



## Marden High School

Friday 10th December 2021

Dear All,

I would like to start by reiterating my thanks for everyone's efforts, understanding and support during the last ten days. I appreciate we are dealing with a situation which has brought many different challenges, and I think that the way everyone has responded to them has been impressive. We have been very pleased with the mature attitude and sense of responsibility that students in school have shown, and also very pleased with the engagement shown by our Year 7, 8 and 9 students who have been working remotely from home, and the commitment they have demonstrated through good communication with their teachers. The continuity of learning in such challenging circumstances has been made possible of course by the excellent support they have received from school staff and their parents and carers, and for that we are all very grateful.

There has been meticulous work carried out by contractors, surveyors, forensic engineers, salvage operators and loss adjusters to establish the best way forward with regard to bringing the building back into operation. The good news is that the Department for Education, acknowledging the thorough assessments carried out and the work we have done in seeking a variety of solutions for continuity of education, has been very supportive. There is no quick fix, however, and any resolution will take several months, and so the search for potential solutions to enable face to face learning for all our students has been a vital part of our work this week. There are various scenarios that we have and that we continue to look at with stakeholders.

A key part of our considerations for all potential solutions is to weigh up the benefits and challenges each one brings against the benefits of our remote learning provision and the associated challenges of home learning. As you can imagine, there are challenges with all solutions but I will continue to keep you updated on developments and post updates on the school website with any significant additional information.

Whilst Key Stage 3 students will be continuing with remote learning next week, we are currently working on plans for some face to face activities for children in each of Years 7, 8 and 9, and further information will be emailed directly to parents and students. We will also be hosting a gathering of festive musicians for a socially distanced twilight of music in the Cafe on Tuesday 3.30pm until 4pm. Any parents and

carers who wish to join us for refreshments and music should follow the cones into the East Yard next to the Cafe.

We are mindful, also, that children who are supported by Free School Meals, will be impacted upon by not being in the school building, and so this week we have been able to secure two weeks worth of Morrisons vouchers, which have been posted out to homes. This will support families until the 17th December, at which point the holiday food voucher scheme will support the holiday period, the scheme which has run since Spring 2020 and received as an email. If you have any questions about either the term time voucher which has been posted out or the holiday voucher please contact [d.anderson@mardenhigh.net](mailto:d.anderson@mardenhigh.net). If you think you may be eligible for free school meals but are not yet in receipt of them, you can find out through this link: <https://www.gov.uk/apply-free-school-meals>.

The end of the Autumn term has always been a time when our school community has come together to celebrate success and raise money for charity with the Christmas Jumper Day. Because not all students are able to be with us on site for the end of term, we have decided to postpone these activities until we can all come back together. Mr Anderson will share information relating to this with students via the Student Bulletin next term. Until then, students can continue to earn points to cash in by picking up House Points in lessons, extra curricular activities and through outstanding contributions to school life. This week's Golden Ticket week is a good example of students earning points through excellent work, in school and at home.

Form tutors in Years 7,8 and 9 are in daily contact with their forms, via email and Google Classroom, and each day activities are shared with students for their form time. Meanwhile Heads of Years 7, 8 and 9 are continuing to contact all parents and carers of students in those years to ensure that students welfare and ability to access work are supported. If you want to contact your child's Head of Year, you can see information on the school website.

You may remember that some weeks ago I wrote highlighting an invitation for parents and carers to put themselves forward to join the Governing Body. I have enjoyed speaking to a number of parents about this rewarding role, and would remind everyone that the deadline for applications is Tuesday 14 December, and application forms are on the link on our website under the heading "Join Us".

Many thanks for everyone's continued support with COVID testing. This is still an important factor in limiting the spread of the virus and we have followed Government guidance throughout. The latest advice we have is there is no need for pupils to carry out testing over the holiday period, but that in line

with general public health advice, students should continue to test when at risk, that is, in situations where they are more likely to catch or spread COVID-19.

Schools have been asked to carry out on site testing for students returning in January 2022. Due to the current situation in school and the lack of suitable space, we are unable to accommodate this, and are therefore asking for parents' and carers' support by ensuring all students carry out a lateral flow test before returning to school. This would ideally be on the morning of the 4th January but we appreciate this may not be convenient and the night before would be fine. Testing should then take place twice a week in line with current guidance. As students were due to be given a further pack of test kits on Friday, you may find that your supply is running low. We currently have kits in school and these will be given out to Years 10 and 11 this week, and arrangements will be put in place for parents of students in Years 7, 8 and 9 to collect theirs.

A group of year 9 students have participated in an online assembly this week with This Is Creative Enterprise (TICE). TICE creates opportunities for students to gain an insight into careers within the creative industry. The Year 9 students will participate in an exciting 10 week fashion programme. Projects are chosen by students and focus on particular areas of fashion, design, illustration, photography and film. The thought provoking projects are designed to combine the experience of new skills and knowledge through projects linked to fashion industry professionals.

On Wednesday evening the U16 girls football team were back in action at the central venue league where they played 3 7-a side matches. The students played some magnificent football. The evening started off with a brilliant 1-0 win against Monkseaton. We were then straight back in action with only a 5 minute break between games and were extremely unlucky to get beat 2-1 off George Stephenson High School. The feeling amongst the girls was that they were a little hard done by but they picked themselves back up and showed brilliant grit and determination in the final game of the evening with an amazing 6-0 win over John Spence, a brilliant way to finish the last game before the Christmas break. A huge well done to all players.

Thank you for your continued support and take care.



Mr M. Snape  
Head Teacher