



Marden High School

Friday 17th March 2023

Dear All

It has been good to see our students and staff adapting this week to the new arrangements for a single break and lunchtime. Many of our young people have enjoyed opportunities for taking part in various activities at lunchtime from board games to badminton, and from reading to revision. Now that students are able to use much more of the building at lunchtime, we have been pleased with the level of maturity and responsibility shown, and this is a great experience for them as it prepares them for the environment and expectations they may find at college or in employment. Our prefects have played a key role within the new arrangements for lunchtime this week. It is with a sense of agency that they have stepped up to the responsibility of supporting their fellow students on the corridors. This prefect duty sits alongside the final Leadership Development Programme session where this morning the prefects completed a problem solving task with Miss Harrison. Next week's graduation will see all prefects receiving their certificate for the completion of the course, alongside the guidance of younger students through the mentoring programme showing the dedication and proactivity that our prefects have demonstrated all year.

Year 11 students now have nine weeks before the exam season proper begins. I have said previously in this newsletter that it has been good to see therefore this year group working hard in preparation for these exams. This is also a significant point in time for Year 10 students, as they are very aware that Year 11 are about to start their final GCSE exams, and that means that they have nine weeks and one year (including holidays) before their final exams start. I know that this has been a moment of realisation for some Year 10 students that things are starting to get serious for them. It is not overstating the case to say that GCSE exams really are key for our young people's futures and depending on the results, they can make or break their plans and ambitions. Each student needs to have a realistic sense of how well they are working, how much effort they are putting in, what sort of progress they are making, and, critically, what they need to do to take the next steps in improving their work and learning. Having this sense of self awareness and metacognition is what I addressed with Year 10 this week in assembly, as now is a good time for them to think very honestly about whether the perception they have of themselves is accurate. Useful questions they may ask themselves are:

- What do I want to do when I leave Marden?
- What sort of qualifications will I need to do that?
- What level of effort will I need to put in to get them?
- What learning and revision skills will I need to achieve what I want?

The answers to these questions will vary for each young person, but this is an essential first step to getting serious about achieving potential. I think these questions also provide a useful framework for parents and carers to use in conversations with their children, as support for the students will obviously come from both home and school. Now is a great time for Year 10 students to reflect on these questions, and it is worth them, and the rest of us too, remembering the words of Oprah Winfrey “The smallest change in perspective can change a life. What tiny attitude adjustment might turn your world around?”

Education is becoming increasingly reliant on technology, and with that comes a responsibility to ensure that the apps or platforms we use are safe and secure, both in terms of content but also in relation to the data that they can both share and access. This is something that as a school we are very aware of and pay careful attention to. What we have also started to consider is the potential for any wider ramifications of such apps and platforms on the ethos and culture in school, and on the relationships between parents/carers and staff at the school. To this end we have set up a group within school to consider the various implications of any new technologies we may introduce at Marden, looking in particular at the purpose, benefits and data sharing capabilities, and any repercussions there may be for the ethos and culture in our school community. This may well lead, from time to time, to consultation with parents and carers about how they wish to interact with us and with information about their children.

This week students have been involved in the House Competition which has had a science flavour. The study of science is not just for those who want a scientific career of course, but is relevant to everyone for their future decision making and information processing. Students this week have watched a film showing how science enables young people to gain a broad range of transferable skills useful in many careers. Science is a way of thinking, a way of analysing facts and acting upon this analysis; science is not about knowing the answers, it is about knowing what questions to ask. For the science House Competition this week students were creating career profiles for jobs of their choice, including the key skills which would be required for them. This has been an excellent additional opportunity for careers education which helps students make more informed decisions, as well as inspire them to achieve new goals.

In assembly this week students heard all about the number pi as it was International Pi Day. Pi Day is celebrated on March 13th, as in the American date format that reads as 3.14, the first three digits of pi.

Students discovered that pi has fascinated people for over 4000 years, from Ancient Babylonians trying to measure it with ropes through to the present day where supercomputers have calculated it to many trillion decimal places. They also learnt that pi was nearly written into law as 3.2. Students have been challenged to find their own ways to represent pi, as part of the Pi Representation Project from Think Maths. There are no rules on what medium they use to represent it. For example, it could be in the form of some art work, a piece of music or a poem.

On Friday 10th March, Year 9 students were visited by local MP, Sir Alan Campbell, who answered student questions in a 'Question Time' style lecture. Year 9 students have been doing work in English around social equality and justice this term and the questions asked were produced by students in their English lessons. Sir Alan discussed his role in politics, the economy, and answered questions about social issues. This was a very enjoyable event for all, and the quality of questioning reflected the sense of agency and interest in shaping the future that some of our students have, and this should certainly give us hope for the future. A video of the event can be viewed on our website [here](#).

Since beginning in 2007, Earth Hour has been known for the "lights off" moment – a symbolic event to show our collective support for the planet. Earth Hour is a worldwide movement organised by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF). The event is held annually, encouraging individuals, communities, and businesses to turn off non-essential electric lights, for one hour, from 8:30pm to 9:30pm. on the last Saturday of March, as a symbol of commitment to the planet. The Marden Green Team would like all students, parents and the community as a whole to take part in this important event on Saturday 25th March between 8.30pm and 9.30pm. While the lights are out, you could chat with friends and family or play games in the dark. Think about what it would be like if this happened every day! Earth Hour encourages you to think about the amount of energy we use (or waste!) every single day which contributes to our planet heating up. Nearly 400 landmark buildings, like Buckingham Palace and Edinburgh Castle, will be switching off for Earth Hour. Last year, around 9 million people took part in the UK alone and this year's Earth Hour is set to be the biggest yet.

Thank you for your continued support and take care.



Mr M. Snape
Head Teacher