



Marden High School

Friday 28th May 2021

Dear All,

Friday was a significant day for our Year 11 students as this was the last one when they would all be together in school engaged in normal lessons. Having reached the end of what has been quite an intensive period of assessment for them all, following the half term break there is a programme of enrichment activities which they will be engaged in, in school, but at different times, and for them it will feel different, something more akin to college or university as they start to investigate Post 16 learning and support their teachers in classrooms.

This is the year group that started Marden at the same time as me, so straight away we had something in common, and it has been a privilege to watch them grow and develop into the fine young people they are today. They have reached the end of their 5 years here at Marden at an historically significant time, certainly one to tell their grandchildren about in years to come.

They have worked hard, and I never tire of telling various people - governors, parents, councillors, friends - how well they have been working within a whole new assessment landscape. And this is really important, because learning to work hard is a great quality to develop, and I know this will stand them in good stead for a bright future.

I will remember this year group for the enthusiasm, commitment and joy they have brought to school at various times, and if there is just one thing I would ask them to think about in the future, whatever they choose to do, and whatever their chosen career, it is that they continue to bring that joy into the lives of others, whether that is family, colleagues, partners, whoever. Remember the mantra - *'be someone else's sunshine, be the reason someone smiles today'*. We're all going to miss these young people hugely - we have been through a lot together - and I wish them all the very best as they move forward into an exciting future.

Lots of Year 11 students have now signed up to the wide variety of enrichment activities taking place after the half term. Amongst these activities is a whole suite of A level bridging sessions delivered by Marden staff which will give the students a great insight into some of the content and skills they will be encountering in their studies next year. Many of our students will also be offering support to younger children in their lessons, providing assistance to class teachers and gaining valuable work experience alongside their teachers. This will see students helping staff to develop

and deliver resources in the classroom, and in so doing, will give them the opportunity to improve their leadership skills through supporting others. The sign up document has been shared with all Year 11 students so that they can all have the opportunity of using their time this summer effectively. If any student has not signed up to anything yet, I would strongly encourage them to do so and there is still time for them to sign up to the different activities.

A group of year 11 boys have also pledged to raise money for the Whitley Bay Foodbank. They are doing this by taking part in a team 10k race where all other pupils will be able to view the exciting finale while in their Personal Development lesson. Students and staff have already pledged their support by donating generously.

A number of our Year 10 students have applied for, and been successful in gaining, a place at Oxford University's prestigious summer school as part of the University Education programme, where they will be enjoying a week long residential at destinations such as St Anne's College. The residential gives participants a snapshot of life as an undergraduate university student as they attend academic seminars taught by university lecturers, complete a group work project, and take part in various social activities. Participants live in student accommodation, explore the city, and generally get to understand what life at university might be like. This is a great opportunity for the students to start planning future studies and career paths and we wish them well on their travels.

As you are aware, we are always very keen to hear parents' views of their own children's experiences at school. I hope therefore, that all parents will take a few moments to complete the questionnaire which we will be sending out, as the more responses we have, the clearer the picture is to us of our areas of strength and areas for development. I mentioned last week that we are currently working on our School Development Plan for next year, and the findings from this parent survey will feed into the content of this important working document. The link to the survey has been emailed directly to all parents and there are links on the website. I hope that reasonably soon we will also be able to restart the parent forum meetings that we have held in the past. Covid restrictions have meant that these have had to be put on hold for now, but I will let everyone know the dates of future meetings in due course.

Our Year 10 students will be having exams in their lessons next half term, mostly in the week beginning 21st June. This is always good practice for important assessment in year 11, and the next few weeks will be a good opportunity for the students to learn, develop and practice effective methods of revision, which their teachers will have shown them during lessons. Currently, the

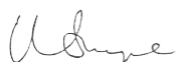
message from the Department for Education is that GCSE exams next summer will be back to normal, so it is important that students get a feel for the GCSE exams and to become familiar with exam rubric and regulations. Once exams are completed by the end of June, students will receive valuable feedback on how they have performed, as well as information on further revision strategies for next year.

Our Year 11 students remain on roll with us until the end of June which means some will still be eligible for free school meals. If any student needs this service, they should email office@mardenhigh.net by 9am on the day and we will ensure there is a packed lunch available for collection by midday. If there are any further questions relating to this or matters relating to free school meals, please contact the same address.

As we are becoming used to in holiday times, I would remind all parents and carers to let me know if any student tests positive with Covid within 48 hours of them having been in school. They should send - child's full name; date of COVID test; what date symptoms started if present - to my email address, m.snape@mardenhigh.net. This will allow us to follow up any potential close contacts and request that they isolate for 10 days to prevent further transmission of COVID-19.

And finally... we are proud of how our students present themselves both in school and in the community, often demonstrating in fine style their responsibility, resilience and resourcefulness, so it was heartening to hear from a local resident this week who informed us that some of our students showed these qualities when attending to an injured seagull on Hartington Road. Having found the injured bird, they contacted the RSPB, ensured the seagull was safe and waited until help arrived. Their thoughtful response in the moment, even more impressive given the weather conditions at the time, were an example of the characteristics and qualities that we continue to foster at Marden and enjoy hearing about when demonstrated in the community.

I hope everyone has a pleasant Bank Holiday weekend. Thank you for your continued support and take care.



Mr M. Snape
Head Teacher