



Friday 14th May 2021

Dear All,

Earlier this week I wrote to everyone to highlight the fact that because we have all paid such close attention to the risk assessment in place to minimise the spread of Covid-19 in school, we have had relatively few positive cases at Marden throughout the pandemic so far. As a country we are now at another key point in suppressing the virus and being able to continue to move towards the lifting of restrictions. From Monday 17th May, updated government guidance will be in place in a variety of sectors, increasing interaction amongst the population. That means that increased responsibility will be placed on all our shoulders to make sure that in those interactions we have, we keep in mind the need for vigilance and continue to do all we can to minimise the risk of spreading of the virus.

The updated government guidance as it relates to schools means that as of Monday:

- Staff and students **do not have to** wear face coverings in classrooms, but **may continue to** do so if they wish to.
- Everybody will **need to continue to** wear face coverings in the corridors when moving around school, as this is where student bubbles cannot be maintained.
- Hand hygiene, ventilation and testing continue to be **essential elements** of our system of controls to minimise spread of the virus.

It is worth mentioning at this point that communication from the Department for Education has been released over a number of days and in a number of different statements, and has included guidance on schools having to make local decisions taking into account their particular school buildings and risk assessments:

“Where a setting cannot maintain consistent bubbles or keep bubbles separate, they can choose to ask pupils and students to wear face coverings in communal areas. Each setting should make decisions in line with their continued risk assessments.”

Whilst students at Marden are in bubbles in classrooms and at breaks and lunchtimes, on corridors students may cross bubbles, and so we will be requiring students to continue to wear face coverings when they are moving around the school in corridors.

Year 11 have had another busy and successful week of revising and assessment, and I hope that they have a well deserved rest over the weekend, ready for the last two weeks of such work. They really are doing very well as a year group, and need to keep up their excellent efforts in order to reap the rewards they deserve. The Teacher Assessed Grades that teachers arrive at will go through a process of internal standardisation and internal quality assurance before being sent to the exam board on June 18th, and it is important to reiterate that these will remain confidential. This is because, after being submitted to the exam boards, the grades then become part of a process of external quality assurance where exam boards will ask for a sample of evidence of students' work and, following this, exam boards may change grades up or down. Final GCSE grades will then be issued, by exam boards, to pupils on Thursday 12th August.

Later on this term we have an exciting opportunity coming up for some of our key stage 3 students, the RAF Breakout STEM day. Based around a series of virtual breakout rooms, the activity is based on the RAF's relief response to Hurricane Irma in 2017 called Operation Ruman. RAF personnel will be presenting information about the relief effort in the form of maps, diagrams and videos from RAF staff involved in the relief effort, which the students will use to solve the clues and open the lock to the next room. Students will find out about the varied STEM-based careers in the RAF and how logistics and problem-solving skills were needed to manage the Hurricane Irma relief operation. At the same time, the breakout experience tests their problem solving skills and develops the skills of collaboration, communication, critical thinking and creativity to solve the problem, promising to be an engaging and fun way to develop some of those key skills for employment.

As we continue to focus on developing our CEIAG programme, time is being spent researching new ways to help our young people accelerate the development of key skills needed to be successful in the workplace. To keep up with our rapidly changing world, students need to connect with employers early, and build critical skills like problem-solving, teamwork and creativity. Upskill Me is a website which encourages young people to track their skill development through earning badges and participating in workshops. They also host virtual work experience events, one of which is coming up during half term. Speakers from global companies such as Amazon, TikTok and Citibank will be explaining what their job role involves and giving advice on how to enter the industry sector. If you would like to find out more and register for the work experience event please

visit <https://upskillme.io/> and create an account. Virtual work experience is running from Tuesday 1st of June to Thursday the 3rd of June, with headline speakers from Law firm Lathan and Watkins on 1st June 10am-3pm, Amazon and TikTok 2nd June 10am-3pm and Citibank 3rd June 10am-3pm.

This week's assembly has been on study skills, and in it Mrs Robson revisited some of the skills developed in lockdown and gives an example of how pupils can use Google classroom to develop their own study skills. Here is a link to the assembly so that parents and carers can continue to support their children with their home learning, and so that students can revisit some of the valuable hints and tips that Mrs Robson has shared:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1vMH7UUKNDyKwfZTM3yIUYHYxBIput10-/view?ts=60992a57>

In March 2020, our geography shrank. Our most epic journeys now extended as far as the shops, great expeditions braved the trip to school or to work. But a group of young adventurers from Marden, John Spence, and Norham High schools who had just begun a creative arts and history project with Newcastle based educational charity Hand Of were undeterred. Their adventures would just have to take a different form. So, together with a host of musicians, artists and archivists from as nearby as Newcastle and as far afield as Norway, they have been working throughout this past year, documenting both our region's history and their own experiences of the 21st century through art, music, and poetry. The Home Adventures project brings together all of their creations into one film, which will premiere at Sage Gateshead on June 20th 2021 at 2pm. The students' film will precede a live musical performance which will feature some of the musicians and workshop leaders they have worked with across the last year. This promises to be an exciting event which I am sure parents and students will enjoy. We hope to be able to bring the film to our school website for everyone's enjoyment at some point in the future.

Thank you for your continued support and take care.



Mr M. Snape
Head Teacher