Marden High School

Friday 17th April 2020

Dear All,

I hope that everybody is well and that you have all been able to enjoy something of the beautiful sunshine we have had over the Easter period, in spite of the current restrictions we are all living with. Next week we will begin again with the setting of school work that follows the children's timetables. Teachers will continue to set work for each lesson for students in Years 7-10, and to give feedback where appropriate. The sensible and balanced approach we have been taking with the amount and type of work being set so far, seems generally to be right, given the very positive feedback we have received from parents and carers. Parents and carers will know best how much of the work that is set for children is the right amount to do, and our children should know that they are not going to be in trouble for not getting absolutely everything completed, as long as they are doing their best for a reasonable amount of time. At this time it is very important that nobody - students, parents, staff - feels overwhelmed and confused by unrealistic expectations.

As I wrote in my newsletter two weeks ago, the exams body Ofqual have published the details of how GCSE grades will be awarded. Schools will be asked to send exam boards information for each subject studied by each student, based on what we know about their work and achievements. This means that we will not be expecting Year 11 students to continue their GCSE work. Instead, teachers will be advising students of the types of reading and work they could be doing so that they can prepare themselves for September, and whatever they are going to be continuing to study, be this an academic or a vocational route. This is a great opportunity for students to get themselves familiarised with the content of what they will be studying and to develop or refine their study skills.

In addition to spending their time doing this valuable preparation work, it will be very important that Year 11 students in particular consider this one question : “What did you do during the lockdown?” This single question is bound to become a standard part of the interview process moving forwards. Students should stop for a moment and think about what

their answer would say about them …
What are you doing?
What books have you read?
What did you learn from that?
Have you learnt a new skill?
Have you developed your resourcefulness?
How do you know?
It is worth reflecting on this, and then making a 4 month plan - what do you want to achieve? Some will remember that on the top corridor there's the quote: "Don't count the days, make the days count".

Year 11 students continue to have discussions with staff about their next steps in September, and it is worth highlighting one particular organisation called TDR who have been particularly proactive in disseminating information on apprenticeships. Their website, https://tdrtraining.co.uk/, has lots of information on the various types of apprenticeships that are available, as well as current vacancies, and the dates for interview rounds which will be taking place soon - well worth a look.

Mr Prytherch is contacting Year 11 students to invite them to send in their thoughts and advice for other students at Marden and this will then become a commemorative video to celebrate their time spent at Marden and to serve as a motivation for younger students to remember to make the most of their time at Marden. We look forward to seeing the video which will be published here on the website, as well as being shown in assemblies when we are back in school.

I guess it's true that absence makes the heart grow fonder, as one of the most enjoyable activities I undertook during the Easter period was looking at the Year 8 reports. These really are excellent reports, and reflect the great attitude and talent of all of our students. Adding my own comments to these reports has been a wonderful antidote to the sombre daily news of the past week, as has been looking through the Work of the Week on this website, and has reminded me of the bright future we have together at Marden, hopefully in the not too distant future.

We have continued to have children in school over the Easter holiday period, and I would like to extend a huge thanks to all the Marden staff whose professionalism and dedication to our children is simply second to none, and who have continued to support children of key workers and their families. Staff and children have created a superb banner message outside the school gates proclaiming all our support and thanks for the key workers who are keeping things going and looking after us.

Take care and look after each other.

Mr M. Snape
Head Teacher