



Marden High School

Friday 23rd June 2023

Dear All

The School of Sanctuary network is a group of schools across the country who are all committed to creating a culture of welcome and inclusion for refugees and people seeking asylum. Driven by students, teachers, parents, governors and community groups, this network supports the thousands of young people seeking sanctuary in the UK, raises awareness of the issues facing people in the asylum system, challenges misconceptions and builds social cohesion. To be granted School of Sanctuary status a school must demonstrate that they are well on the way to achieving the above, and this week we have been through a rigorous assessment process resulting in Marden High School becoming an official School of Sanctuary. We are very pleased and excited about this achievement, as of all the tens of thousands of schools in the country there are only just over 400 with this status. The School of Sanctuary group in school is very active, and amongst other things this week they visited a local first school, as described in the words of one of the Year 7 students:

We visited Marine Park First School to teach them a bit of what it's like to be a refugee. We, with Miss Fenwick's help, organised a workshop for lots of the younger kids to enjoy. We based the workshop on a book that the younger ones would enjoy called The Suitcase, which is all about refugees coming to the country with minimal belongings. When we read the book to the Year 3 children they agreed that it wasn't right to open the refugees' suitcase without their permission, and that they needed to be treated with respect and kindness.

Recently, Literacy Leaders have been helping Ms Taylor to create a *Reflection Time* for Refugee Week, asking form classes to reflect upon a selection of video clips, artwork, recent news stories and a powerful graphic novel that all explore the refugee experience. With the theme of Refugee Week this year being 'compassion', reading is a powerful way to build our empathy and understanding of different perspectives and experiences. Together with Literacy Leaders, the School of Sanctuary group, has also compiled a range of book recommendations connected to the theme, many of which are available in the LRC for students to borrow - a display of some of our favourites has been created during Library Club on

Wednesday. Pulling all of this together is this week's Literacy competition which asks students to reflect upon the stories and experiences they encounter over the course of Refugee Week and to create their own piece of artwork or creative writing inspired by them. As we look forward to the next academic year, the Literacy Leaders will be looking to recruit new members for 2023-24. This is a wonderful opportunity to develop leadership skills and to take part in organising events, assemblies, weekly activities and competitions that celebrate the power of Literacy and develop our students' empathy and understanding of the world around them. The work of the Literacy Leaders is the very embodiment of Hope, Agency, Leadership. I would encourage parents and carers to talk to their children about the potential of this opportunity for them, and if any students are interested, they can speak to or email Ms Taylor.

On Monday 10th July we will move to our new timetable for the next academic year. This is something we trialled last year with great success. It is an opportunity for students to meet their new teachers and familiarise themselves with their timetables ready for starting in September. Students will be given their new timetables during form time on Friday 30 June.

Whilst our Year 11 students have been finishing off the last of their GCSE exams, Year 10 students have been busy preparing for and sitting their Year 10 exams, and we have been very impressed with their attitudes so far. At this stage, these Year 10 exams are, of course, not about getting the very best grade but about students and their teachers identifying together where the gaps are in knowledge, understanding and application of skills. As such, they are key to the next stages of study as students and staff refine topics for focus. Year 10 exams are also a great way for the students to start to understand the best ways to manage their time and energy levels during an exam period. At the same time, Year 10 students have played a pivotal part in selecting the Head Prefects from a shortlist of senior prefects. We are very impressed with the enthusiasm of our Year 10 prefects so far, and with the maturity and responsibility with which they have approached their new roles. Ten of these students have presented, not only to the Senior Leadership Team, but have also produced a short campaign video watched by their whole year group. These presentations have been an important part of the selection process, and four fine young people have been selected for the roles of Head Prefect - Gracie Longstaff, Hajar Al-Sabahy, Blyth Amers, Tom Langley. The successful candidates will have an important role in our school community, as they will be leading the other prefects in their work, acting as a role model to other students in the school, and representing the student body at important events such as open days and during VIP visits.

We have had a busy and exciting week in the PE department this week as we have celebrated National Sport Week. We have had pop up sporting events across the week at lunchtime where students from all year groups played sports together. We had tennis, table tennis, netball, basketball, cartwheeling

competitions, rowing and keepy-up challenges for students to take part in. There was a real sense of togetherness and excitement around as students took part, gaining house points as they went. Additionally, as part of national sports week we took part in a tournament of sport with schools from across Newcastle and North Tyneside playing a variety of sports together, including the Year 7 girls football team who won one match, drew one and lost one, our Year 8/9 netball team who won 4 games and drew one match, and a Year 9 boys football team who won one game, drew one and lost one. All the students were brilliant and a credit to the school. It was wonderful to see so many students enjoying themselves and keeping active.

On Monday evening the U13 girls North Tyneside rounders tournament took place. It was a wonderful evening of sport. There were some outstanding catches and wonderful long barriers. The attitude from the students involved was very supportive and they showed great teamwork and communication skills. The team won 2 and lost 2 games. Furthermore, on Monday evening Marden hosted a tennis match against Kings Priory where the boys team had an extremely close match but unfortunately were on the wrong side of a narrow defeat. The Year 7 girls team played their first fixture of the season and had a brilliant match. The girls played some fantastic tennis and won all of their games. On Thursday the North Tyneside Trampoline competition returned. The girls were nervous and apprehensive when they arrived but after a couple warm up routines, the girls performed their compulsory routines to perfection. There were some magnificent tuck back somersaults, pike jumps and swivel hips on show. We congratulate all students who took part and once we have the finalised results through we will share them with the girls who took part. To finish off the fixtures for this week, the U15 rounders team competed in the North Tyneside schools competition on Thursday afternoon. Against some tough opposition, the girls played brilliantly. Despite some narrow losses, the team rallied in their final game to end the competition with a win.

Overall, we have had a wonderful week of competitive and noncompetitive sport. It has emphasised the togetherness sport can bring to our young people here at Marden and how much it can help enrich our lives. Well done to all students who have cheered on their peers and who have taken part in some form of sport this week.

Thank you for your continued support and take care.



Mr M. Snape
Head Teacher