



Marden High School

Friday 29th January 2021

Dear All,

This week there has been a great deal of speculation in the media about how and when schools and colleges might open to more students. The Prime Minister has announced that it will not be possible to resume face-to-face learning immediately after the February half-term and instead hopes it will be safe to commence the reopening of schools and colleges from Monday 8 March. This is in response to national public health data and pressure on NHS capacity. The government has said that if it reaches its target of vaccinating everyone in the four most vulnerable groups with their first dose by 15 February then those groups will have developed immunity from the virus around three weeks later, that is by 8 March. We look forward to working with the government to consider how this process might work, including how any staggered wider opening might happen. We will let everyone know as soon as we have any further information on this. The Prime Minister also said that schools will close over February half-term and are not expected to remain open to vulnerable children and the children of critical workers during that week.

Our students continue to impress us with their independence and enthusiasm as they carry on learning online. The approach we take means that students can access the learning at any time and this has proved invaluable to families that need to work around IT and broadband access for multiple users in one household. As we continually review our approach, we have begun to introduce elements of synchronous (or live) learning to enhance this experience. While live streaming is not the panacea to online learning it does have benefits and we are keen to capitalise on these without compromising our existing provision. A blended mix of synchronous and asynchronous learning dictated by teacher judgement is the best way to support our students. From this week teachers have been trialling different ways that synchronous learning can enhance our existing offer. So far students have enjoyed short sessions with their form tutor and seminar sessions in maths. Next week there are plans to trial more variations such as giving feedback, class discussions and teacher-led modelling.

We have now been carrying out COVID testing in school for two weeks, and the team that has been set up to do this deserves huge thanks for a brilliant start to the COVID-19 testing process.

The team consists of school staff, very ably led by Mrs Thompson, who has set very high standards of care and safety. All members of the team have undergone training, and, alongside our caretakers, have shown remarkable commitment and flexibility, in developing a very professional 'set up'.

We are pleased to announce details of a free digital careers fair event open to all 14-18 year olds and parents and carers from North Tyneside Learning Trust Partner Schools. It has never been more important for our children and young people to be aware of what options and opportunities are available to them on leaving school, and this event will allow attendees to watch live streams, view uploaded content and chat directly to a huge range of organisations in a secure and a safe environment. Representatives available will include a large range of employers, apprenticeship and training providers, further and higher education institutions and Connexions advisors. The broadcast is free for all pupils and parents from North Tyneside Learning Trust schools to watch. The date of this exciting event is Thursday 4th March from 5.00pm until 8.00pm, and there will be details of how to register soon on our school website.

This week our Heads of Year have shared with their year groups a checklist of actions to perform daily, promoting good routine. These actions include getting up at the right time, making sure equipment is at hand, that they have checked Google Classroom for work, and have asked their teachers about anything they are not sure about. However, it also includes making sure that students have made time to move and exercise, and that they have spoken to friends and family. As I have said before, getting into a routine is important for everyone, and helps us feel productive, and I would encourage all students to use this checklist to either plan or review their day.

Children's Mental Health Week is taking place between 1 and 7 February, and this year's theme is Express Yourself. Expressing yourself is about finding ways to share feelings, thoughts, or ideas, through creativity. It is about finding a way to show who you are, and how you see the world, that can help you feel good about yourself. The organisation Place2Be has an excellent website where you can find some useful information and resources to help everyone.

Thank you for your continued support and take care.



Mr M. Snape
Head Teacher