



Marden High School

Friday 27th October 2023

Dear All

It has been my privilege this week and last to have several conversations with individual students about the current situation in Gaza, and what has perhaps struck me most is the lack of polarised or partisan view that any of those young people have taken as they consider and process what they see and hear via all sorts of media. As we know, in this country and around the world, there have been many groups who have taken either extreme pro-Palestinian or pro-Israeli allegiance, and sadly this serves only to inhibit an accurate understanding of the Middle East situation and an empathy for the people caught up in this conflict. I include this in my newsletter, not to be political in any way, but because here at Marden we talk a lot about Hope, Agency and Leadership:

***We are a strong community, each individual full of hope, looking forward to many possibilities.
Our focus on student leadership helps develop our strong moral compass, giving our young people a global awareness and a sense of agency to shape a more equal society for the future.***

(from our School Development Plan)

If ever there was a time for us all to help our young people exercise these attributes, this is one of them. But truly comprehending the intricacies and history of conflict in the Middle East is difficult for anyone, as is resisting the biased and incomplete reporting which feeds off the plethora of sound bites we are exposed to daily. So how best to help our young people navigate their way through these competing polarised views? One approach is that described by Mona Siddiqui, Professor at Edinburgh University, in her [Thought for the Day](#) on BBC Radio recently, which I felt resonated strongly with our Marden values. Professor Siddiqui talks about how our sense of self worth and emotional well-being is deeply influenced by how people interact with us in public, and about the importance of ensuring that our words and actions make others feel safe and not scared, as resentment and fear can only be destructive. She reminds us of the important loyalties we have to our neighbours, the people that live in our street, that go to our school, our community. The Marden ethos of treating others as we would want to be treated enables us to build a web of positive relationships which will contribute to the good and compassionate society we all want. In the words of Professor Siddiqui, "sometimes when we feel conflicted or helpless, the most moral thing to do as

a citizen is simply to be kind to those around us and to reach out to the people you feel are on the other side, to listen to their stories and recognise their goodness.”

During this half term we have been conducting one of our regular internal reviews of the quality of teaching which involves learning walks. Many lessons from different subject areas have been seen and the findings of these learning walks indicate very effective, and in some cases, exemplary practice in classrooms. Some of the strengths of many lessons have been teaching delivered in the context of the real world, and resources and activities being used to stimulate creative thinking and curiosity. It has also been good to see students' independence being developed over time resulting in them being more able to manage their own time and learning, and it is always great to see the students working with a sense of pride and accomplishment and making good progress. There are some great examples of this work in the half-termly newsletter on the school website.

After half term there will be an “*Introduction to Year 10*” event for parents of students in Year 10. Prior to this Year 10 students will receive a report outlining their Yellis test results. Parents of Year 10 students are invited into school on Thursday 9th November where Mrs Robson will explain more about Yellis tests and chances graphs in relation to students' progress. Mr Tueart will also deliver a session around how students can start to revise and how parents can support their children's learning at home. If you would like to attend, please complete the form linked [here](#).

Students have been enjoying “The Be All”, an original Marden Podcast series produced by members of the English department. This week we have launched our first episode for KS3, our Halloween special, which includes staff and student literary recommendations and a “live midnight reading” from the Priory Castle. This follows our first two episodes for KS4 specifically on exam strategy and mindfulness. They are currently accessible via GoogleClassroom and the Subject Cloud on the school website.

The Year 8 girls football team started their season with a trip to Churchill in the Northumberland County Cup this week. The hosts broke the deadlock with a well taken goal midway through the first half. This spurred the Marden team into life and they hit back almost immediately to equalise and followed this with 3 more goals before the half time whistle. The girls carried this momentum into the second half scoring a further 5 goals to make the final score 9-1, a fantastic afternoon of football and a brilliant result in the first round of the cup.

Our Year 8 Boys football team were also in action this week with a home league game against Marden Bridge. In an entertaining game, the visitors took the lead with an early goal and looked like extending their lead with some periods of extended pressure on the Marden goal. However, the Marden team pressed hard to get the equaliser, which came after some slick passing down the right wing, then scoring another 3 goals before the half time whistle. After the break Marden stepped up another gear, finding the net 5 more times to make the final score 9-1. A marvellous result with all players thoroughly enjoying the game.

The final County cup game of the week saw the Year 9 boys perform in an amazing goal fest on Monday afternoon against Berwick Academy. The in-form Marden team scored 10 goals in the first half and added another 10 in the second. The visitors battled hard and managed to score 4 goals of their own. 20-4 the final result. Well done to all the players involved. The Year 10 boys football team also played in the first round of the County Cup this week, facing last year's winners Walker Academy in very tough conditions. Marden started slowly, giving away two penalties, with the first being saved and the second scored. The game finished 5-1 but the boys battled until the very end and created some good chances.

The Year 7 Netball team started off their season at Marden Bridge Middle School on Monday, with five friendly games against Marden Bridge. The girls' attitude and drive on court was excellent to see. The games finished off with 3 big wins, a draw and a loss. The PE staff were extremely impressed with the standard of Netball and the girls should be really proud of their efforts.

Central Venue League Volleyball took place at Whitley Bay High School this week, with the Year 9 Boys producing some excellent volleyball, winning all but one game. The Year 10 and Year 11 boys teams also played fantastic volleyball, with the Year 11's winning in a closely contested final. Congratulations to everyone who represented the school with distinction.

Thank you for your continued support and take care.



Mr M. Snape
Head Teacher