



Marden High School

Friday 27th November 2020

Dear All,

We have arrived at the end of another productive week, one in which student attendance has again been excellent. No doubt you will have heard in the news this week that, nationally, attendance at secondary schools has plummeted with almost one in five students absent. I have been thinking about what makes the difference at Marden, and why our attendance is still so high. We have had a rigorous risk assessment in place since September and we have actively reviewed this as we have gone through the term, ensuring that it is continuously fit for purpose and rigorously adhered to. We have had close and clear communication between home and school, and clearly there has been in our wider community a careful consideration and mitigation of the covid risk as people go about their daily lives, and in keeping to the rules around isolation. But of course, there is an additional element that encourages our students to do everything they can to be in school, and that is the sense of belonging and shared values that we have as a community. This sense of who we are was put into words last year when staff, students, parents and governors all worked together to discuss its content and to produce the finished version, and it seems that more than ever this term we have seen the qualities and attributes that are described within it. I have a copy of the statement on my wall and in these recent challenging times, as I walk past it, there are three phrases that catch my eye which describe what I see in our students and staff each day:

“We are a strong **community**, each individual full of **hope**, looking forward to many **possibilities**.”

“We see hope and opportunity for everyone, recognising the great range of talents we all have, and we leave no stone unturned in helping our young people to a **bright future**.”

“Our focus on student **leadership** helps develop our strong moral compass, giving our young people a global awareness and a sense of **agency** to shape a more equal society for the future.”

And it is this sense of optimism that has pervaded our work this term. Of course, everyone is dealing with workplace and personal challenges as we navigate our way as safely as possible through the covid landscape, but it is these values that bind us together in a common cause which

will help us through the rest of this challenging term, as we continue to support one another. I would invite you to have a close look at the whole statement. This is not a vision that an organisation might put out as an idea of who they might like to be or who they might become in the future. This is us - it is who we are, something we can be proud of.

We are all of course very hopeful about the development and roll out of coronavirus vaccines, and there is much talk about the end of national lockdown and arrangements for Christmas, but of course there is some way to go before we are out of the woods, and it is important for our mental and physical well being that we have a healthy acceptance of this, and that we continue to do everything we can to protect each other this winter. Emotions in such extreme circumstances will range through happiness, sadness, anger, fear, shock, nervousness, worry and at a variety of intensities. But it is worth reflecting on the benefits that physical exercise, time outdoors, and some simple self-care techniques, including the importance of rest, time spent on hobbies and with family, can have on mental well being and happiness. These links include some further ideas on helping families look after each other's well being:

<https://www.annafreud.org/coronavirus-support/support-for-parents-and-carers/>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zkqtjsg>

This year the science department at Marden High School is pleased to be the fundholder and coordinator for the North East Ogden Trust Partnership. The Ogden Trust is an organisation involved in the enrichment and enhancement of physics learning within schools, and has the aim of developing in students a 'physics identity – to believe they can be a scientist and to see what studying physics can mean to them'. Staff in the department had a successful virtual meeting with other collaborating local schools this week, where discussion involved best practice within physics teaching and further opportunities throughout the year to develop physics within their departments. We look forward to future developments as Marden leads on collaboration with other physics specialists to give our students even greater opportunities within science.

The PTA have now registered Marden High School with #easyfundraising, which means retailers will donate to our school for free every time you use easyfundraising to shop with them, so if you are going to shop with some of the large retailers then we would appreciate your support to help raise funds for our school. It's easy to use - all you have to do is sign up and do your usual online shopping via easyfundraising to raise free donations for the school. There is also an easyfundraising app you can use. There are over 4,100 retailers to choose from including Just

Eat, eBay, John Lewis & Partners, Amazon and many more, and the link below allows you to sign up:

https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/mardenhighschool/?utm_campaign=raise-more&utm_content=s-f2

As the weather gets potentially colder over the coming weeks, it is worth remembering that students will still be outside at break and lunchtimes and so it is important that they bring coats and scarves so that they can still be warm and comfortable while enjoying the fresh air. As we are operating split breaks and lunchtimes, it means that lessons for some students continue when it is break for others, and so space in the building is at a premium. Of course, if it is very wet, then we will move classes around to make arrangements for students to shelter under cover or indoors.

This is also a good time to remind parents and carers that if they are dropping children off in the morning, not to drive into the school car park to do so, but use a safe space away from the school gates on Hartington Road. This is a busy time in the morning and we want obviously to minimise the mix of cars and pedestrians. If any child needs to be dropped off in the car park due to an injury or other incapacity, please let the school office know.

We have worked hard to ensure that all students are able to access learning at home via Google Classroom, and this is proving generally successful. However, circumstances can change quickly and this means that households can find themselves in a situation where a number of people need to use one computer, or where there is no computer available at any time. If you find yourself in either of these circumstances and you feel that there is a need for a chromebook at home to allow work to be completed, please do contact Mr Anderson at school and he can organise the support required.

Thank you for your continued support and take care.



Mr M. Snape
Head Teacher