



Marden High School

Friday 8th December 2023

Dear All

As I hope you are aware, standards of behaviour at Marden are very high, and we get a lot of positive feedback from visitors, guest speakers and colleagues from other schools who visit us. Sometimes a young person may have difficulties and in spite of support from their own school, it may be appropriate for them to have a trial period at another school with the aim of their behaviour improving. This arrangement is called a supported move. It has been notable how successful a number of these supported moves have been when young people have come to Marden for their trial period, so that they have settled and focused on their school work and on forming positive relationships with their peers. This is a reflection of the skills, expertise and enthusiasm of staff at Marden who are able to help these young people meet high expectations.

From time to time at various meetings or in discussions with governors and parents, I will refer back to our most recent OFSTED report as reflection and to check on our current progress. Contained within the very positive narrative of the OFSTED report from last year is the second, very short sentence which states "Pupils thrive". Whilst it can be gratifying to read such analysis, it also acts in my mind as a warning against ever thinking that the ethos and culture our children enjoy at Marden High School will continue regardless. Achieving and sustaining an ethos and culture of high standards, achievement and kindness requires hard work, honesty and constant evaluation from everybody who shares in that "strong sense of community at Marden High School". One such recent evaluation was carried out by our School Development Partner, who is also Assistant Director of Education in North Tyneside, who conducted, amongst other monitoring exercises, a focus group discussion with students. The feedback from the students reflected the hard work everyone puts in here. Students in Year 7 who have joined us this term described the school as (and I quote), *welcoming, kind, nice people, help from older children, no mean people*. Older children, when asked what made them proud to be a Marden student quoted: *charity work, one of the best schools for learning, quality teachers getting great results, amazing overall, great GCSEs gives me confidence I'll do well, community where everybody is nice*. This is what we all need to keep working hard to sustain.

At Marden High School one aspect of our Careers programme that we attach great importance to is our Work Experience Programme. Work experience gives students the chance to learn about what type of job

they might enjoy, and to develop their CV. We know it can be one of the most transformational experiences young people have during their education. We would like to encourage Year 10 students to start to think about possible placement opportunities and if possible, start contacting potential providers. When we return in January, students will be involved in a series of preparation lessons designed to help support them on how to find a suitable placement and complete the online documentation. This year we are using Unifrog (www.unifrog.org) to manage the administration of the work experience programme, including collecting information from the employer about their risk assessment and health & safety policies, as well as getting agreement from parents and carers for the placement to go ahead. Year 10 students will be receiving their unifrog login details this week and we would encourage them to log onto the website and start to explore the placement section of the site. We have added some information for parents and carers to our school website under the Life At Marden, CEIAG, Unifrog banner.

E-Safety is clearly an important part of keeping children safe in the modern world, and teaching children how to be safe online is a responsibility that we all share. If you would like support or information about popular apps, games or social networks, our [e-Safety webpage](#), includes weekly tips, safety guidance and information on popular online platforms that are popular with children. This week's guidance is about Snapchat and TikTok, and will be a very useful resource for parents and carers of children who may use this app. Following the excellent feedback we had from our e-safety information evening last year, we are holding another such event on Monday 18th December in the auditorium (5.30pm - 6.15pm). Even if you attended last year, the rate of change in this area is such that it may well be worth coming along again this year.

This week we celebrated the hard work and dedication that had been put in by a team of Year 10 girls who have been working closely with [Jo Darby](#) on developing their confidence, presentation skills, and etiquette for success. The auditorium was filled with an entertained and inspired audience as they listened to presentations on a diverse range of topics delivered by each of the girls, showing excellent style and impressive confidence. We also heard from leading rock climber [Mina Leslie-Wujastyk](#) who spoke about the lessons she has taken from some of her most challenging exploits. This was a fantastic evening and was a great blueprint for how similar, future projects and events might run.

On Tuesday this week we had a visit from Kielder Observatory. Two astronomers came into the school with an inflatable planetarium. An exciting opportunity to learn more about the night sky we see was given to our Year 9, Year 11 separate scientists, and our STEM and astronomy club students. The experience was enjoyed by our students with some excellent and intriguing questions being posed.

At Marden we believe it is very important for us all to have an awareness of other religions and cultures.

Each month around school and in the newsletter we highlight festivals from various cultures and religions so that we can appreciate the sense of spirituality that exists within our community; one that finds shared understanding and shared kindness. In December the Jewish community celebrates Hanukkah, one of the most widely observed Jewish holidays which is an eight-day celebration that for many people falls during the darkest, coldest season of the year. Also called the Festival of Lights, the holiday brings light, joy, and warmth; something that anyone and everyone in the world can appreciate.

Last Monday evening, the Year 7 and Year 8 girls Netball teams had another round of friendlies at Marden Bridge Middle School. The Year 7 girls came away with three wins and a draw, and the Year 8s with 2 wins, including a superb 7-0 win. The girls' energy and motivation once again was excellent to see.

Braving the elements on Thursday afternoon, the Year 9 Boys rugby team travelled to Gosforth Academy for the Northumberland Schools County Cup Competition. Having played schools in the local area in the first round, this was an opportunity to play against schools from further afield. They met the hosts in their first game, winning 4 tries to 2 in a very close game. The next game was against a very determined Bede Academy side, but the team could not repeat their exploits from the first game, losing by 4 tries to 1. Their final game was also a defeat to a vastly experienced Queen Elizabeth High School from Hexham. Despite the result, the team gave a great account of themselves, playing hard right up until the final whistle. Well done to all that participated.

Thank you for your continued support and take care.



Mr M. Snape
Head Teacher