



Marden High School

Friday 28th April 2023

Dear All

As you are aware, last academic year, there were discussions at Governing Body meetings about whether academisation should be explored further, and there was also some early communication with staff and parents and carers. During this academic year these discussions have intensified with an agenda item at each Full Governing Body meeting, as well as establishing a working group of governors and staff specifically for the consideration of academisation. We have also consulted with various CEOs of existing academies, and officials from the Department for Education, and we have engaged with parents and carers to gather opinions and address questions. During these discussions the most important consideration has always been whether forming or joining an academy trust would enhance opportunities for students and staff. It has been clear during these discussions that there are many uncertainties around the changes that might stem from academisation, and one of the key questions that kept coming up was what is the big advantage to us that on balance would make it worth some of the risks associated with academisation. However, there has not been a satisfactory answer to this question. In meetings with staff and parents and carers it has been clear how much they value the school culture, and the sense of community that exists, and a concern would be that there may be detrimental impacts on both under academisation, without there being an obvious major advantage for us. The process of the last twelve months has been both illuminating and thorough, and it has been absolutely the right thing to consider whether there are different opportunities for Marden, but for now, the Governing Body has decided not to go down the route of academisation. I would like to thank everybody involved in all the discussion and for the enjoyable and collaborative spirit in which it has been conducted.

From June 19th to June 30th, Year 10 will be completing a scheduled two week exam cycle, followed by a week of work experience. The exams are good preparation for their studies in Year 11 as well as providing students, parents/carers and staff with a clear indication of students' current attainment. In Personal Development lessons teachers have been showing students how to use revision cards, and these techniques will be further developed during lesson time. In order to further help support students to prepare for exams we would like to invite parents and carers of Year 10 students to a revision evening on Thursday 4th May from 6.00pm - 7.30pm. This will be an opportunity to find out more about YELLIS and chances

graphs as well as to take part in a carousel of activities to help support your child to revise at home as well as support their wellbeing.

We often receive positive comments about how smart and responsible our students appear around school and in the local community as they wear their uniforms with pride. The Marden uniform is worn well and represents the community we are part of and reflects the pride there is in being part of it. It is important that we provide value to our community with the purchasing of the uniform and so recently we attended a 'Uniform Summit' at the Local Authority so that we can continue to identify ways to ensure all students can access good quality uniform at an affordable cost. One way we are able to support families is by providing uniform from school when something is missing or damaged. This supply is supported through the 'pre-loved' scheme where families donate uniform no longer needed to the school. We wash the items donated and ensure they are in good condition before redistributing and therefore thank anyone, in advance, who might be in a position to donate spare uniform to our reception. We will always be able to make good use of it.

Over the years our Governing Body has developed into a well informed, interested and committed group of people who oversee the strategic direction of our school, first under the leadership of Father Adrian Hughes, and now, since this academic year, under the leadership of Dr Margaret Stewart as Chair of Governors. Now that Father Adrian is no longer part of the governing body, he will continue his association with Marden as a Visiting Community Leader which will involve regular visits into school to collaborate and plan with school leaders on issues that impact on our wider local community, in the same way as we have Visiting Community Leaders from the business and charity sectors.

Year 10 students, soon to be the oldest students in the school, will have the opportunity to apply to be a prefect later this half term. Whilst there is an expectation that all students should be good role models, this expectation is heightened for those who will become prefects through the positive actions they take, from mentoring younger children to running lunchtime or sports clubs for other students. There will be details shared with students soon about the application process. I am looking forward to reading the applications - from what I know of this year group, I expect they will be of a very high quality.

As you may be aware, it is Year 9 students who are involved in the Boys' Network this year. Each of the boys taking part meets with his coach on a regular basis to talk about career aspirations and transferable skills that could be of value in future careers. All of the boys taking part are getting to know their coaches now and it has been encouraging to see animated discussions between coach and coachee. The focus recently has been on applying for jobs and courses and this will complement the mock interviews and other

careers work the boys will undertake in Year 10. In September there will be a new cohort of students starting with the Girls' Network.

It has been a busy week for the PE department with GCSE moderation going on, and it has been great to see students who have worked so hard showing the external moderator the skills they have developed. We look forward to a bumper sports report in next week's newsletter.

On Tuesday we held our second face to face evening. This was a great opportunity for Year 8 parents/carers, together with Year 8 students, to come in and look at their children's books ahead of Parents' Evening on Thursday afternoon. There was a high turn out and it was a great opportunity to have parents/carers in the school building. It was also very rewarding to see so many fruitful conversations between parents/carers with their children about their learning. We look forward to our next face to face evening, for Year 7 students, on Tuesday 13th June.

I hope everyone enjoys the long Bank Holiday weekend. Thank you for your continued support and take care.



Mr M. Snape
Head Teacher