



Marden High School

Friday 10 July 2020

Dear All,

It has been another brilliant year for our summer term talent show, despite the very unusual circumstances. I know that many of us enjoyed a superb array of wonderful entries, marvellously hosted by our talented Year 9 students. Well done to all participants, and congratulations to our winners.

On Tuesday we held our Transition Q&A session with the Senior Leadership Team and the Transition Team. It was a wonderful evening of discussion, with lots of useful points raised. All of the information from the night can now be found in the transition section of our website alongside all the other activities and information which we have been making available to all Y6 students to support them with transition at this time. Here is just a taste of some of the feedback from our new parents:

"I just wanted to say thank you for holding tonight's Q&A. I personally found it very useful and gained a lot from it. I often find small events like this always go a long way."

"Thank you for tonight. It was very informative and interesting. My son will love your school and is very excited to join the Marden family"

Amongst the activities in this very busy week we have been continuing our planning to welcome all our students back into school full time.

Working through the latest government guidance on September opening for all, we have thought particularly carefully about specialist teaching and interventions, so that all students can access their full timetable of subjects right across the curriculum. We have also thought very carefully about the organisation of the day, including how best to keep the year group bubbles separate at break and lunch times and at the start and end of the day. Key to our thinking has been to achieve the delivery of "an ambitious and broad curriculum in all

subjects from the start of the autumn term, but make use of existing flexibilities to create time to cover the most important missed content” balanced with minimising the risk of virus infection. We are combining several measures and actions, with a focus on appropriate training and full and frequent communication with parents and students. Through these actions we will be following the latest government guidance and doing our best to reduce both the risk of a case of Covid-19 arising and the impact if a case does occur. We expect that the cumulative impact of a number of mitigating actions across the school will be considerable in terms of achieving this.

Of key importance will be the expectations we have of everyone using the school building. The basis for these expectations will be responsibility and respect, two characteristics I know members of our school community demonstrate in abundance. That is why I am confident that when we return in September we will see a smooth and purposeful start to the term. These expectations will manifest in particular in terms of respectful distancing and good hygiene, and a detailed protocol of how students and staff should conduct themselves with regard to these two important aspects will be shared with everyone next week, and emphasised in several different formats frequently during the autumn term.

- We will be ‘zoning’ social spaces, so that where students from different year group bubbles are on break or lunch at the same time, they are kept separate from one another. These separate social spaces, which students will also use in the morning on arrival at school, will reduce the risk of mixing between year group bubbles at start of day, breaks and lunch time. Specific food service areas will be designated for each year group.
- We will have increased sanitising facilities, and a special cleaning team will constantly tour the site and clean desks and door handles in rotation, including mid-lesson.
- We will be using some of the large indoor spaces such as the auditorium and sports hall, as appropriate for rooming of some lessons to give extra space when possible.
- Students will wear PE kit rather than uniform in school and travelling to and from school on days when they have PE in order to reduce use of changing rooms.

- 'No waiting' zones around gates will help to avoid congestion and encourage students to move home promptly at the end of the day.
- We are planning to continue to use digital technology within school in order to maintain a sense of community when large gatherings are not possible. For example, use of video meeting facilities over whiteboards to deliver assemblies to children in multiple different classrooms.

We have year groups starting and finishing at slightly different times to reduce the number of students entering and leaving the building at once. Plans are also in place to use multiple exit and entry points in the school to ensure year groups remain separated. The proposed timetable allows the school to maintain its planned curriculum for September, teaching five 60 minute periods each day across all year groups and protecting tutor time and reading time. Break and lunch are more equal in length and phased so allowing sufficient time for staff and students to eat and relax in the breaks provided. P2 and P4 can be seen as 1hr 25m and 1hr 30m respectively, with Y10 and 11 having break/lunch in the first 25m/30m of each of these, and Y7, 8, 9 in the last 25m/30m of each - reduces numbers of students in circulation therefore reducing potential for interaction between the year group bubbles.

Full details on our arrangements for school life in September, including timings, equipment, expectations and protocols, will be sent to students and parents/carers next week, and will also be published on our school website. As we are still in a period of change regarding national guidelines, it is recommended that you check this from time to time for any updates during the summer.

As you know the students take part in the yearly Maths challenge that takes place across the country. Because of COVID key stage 3 had to do this recently online instead of in school and we had some students participate in this. We had several students receiving the highest gold standard which only a small percentage of children achieve across the country. Well done to all who participated.

Across the week we have been enjoying the 'Love of Sport' week, where the school community have been taking part in sporting events, from egg and spoon to attempting long distance running! It has been great to hear about some of the feats achieved by members of our community, and I have very much appreciated the messages of support from our daily

videos from top British athletes. The points earned by students are for taking part and we are now counting up to find out which House won the event itself and who won the annual House Competition. The videos and pictures being sent in are being collated and will be shared next week. There will be a more detailed review of the week within the end of term newsletter.

It has been lovely to see and hear from some of our Year 11 students in particular over the past weeks. As I have said before, we are very aware that Year 11 have not had the opportunity to experience the usual rite of passage at the end of their GCSEs, and so we are busy putting together a Year Book which we will be producing for them as a memento of their time at Marden. I have written to all Year 11 students today with further information on the prom and the hoodies.

I and the staff are very much looking forward to seeing them all on the GCSE results day. Many schools are simply emailing results to students but we feel that it is very important for our Year 11 to have the chance to come and see each other and their teachers at such an important time for them. As we reflect on the period we've just been through, I'll leave you with the words of the actress Neve Campbell:

"If you can see life as a learning experience, you can turn any negative into a positive."

Take care and look after each other.



Mr M. Snape
Head Teacher