



Marden High School

Friday 24th April 2020

Dear All,

Students and staff have been busy this week as they have returned to their original timetables and teachers have enjoyed receiving some excellent work from our students. We are seeing that amongst the most successful types of activities that Marden students are using are 'reading and note making' or 'reading with comprehension exercises', but students are also enjoying a range of creative tasks and an opportunity to make choices in the way they complete their work. Several teachers are experimenting with online videos and screen casts in order to bring the content alive and to make new information as clear and easy to understand as possible.

In fact, there is an ever increasing amount of material available for students online with the government sponsored Oak National Academy and BBC Bitesize to name just two sites providing daily lessons. Rest assured teachers are accessing and adapting the information and activities on these sites to meet Marden students' needs as well as using their own expert subject knowledge to create the best possible resources for home learning.

There has never been a better time to develop the skills that learners need for independent lifelong learning, nor a greater need. Being able to manage one's own learning consists of a fundamental skill set that will be of immense use in later life. To some of us, this skill set comes quite naturally but for the majority they are skills to be developed like any other.

We are aware of this need and will be addressing it in the coming weeks with our Year 10 cohort. Each week there will be a skill focus aimed at guiding Year 10 through some of the difficulties they may face in learning from home. If students embrace this, they could return to school much better equipped for study at GCSE and beyond.

For our Year 11 a guide to next steps will be shared in the coming days and teachers will be creating opportunities for students to complete preparation activities that will ensure they can

begin their next steps with a flying start. Year 11 were so focused up to the point of school closure and will take this work ethic with them whatever they choose to do next.

Members of our Student Cabinet are working on a number of projects at the moment to continue to develop the student bulletin. Each week they will be adding some information relating to dishes from the school cafe menu. This week they explain what Lasagne is, what is in Lasagne and some information about the country it originates from. This will continue week to week with the various dishes from around the world. They are also including a 'Scene of the week' which is a calm and peaceful picture taken somewhere in the world which gives a little window to different places that might inspire some creative writing or poetry! Some longer term work they are developing will be around branding the Student Cabinet so that when they publish work it is evidently from that team. The creation of the subcommittees this year has been a strong development and like any good team, a good brand identity will help their communication. We look forward to seeing this in the coming weeks.

Over Easter we ran a House competition to design easter cards, create an Easter scene and complete keepy ups with Easter Egg wrapping. The winning number of keepy ups was 12 and the Cards and scenes were wonderful with a range of colours and designs. This week the challenge has been a fitness one with runs, press ups and arm curls all the order of the day! Well done to those who have done so already and keep going if you're aiming on a few extra sit ups or have a few metres left to go with the distance run!

We will be conducting a student survey next week. This is to gather Student Voice at a time when things are different and we want to find out what is working well and what we can do to improve things further. The survey will be shared with all students on Tuesday of next week, to be completed as soon as possible. It will be part of the reflection time for students, with the Theme of the Week being 'positive life choices'.

The uncertainty of the current situation can be worrying, and is a disruption to routine, potentially impacting on our well being. There are, however, many things we can do to support and manage our well being during such times. Try to use this new and unusual experience to learn in new ways: perhaps start a new hobby, practise mindfulness, read, research new topics on the internet and investigate healthy cooking and eating. We should also try to make sure we are spending time practising self care. Relaxing and focusing on

the present can help improve mood and lighten negative feelings. We have listed some of the Apps that might help us achieve this.

Perhaps most importantly, it is vital to stay connected with our Marden community and reach out to, and be kind to friends. Don't forget that students have staff here who can continue to support them. Teachers and mentors continue to support individual students remotely from home and can be contacted by email. We also have our online counselling service, Kooth, which can be accessed at any time for support.

Dreamy Kid www.dreamykid.com Children have been showing signs of stress, technology-fatigue, and anxiety starting at younger ages. It is a science-based fact that only 10 minutes of meditation is a great life-tool to find inner-harmony and balance amid their busy lives. With DreamyKid, just play it as they fall asleep or awake. They will begin a life-long journey that will center them with tools for all situations.

Smiling Mind www.smilingmind.com Smiling Mind offers a unique web and app-based tool developed by psychologists and educators to help bring balance to people's lives. Just as we eat well and stay fit to keep our body healthy, mindfulness meditation is about mental health and looking after the mind. Programs are designed to assist people in dealing with the pressure, stress and challenges of daily life. They offer programs for 7 - 9 years old, 10 - 12 years old, 13 - 15 years old and 16 - 18 years old.

Workers Memorial Day is held on 28th April every year all over the world to remember those who have lost their lives at work. This year it will pay tribute to the heart-breaking number of workers who have lost their lives to coronavirus, and to thank all those who continue to do vital work at great risk. As you know, all of our staff are still working hard to support our children and families, and we will cease work for one minute at 11am on Tuesday 28th April to reflect, remember and as a mark of respect. We invite you to join us in this moment of reflection and thanks.

Take care and look after each other.



Mr M. Snape
Head Teacher