



Marden High School

Tuesday 31st March 2020

Dear All,

As we enter the second week, pupils seem to have settled well into the different way of working and have been well-supported by staff. By the end of this week we will be entering what the Local Authority has dubbed 'Phase 2' which is the Easter holiday period.

Over Easter it is important that both staff and students have a well-deserved break. However, with families having to stay at home, we want to be able to provide some support in terms of activities that students could choose to do. These will be completely optional for students, but we would encourage the children to get involved with at least some of them as they will be designed to develop a range of knowledge, understanding and skills, as well as the 5Rs. As staff will also be having a rest, there will not be the same feedback that has been available during these last 2 weeks. It may be an opportunity for students to do something fun or culturally based around a variety of different subjects, and these may be activities that do not always fit into curriculum planning. Departments will be sharing these activities with students at the end of this week. They will also be available by clicking on the 'Home Learning' button on the school website.

However, please remember that even though students will not be getting daily feedback from subject teachers, we are still here to support students and their families, so if parents or carers need to, please contact myself or a member of the Senior Leadership Team by the normal means and we will get back to you.

During Phase 2 (Easter holidays), and Phase 3 (start of summer term) we will, of course, continue to provide a supervised learning environment in school for children of key workers.

Whilst we are of course continuing to support all our students, we are currently giving some thought to our Year 10 students in particular. This is the year group whose GCSE studies have been interrupted half way through, but who will still need to be sitting their exams in

summer 2021. Whilst I have no doubt that they are all very capable of picking up where they left off and of doing very well, we want to put some additional support in place now so they can hit the ground running upon their return. To this end there will be a programme of mentoring and study skills which we will launch for them towards the end of the Easter holiday period, and we hope that this will enable them not only to keep their focus sharp, but to help them develop some of those independent revision skills necessary for making the most of their GCSE study. Students and parents will be emailed further details.

The Girls' Network mentoring programme for some of our Year 9 and Year 10 girls continues in an altered form. Monday's scheduled meeting will take place by telephone with the girls speaking directly to their mentors. It is hoped that this will allow the girls to continue to have the opportunity to discuss career aspirations and to develop those crucial employability skills as part of their education. The Girls' Network is now circulating a regular newsletter entitled, 'The Future isn't Cancelled'. While the newsletter is for the mentors who volunteer on the programme, it serves as a reminder of how we must all strive to be creative and resilient in the current climate.

Over the next two weeks, the House Competition will be continuing with Easter related challenges that can be completed anywhere. Each worth 20 House Points, students can complete any or all of the four challenges across the two weeks and the range of activities includes designing an Easter card, creating an Easter scene, designing eggs and a keepy-up challenge. An email will be sent to all students.

We know that students will still be very proud of the work they are producing at home and we want to celebrate this, so The Headteacher's Award for Work of the Week will continue this week, but in a slightly different format. A best piece of work will be sent to me from each subject area and I will then have the pleasure of writing to students and parents to congratulate them on their work. This work will then be exhibited on the school website - by clicking on the Work of the Week button - for a week, for all to admire.

Every year Marden High has taken part in the NTLT Star Awards. Due to the Government guidance around social gatherings and social distancing, the Star Awards can't happen as they have in the past. However the Trust wanted to maintain the ethos of Star Awards and still encourage nominations of children and young people from Trust schools with a view to having a Virtual Star Awards. Every child or young person nominated will be sent via school

or home their certificate, asked to take a selfie with their certificate and upload it to twitter with the #NLTVirtualStarAwards2020. The categories have gone and the timeframe is open all the way until the end of the year, so as to broaden the opportunities for all. Parents, carers, school staff and children themselves can nominate. There's more information on the NTLT website and in our end of term Newsletter the full information including the link to vote will be included.

Late on Friday last week I was contacted by the Director of Communications for Northumbria NHS Trust, who was sadly having to get in touch with schools to ask whether they have science goggles they could donate to the NHS. We were, of course, very glad to help out our health care colleagues/heroes with the personal protective equipment they so badly need, and we were able to hand over 350 pairs on Monday morning. I hope that they are provided with the equipment they need going forwards.

On Friday Mr Ranson shared a video of Marden staff working from home. This week we wanted to share a video of top mindful tips from Marden students - what are you doing to stay mindful, keep calm and relax quietly? What tips can you offer to other students to feel well and peaceful? We are looking for either a picture of students being mindful or 2-3 lines of writing explaining what students have been doing at home. The best and most creative or most mindful contributions will make it into our video this week and onto the Marden website.

Take care and look after each other.

Mr M. Snape
Head Teacher