



Marden High School

Friday 22nd May 2020

Dear All,

As you are probably aware, the government has a review on Thursday 28 May of the situation with regard to the latest science on COVID 19 and on schools opening more fully. We hope that at some point after the half term break that the situation will be such that our risk assessment will allow us to invite small groups of Year 10 students into school in order to support the home learning that they have been doing, and continue to undertake, it has to be said, in great style. The aim will be to provide personalised face to face advice and guidance to students on what they need to work on at home and to ensure that they know how best to achieve that. There will be further details regarding when this may happen in the weeks following the half term break, and students and parents will be contacted directly.

We are very proud of the way our staff and our students - and their families - have adapted to home learning. It is a very different way of working to normal school lessons and students have had to learn to be very resilient and resourceful in a short space of time.

Feedback from all those involved in the process of home learning has been positive but not without challenge. For this reason we have evaluated and reviewed the Marden approach and decided to pare back the number of subjects per day to two. This will make learning simpler for students and alleviate some of the feelings of being overwhelmed by multiple subjects to complete every day. Emails with instructions and resources will still be sent out by teachers in the morning.

It must be emphasised that this does not mean students will have less to do. We have responded to feedback from students, parents and staff around our provision of learning, and so the aim behind this move is to give students the opportunity to engage with each subject at a deeper level, to consolidate their learning, and to be able to assess their progress through testing as well as teacher feedback. In terms of daily structure and routine,

there should be no change for students - they should still be completing the same quantity of work, but spending more quality time on each subject.

At key stage 3, each subject will have one slot every two weeks, except the core subjects which will have 3. In Year 10 option subjects will have 2 sessions over a two week cycle and the core will have 4. Each session will be between 1.5 and 2 hours of learning. The only exceptions to this will be Personal Development and Physical Education which will focus on mental health and wellbeing with suggested activities to complete at any time.

To give students a chance to catch up on any subjects that may be taking a little longer, there will be one free slot per week for catch-up or extension work in any subject.

Students will still be receiving support and feedback from teachers, form tutors and heads of year and, as we all become more familiar with the range of technology available to us, we are beginning to make effective use of Google Classroom, screencasts, demonstration videos and other online resources to ensure that students have the most accessible and engaging learning experience possible.

I include for fullness of information a link from a government document published today which parents and carers may find useful. It contains broadly the same advice as we have been giving for the last two months.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/help-secondary-school-children-continue-their-education-during-coronavirus-covid-19>

Every week the Heads of Year email on a Wednesday with information about activities that are taking place, House Challenges to get involved in and various ideas and opportunities to take part in during this time where we're apart. It often has talking points which can be discussed at home, or as part of the daily exercise and our staff really enjoy getting the House Challenge entries, as well as communication from students about how they are. Each Monday morning an email goes out with the form time activities, including a quiz, an activity to enjoy at home, the reflection time information and opportunities to email the form tutor. We'll continue this level of communication, pastorally, as we know that staying in contact, whilst we're apart, will help support everyone.

To ensure we continue to support all families we will ensure that despite news reports that the free school meal vouchers will not be available over half term, we are ensuring they are for our families. Vouchers have been posted this week to be used next week and on Wednesday of next week we will send the next batch. Packed lunches continue to be delivered too.

Across half term, we will also be continuing with the current house challenge - the Match Stick Challenge - something fun to try at home and an opportunity to win some more House Points! This week the House Competition has been updated and we continue to offer many opportunities for all students to earn points through the challenges, Headteachers work of the week and times when students have gone 'over and above'. So as not to disadvantage anyone we always ensure that point collation is equal and fair and though they can't be earned through attendance at lessons there are plenty of chances for students to boost their personal total and house total continuing this coming week working with the Match Stick puzzles!

Another means of contact is the student bulletin. When students log on, there are a variety of items which can help students during the day. From 'Scene of the Week', to information about the meals at school (explaining where they're originally from, how to make them and facts about their country of origin!), alongside headlines from Heads of Year and from Monday; 'Mr Shields' Mental Healthiness Guide'.

I would like to finish by saying well done to everyone - students, staff and parents - for their hard work this half term; we are doing very well adapting to this new normal. I hope that people have an opportunity for at least a little downtime over the next few days - we all need to stop for a little while, to reflect and recharge the batteries, and so we're ready for what promises to be another rather odd half term.

Take care and look after each other.



Mr M. Snape
Head Teacher