we will be in touch with parents early next week to ensure we have accurate registers for that period.

Take care and look after each other.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'M. Snape'.

Mr M. Snape
Head Teacher