



Marden High School

Friday 26th March 2021

Dear All,

We have reached the end of a term like no other, and I want to start by passing on my thanks to our whole community - staff, students, parents and carers - for all the amazing work and support that has gone on this term. It has been a privilege to receive the many messages from parents and carers thanking our staff team for the way they have dealt with challenges this term: starting back for a day, going into lockdown, switching to remote learning and remote pastoral care, the continuing development of our remote learning offer, live streaming, juggling work with home learning, returning all students to school, setting up and running a covid testing centre, designing a curriculum for Year 11 assessment - the list goes on. This week, at the full governing body meeting, the governors of the school also recognised this and passed on their gratitude, being aware of how much the community appreciates the historic efforts of staff.

The last date when all Year 11 students will come into school together will be Friday 28th May, which is the last day before the summer half term break. After this time, from Monday 7th June, students may be required to come into school to complete any missing work or tasks, and they will be notified of this by their Head of Year Mr Topping. Later on in the summer term there will be opportunities in school for Year 11 for enrichment in the form of CEIAG (careers) and character development activities. There will be more detail of these events in due course next term, in addition to information on year books, hoodies, and our all important celebration event. Suffice to say for the time being, there are a number of student committees hard at work with Mr Topping making plans for all of this.

When Year 11 students return after the Easter holidays they will be starting a very important period of consolidation work and assessment during which their teachers will be giving them the opportunities to show how much progress they have made. This information will be crucial in arriving at the Teacher Assessed Grades used by the exam boards to award GCSE grades. Clearly students will need to be working hard, and will need to continue to adopt the positive and responsible attitudes they have shown throughout this academic year so far. We want to acknowledge the sense of maturity displayed by Year 11 students as they have come through

considerable challenges this year, and so we will be exercising a traditional rite of passage earlier this year and allowing them to come to school in non-uniform from Monday 12th April.

You may be aware that the new Children's Commissioner for England is Dame Rachel de Souza and she has written to all schools to introduce herself and ask for our help. The role of the Children's Commissioner is to speak up for children and young people across England, and Dame de Souza wants children to be at the heart of the government's plans to rebuild after the pandemic, and so she is looking to gather children's views and priorities for the future, so that she can make sure the government takes them into account.

She has recently launched the Childhood Commission, a once-in-a-generation review of the future of childhood to review any barriers preventing children from reaching their full potential, put forward solutions and set ambitious goals for the country to achieve. The Big Ask will be the largest ever consultation with children in England to find out what children's concerns and aspirations about the future are. We look forward to being able to contribute to this research and I would encourage as many of us as possible to put forward our views, as this is potentially a great opportunity to exercise our agency to shape the future.

Recently we have set up a dedicated recording studio for students to create radio programmes, conduct interviews and showcase their production talents. We will be broadcasting the live programmes within school over our new PA System with our radio production team of students being responsible for the planning, preparation and production. This provides a great way for our students to learn different communication skills in a fun, engaging and exciting environment. The first ever broadcast took place this week on Friday during our two lunchtimes, and was an interesting and exuberant blend of music, interviews, discussion and announcements. We look forward to further shows and to other younger students being mentored and trained in radio production by the current Year 10 team. Many thanks to the team and to Mr Hawkins and Mr Orr who have supported the students.


Earth Hour is a worldwide movement organized by the World Wide Fund for Nature. The event is held annually encouraging individuals, communities, and businesses to turn off non-essential electric lights, for one hour, from 8:30pm to 9:30pm on a specific day towards the end of March, as a symbol of commitment to the planet. This was first started as a lights-off event in Sydney, Australia, in 2007, and this year it is being held on Saturday 27th March at 8.30pm. People turning off electrical appliances for one hour will mean energy will be saved, less carbon produced, and

the planet will breathe easier. We hope you will consider joining in - there's a very interesting video on the Earth Hour website which will record the visual impact of this.

We have had the excellent news that no fewer than 109 of our students have become published writers this term through winning various creative writing competitions, including the North Tyneside Writing Competition. Students have received certificates and copies of the book which has been published to celebrate this fantastic work. There are three national writing competitions for students to take part in over the Easter holidays: the Spinechillers Project; Foyle Young Poets Award; Financial Times Student blog competition. Students have been emailed with details on each of these.

As I mentioned last week we are required to continue contact tracing during the first week of the Easter break, so we are asking parents and carers to let us know if their child tests positive during the first six days of the Easter holiday. If a student receives a positive test after Friday 26th March, please contact school immediately using my email address, m.snape@mardenhigh.net.

I hope that everyone manages to have a good rest over the Easter break and is able to spend some quality time with family and friends, in whatever way you safely can. Thank you for your continued support and take care.



Mr M. Snape
Head Teacher