



Marden High School

Friday 22nd September 2023

Dear All

On Wednesday evening this week we enjoyed a very successful Open Evening, welcoming many hundreds of visitors into the school to listen to presentations and engage in conversation with our staff and students. We have had very positive feedback from many of our visitors, who commented in particular on the warm, welcoming reception from staff and the inspiring conversations they had with our wonderful students. Several of the conversations I had with parents referenced the Ofsted comment about Marden that “pupils thrive” here, and certainly it was clear that parents had seen the evidence for this as they toured the school. As a follow up to this event we have also had our first Open Morning this week, and there will be another one next Friday. If any parents of Year 6 children would like to join us on this Open Morning on the 29th, they should contact main reception at school to book in.

Our Year 7 students have now been with us for three weeks and I am pleased to say that they have settled very well and are enjoying their new environment and lessons. Parents of Year 7 children have had communication this week inviting them to two settling-in events that are coming up to support them and their children. The first, on Wednesday 27th September, is a drop in session where parents and carers get to see their children's books, and we would recommend that children come along to this event with their parents to aid discussions at home about the learning so far. Miss Laing, Head of Year 7, and members of the Senior Leadership Team will be on hand for conversation and to answer any questions. Then on Thursday 28th September there will be online appointments for parents and carers to discuss their child with Form Tutors. Bookings for these should be made via the 'Parents Evening System' accessible on the school website.

Analysis and discussion of this summer's exam results has continued this week, celebrating the excellent outcomes the Class of 2023 achieved, but also ensuring that each subject area has the right strategies in place to enhance outcomes still further. One of the discussion points amongst staff has been the continued emphasis on the importance of reading. In recent years there has been an increase in the reading age needed to access many GCSE questions. This means that the ability to read sophisticated language is ever more important when it comes to sitting a GCSE exam, no matter what the subject. So lots of reading

practice is key for our children's exam success, and this does not have to be subject based revision, but can be, and should be, reading for pleasure. It is also worth remembering the other benefits of reading:

- Children who read often and widely get better at it.
- Reading exercises our brain.
- Reading improves concentration.
- Reading teaches children about the world around them.
- Reading improves vocabulary and language skills.
- Reading develops a child's imagination.
- Reading helps children to develop empathy.
- Reading is fun.

Reading is also something that parents and carers can relatively easily get involved in with their child, providing a useful focus for some quality time together, as well as giving the opportunity to share and develop interests.

This year we will continue to offer signposting for our community via our social media and often via this newsletter. Over the past years, we have seen the use of social media, websites and online communication rise and as this has grown, our understanding of it has developed. A national issue related to young people is youth produced sexual images, sometimes called sexting. As safeguarding is our number one priority at Marden High, we want to help parents and carers with useful information to enable them to support children in understanding what is safe, what is acceptable and in some cases, what is illegal. The following links are from recognised organisations that give advice and guidance helping children make informed decisions about their online experiences:

<https://www.internetmatters.org/issues/sexting/>

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/globalassets/documents/advice-and-info/sexting-keep-child-safe.pdf>

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/sex-relationships/>

Meanwhile the link below is a Safer Internet Day Film for parents and carers to help to learn more about how to keep children safe online: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rl_gZTQ9F7w

On the 24th and 25th of September we note the festival of Yom Kippur, the holiest day in the Jewish calendar, where the main themes are atonement and repentance. This month we are also supporting members of our school community celebrating the Muslim celebration Mawlid, which marks the birth of the Muslim prophet Muhammad. Celebrations of Mawlid al-Nabi include sharing food, attending lectures about the Prophet's life and virtues, *salawat* prayer services, participating in marches, and reciting the Qur'an, litanies, and devotional poetry of the Prophet.

At Marden all of our homework is set using Google classroom. We appreciate the support from parents and carers in the completion of homework. If you are new to Google classroom, or in need of a refresher, there is a screencast here explaining how it works and how your child can best use it to assist them in their completion of homework. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fpr0GdYoiZw&t=1s>

With the new term underway, so begins the start of the school sporting calendar. There are lots of fixtures planned for this term, in a variety of sports and for all Year groups, and I look forward to reporting on them in due course. The Year 8 boys football team started their season last week with an away game at Monkseaton Middle School, continuing with the standards they set last year with a 9-0 victory in this opening game. This week, however, they struggled to adapt in difficult, blustery conditions and lost out to a strong St Thomas More team. Ultimately, the boys will feel disappointed with the result, but played some great football in difficult conditions, and I am sure they will pick themselves back up for their next challenge.

Thank you for your continued support and take care.



Mr M. Snape
Head Teacher