



Marden High School

Friday 9 July 2021

Dear All,

This week the Government made several announcements marking a significant change in strategy in dealing with the rising number of Covid cases. As these have been well publicised through the media I will not go into detail here, and as we are still seven weeks away from the start of the Autumn term, and much could change still regarding transmission of the virus, I will be waiting until mid-August before I write to everyone clarifying any changes to our system of controls.

If anyone is eager to have a long range forecast, I would say that it is likely that little will change in terms of mitigations and arrangements we currently have in place. One thing that we know will change, however, is that from September, students identified as close contacts will not be required to self-isolate, meaning that all the other controls and protections we have in place will become even more important in keeping everyone healthy and safe.

Following those announcements made earlier in the week, we will be carrying out on site COVID testing for students on their return to school in September. When we did this in March we invited parents to volunteer to help us out with the testing; we were fortunate that we had a great response and were able to put together a superb team of testers. Not only did we benefit from their support but many commented on how much they had gained personally from being involved, getting to know staff and students as well as seeing how the school operated first hand. Many of those volunteers have agreed to help again but some are not able to due to a change in their work commitments so we would like to ask if any other parents or carers would be available to help. We are in the early stages of planning but expect to commence on 2nd September for a maximum of 2 weeks. If you are interested in finding out more please contact Sonia Thompson, Covid Coordinator s.thompson@mardenhigh.net, 0191 296 2771. Details of when and how students will be tested will be communicated to everyone when I write in August.

Next week sees the big reveal of Unstuck, the mystery of the missing glue sticks. I am aware that there have been some intriguing theories put forward by students and staff alike as to 'whodunnit', and I must say there have been some exceptional pieces of extended writing (and detective skills)

from students explaining their ideas. Some of them have even got it right! All will be revealed in the next few days.

Next week we have our Transition Evening for parents and carers of our new students joining us in September. We are very much looking forward to meeting them, and I know that staff and students have enjoyed some excellent remote transition lessons over the past two weeks. Parents and carers will have the chance to meet their child's new Form Tutor, and members of the Senior Team will also be available for conversation and questions. In addition to all of this, we have produced a useful FAQ document which answers some of the more generic questions people may have.

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1trpZUhWx8sBE7L_t8BGMT4pPMFw9KmCqcfbYxJ4Jly0/edit?usp=sharing

In this year's TICE project (This is Creative Enterprise), a group of imaginative students from Year 9 were tasked with creating their own series of narrative illustrations to feature in a fairytale-inspired comic book, made to be displayed in the Newcastle branch of Mr Wolf Toy & Book Shop. Mentored by professional illustrator Helen Turner, and working alongside other professionals including Andrew Waugh (Illustrator and Comic book producer), Chloe Green (festival coordinator at Thought Bubble), and Bethan Woollvin (Author and Illustrator), our students developed their character design, narrative image-making, hand lettering, and more, to design their imaginative comic book pages. This project has been fantastic for those who love storytelling through visual narrative illustration. After learning all about the wonderful world of fairytales, getting inspired by influential illustrators, and learning about comic book/graphic novel formatting and production, students used professional illustrator processes to generate their ideas, to explore concept and illustrative style, and to create final comic book illustrations. More information on this and a celebration of their work can be found on the TICE website.

When the GCSE grades are given out later in the summer, students will have the opportunity to appeal their grade, which could result in a grade being lowered, staying the same, or going up. There is also the option to resit GCSEs in the autumn, which may be preferable to some students. The design, content and assessment of these papers will be the same as in a 'normal' exam year.

The Joint Council for Qualifications has given four grounds for appeal:

- an administrative error: an example of this would be putting the wrong information into a spreadsheet.

- a procedural error: where the process, as approved by the exam board, has not been followed. An example of this would be where a student has been told they get extra time for assessments but this was not given in a certain subject.
- the academic judgement on the selection of evidence was unreasonable.
- the academic judgement on the grade you were given was unreasonable.

A letter with further details on this and on the mechanics of making an appeal will be sent out to all Year 11 students and their parents and carers.

This week we welcomed former Team GB Athlete [Stephanie Inglis](#) who won silver in Judo at the 2014 Commonwealth Games. Stephanie worked with Year 9 students by delivering an exciting and fun fitness circuit and a motivational speech. The aim of the day was to help develop and instill teamwork, responsibility, communication and creativity. The day also had an element of focusing and the importance of looking after our physical, mental and social health.

We are delighted to say that we have been informed that we are one of the top-performing schools on HegartyMaths, and have been awarded the accolade of Super School. Only a small number of schools make the Super Schools list each year and it can only happen when the students in a school are inspired to apply serious elbow grease on their maths homework. Well done to all the students who continue to work so hard at this.

For many years Marden High has had a link with King Edwards where our Year 10 GCSE French and German students visit the primary school to teach a languages lesson to the younger children during their Modern Foreign Language day. Due to lockdown last year the Languages day sadly did not take place, but this year we took part virtually. The Year 10 GCSE students rose to the challenge and prepared presentations to teach French and German to Year 1 and Year 5 classes. The younger students who met our Year 10s, practised numbers, colours and introductions. The Primary teachers thought the Marden students performed brilliantly and we are very proud to have such versatile and creative students.

Thank you for your continued support and take care.



Mr M. Snape
Head Teacher