



Marden High School

Friday 10 September 2021

Dear All,

We have now come to the end of our first full week back in school with all our students settling into their new timetables and, for most, familiar routines. The testing we have been doing in school is now complete, and it is now over to the students to be testing themselves at home using the kits provided, before school on Monday and Thursday, and reporting their results using the 'home testing' button on the school website. We have had a number of positive cases during testing in school this term, so this highlights the importance of continuing home testing in identifying positive cases. This will help to reduce the risk of transmission of the virus within our community, so continuing the great teamwork we have all shown throughout this pandemic.

We have been busy updating our 'This is Marden' information pages, and I am pleased to announce the launch of this section of the school website today. There is lots of really useful information on all aspects of life in school, and, of course, this is particularly useful for prospective parents of Year 6 children who will be making the important decision on their child's high school by the end of October. To help them make their decisions we are also providing tours of the school. Because these will be necessarily small groups to facilitate social distancing, these will be available right through the half term, and are bookable through the school office. As well as the tours, there will be a live stream 'Question Time' panel of school staff on the evening of 22 September, answering questions parents wish to send us between now and that date.

In June, Ofsted released updated guidance on sexual harassment in schools after an investigation by the inspectorate revealed that sexual harassment has become "normalised" in schools. In a series of recommendations made as part of the report, Ofsted recommended that schools "confront sexual harassment, abuse and violence among children and young people".

Following these recommendations, we have responded as follows:

- Alerted parents to the potential issue (April 2021)
- Trained staff on the signs and indicators of peer on peer abuse (June 2021)
- Updated our Peer on Peer Abuse Policy (April 2021)

- Informed students in form time about sexting and what to do if this happens (July 2021)
- Piloted a survey on sexual harassment with two Year 9 forms to begin to identify what is happening in our school and how best to safeguard moving forward (July 2021)

The results of this survey showed a wide diversity of responses, indicating a possible lack of awareness or understanding amongst some students, showing that we need to help our young people develop an understanding of what sexual harassment is and why it is wrong will be reinforced in assemblies and Personal Development lessons. Students and staff will work together to identify areas of understanding that need to be enhanced. Through our Continuing Professional Development, we will also be reinforcing this topic with staff so that they can identify the signs and indicators.

I am pleased to let you know that we have been given the go ahead this week to turn our water fountains back on, which will allow students to access additional water more easily, reducing the need for them to bring in multiple bottles of water from home. There is clear signage on each fountain to use only the swan neck to fill bottles and not to drink directly from the tap.

You may remember that last term I spoke about Globalbridge, an online platform all about preparing young people for their future world of education and work. Globalbridge is a secure platform that provides a connection between schools, higher education, further education and industry. It provides students with a digital record of achievement that lasts a lifetime, and access to opportunity regardless of their background. We have now delivered staff training on this, and I am hoping that students in all year groups will start to invest some time in looking at and using this great resource. This also provides a great opportunity for parents to focus in on conversations with their children regarding their interests and ambitions for the future.

Our House Competition begins in earnest this coming week with the House Challenges launching. Next week, to tie in with our regular pastoral activity of 'Reading for Pleasure', students can 'take a selfie in the wackiest of places' to earn points for themselves and their House. The following week students can earn House Points by joining an extra-curricular club as that is the week our extra-curricular programme launches for all students. In early October there is also the chance to earn House Points as students show us what they have been doing on their Globalbridge App. Across the year challenges will continue to link to wider school projects and initiatives so that students can build their House Points, which they can cash in at the end of term, whilst also enjoying the wide

range of opportunities on offer at Marden High School. Mr Richards will update the school community weekly about the upcoming challenges and results of competitions.

Thank you for your continued support and take care.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'M. Snape'.

Mr M. Snape
Head Teacher