



## Marden High School

Friday 10th February 2023

Dear All

This week was Apprenticeship Week and so students have engaged with information in form time to explore this particular post-16 option. Apprenticeships are still one of the less common routes for students to follow, and yet they can offer an excellent route into training and employment. In most cases they are designed by employers so the training reflects the skills, knowledge and behaviours an apprentice will need for a particular occupation. The training is generally of a high standard, and only training providers who are on the register of apprenticeship training providers can deliver it, and of course, working as an apprentice means you earn as you learn. Apprentices are doing a real job, gaining the skills needed for their chosen occupation, and they spend 20% of their working hours training. This training is free, so no apprentice need worry about student debt. As with all decisions, it pays to make sure you know what all the options are, so I would encourage all our young people, parents and carers to find out more. [This link provides a useful starting point.](#)

In recent weeks staff and governors have had some very useful discussion about whether academisation could help support and enhance the excellent standards that we currently have. There are two particularly important aspects to our thinking about this. The first is that we engage in an open conversation about any benefits and disadvantages that various future scenarios may bring us, so that everybody - staff, students, parents /carers and governors - has the opportunity to contribute views and be listened to. Our school is at the centre of our community so it is important, whatever the future holds for us, that we reach a consensus and go together. The second important aspect to our thinking is to consider carefully what it is that is dear to us, in other words, what is it that we must try to futureproof. We could see these as the essential ingredients that produce the excellent outcomes we enjoy for our children, and probably the following four things are a good place to start:

- Enhancing opportunities and outcomes for our children
- Ensuring that our staff can flourish as professionals, have career opportunities, and enjoy well-being at work
- Building strong support structures and networks with other schools and professionals

- Continuing to enjoy our own unique identity, autonomy and excellent reputation

Of course nobody can predict the future exactly, but it is important to scan the horizon as best we can, in order to be able to make well-informed decisions. To this end, a group of governors and staff working together over the coming weeks will be analysing various options, looking at the possibility of joining one of the various existing academy trusts in our region, or the setting up a new academy trust, or not doing anything and remaining as we currently are, a foundation school. The working group will be mapping the pros and cons that each scenario might bring to Marden against those essential outcomes I described above, before feeding back to all our stakeholders including parents and carers. Governors are also keen to engage with parents and carers, and there will be an evening next half term when parents and governors will be able to come together for discussion, details to follow.

As you are aware, developing leadership qualities in our students is a key priority. Indeed, as noted in the recent Ofsted report; *"Opportunities for student leadership are varied and meaningful for all those involved. Pupils are proud of what they do. They know their opinions make a difference within the school. The student council, prefects and pupil cabinets are an important part of school life"*. One such Leadership opportunity on offer each year is that of becoming North Tyneside Young Mayor. Having seen two previous students go on to become Young Mayor with a further two finding positions on the National Youth Council, we are very proud to see Sam Walker, in Year 9, make it to the final four of this year's Young Mayor application process. Having made it through the initial round, Sam joins a long line of successful candidates over the years who have made it to the paper ballot round which takes place here in school on the 13th and 14th of February.

It is good to see so many of our students walking and cycling to school, enjoying a little healthy exercise at the start and end of the school day, at the same time as doing their bit for the environment. I would like to remind everyone, though, of the need for them to be conscious of safety on and near the roads where car drivers might not always be able to see clearly. In particular I would remind students that they must not ride their bikes on the school site. At the end of the day, when staff are on duty, students are very good about not doing this, but it is equally important to adhere to this rule early in the morning to prevent any potential accidents.

All our Year 11 students are in the process of having their one to one careers interview with the Connexions staff. All students will have had at least one interview by the end of February, and students who have requested a follow up interview or have been identified by staff as needing further careers advice and guidance will be seen again following the half term break.

The Year 8 boys Football squad had the second round of the Central Venue League (CVL) fixtures on Monday night at John Spence. They won two of their games (5-0 and 1-0) and drew the third (2-2) which now puts them in first position in the league table. Hopefully another good performance in the final round can bring home the title.

The following day, the Year 8 boys Handball team represented the school in the combined North Tyneside/Newcastle competition. Despite losing to a very well drilled Wellfield Middle School team, the boys responded magnificently, winning the next two games against John Spence and Benfield to take second place overall in the competition. For their first taste of competitive Handball, the boys gave a great account of themselves, impressing the organisers with their skill level and team togetherness.

Finally, on Thursday the Year 10 Football team were at John Spence High School to compete in the 7 aside CVL Tournament. With teams from across North Tyneside there was an expected high standard. The students and coach decided that the team would go with a strategy to focus on their defending and play a passing style of football. With a strong squad we competed in three games and won 2-0 against Churchill Community College and drew games against Kings Priory and John Spence 0-0. The players were elated as their strategy had paid off as they conceded no goals and could have won all three games but for the frame of the goals and some good saves by the opposition goalkeeper.

This week the Lego Robotics team consisting of members from years 8, 10 and 11, took part in the regional championship run by the Institute of Engineering and Technology where they had to programme their robot to complete a series of missions and score as many points as possible in each round. Potential disaster struck on the evening before the competition when the robot's programme would not work and the robot could not complete the tasks. This caused a lot of nerves at the start of the competition, but the team worked together to solve their problems and their confidence grew as the robot began to cooperate. This was a fantastic display of resilience and resourcefulness, and in the end, the team won the Championship Award for the Most Improved Team from start to finish. A huge well done to everyone involved.

Thank you for your continued support and take care.



Mr M. Snape  
Head Teacher