



Marden High School

Friday 18 September 2020

Dear All,

It has been good to see over the past three weeks that the planning we put in place over the summer to welcome all of our students back to a full curriculum is paying dividends. This included a full system of controls according to government guidance as well as a blended learning system which allows students to access their full curriculum and be supported in their learning from wherever they are, in school or at home. We have found that the systems included in our full risk assessment which have been within our direct control have worked very well. During the past three weeks we have had a happy school, with students and staff glad to be back into a daily routine, feeling reassured and confident by what they see around them in the school. Parents have been supportive and have commented positively in person and on social media on the measures we have put in place and on the learning their children are receiving. I would like to congratulate our students on getting to grips with the new routines and showing a mature response to the measures that have been put in place, and I appreciate the conversations that are happening at home reinforcing the message of hand hygiene, respectful distancing and use of face coverings.

As we are all aware the rate of COVID transmission continues to rise, particularly now in the north east, and the inevitable uncertainty around how this situation will develop in the future and the impact of the renewed restrictions we are under as a society, will cause some anxiety in us all. It will be important for us all to remain aware of our own interactions with others, in and outside of school, and doing everything that we can to avoid putting ourselves and others at risk.

[Here is a link to a FAQ provided by Public Health North Tyneside.](#)

I know, however, that we - staff, parents and governors - will continue to do our very best to look after our children here and provide for their learning so that they **do not miss out**. It is important, whilst we take one step at a time in a rapidly changing situation, that we also have a clear direction of travel for the mid and long term, and with this in mind I want to share with everyone the main headings from the School Development Plan that staff and governors have been working on since the summer:

1. Our 'catch up' programme, known as MAST, which will focus on literacy, numeracy, and subject based intervention
2. Enabling sound student and staff well being
3. Enhancing communication with the school community
4. Delivery of a high quality CPD programme for staff to enable outstanding blended learning

5. Making quality assurance work for students and staff

Each of these areas have been identified as key priorities for providing the best education experiences for our children given the current challenges, and there will be updates on these in this newsletter as we progress through the term.

Our Year 7 'Settling In' afternoon on Tuesday 29th September and Wednesday 7th October is an opportunity for parents and carers to speak to their child's form tutor using telephone appointments and discuss how their child has started their time at Marden High School, both socially and academically. We look forward to the conversations we will have with parents but everyone will need to be aware that we have had to make very recent amendments to the arrangements for this event in the light of new government restrictions in the north east. I will explain in more detail in future newsletters how we will be running other parents' evenings later in the year.

Applications for the School Cabinet have been coming in and the standard of writing and the quality of content in what students have been saying has been fantastic. Certainly their words are full of hope, agency and leadership, and I am sure that with that sentiment the students will make a great contribution to school life.

This is also a good time to remember the importance of good sleep and diet in keeping our young people healthy. Staying physically healthy can help them stay healthy emotionally too. Eating the right food and keeping fit, means the body will be strong and help the children to cope with stress and also fight illness, something which is particularly important now. When teenagers eat well and exercise often it also helps them stay in good health later in life. Getting regular sleep is another really important way to stay healthy. Having late nights can leave us all feeling tired the next day, so having sufficient sleep and going to bed at a regular time is also key to our children's health.

So that we continue to support all our students as best we can and ensure that we enable effective communication in a safe manner, we are reminding all students that they must use the appropriate available routes for contacting home (such as speaking to their Head of Year, or reporting to reception) rather than using their mobile phones to call home. I would ask, however, that if parents or carers ever did receive a call from their child whilst at school, to please contact reception and let us know so that we are aware and can support their child.

Thank you for your continued support.



Mr M. Snape
Head Teacher