



Marden High School

Friday 15th December 2023

Dear All

Assemblies this week focussed on celebrating the achievements of our four houses: Alnwick, Bamburgh, Dunstanburgh, and Warkworth. This included several exciting, 'Blankety Blank' style rounds of word competition, during which thousands of House points were earned by House Captains. We also considered the idea of the potential we all have to do fantastic things, but which we do not always realise we have. It is by getting involved in new activities and learning new things that we can sometimes start to see our true potential. Coupled with the idea of potential is the habit of persistence - just because an athlete has the potential to run 100 metres in under 10 seconds does not mean they will be able to do it without practising and training time and time again. A great reminder of this comes from the best selling American author James Whitcomb Riley who said that "The most essential factor is persistence - the determination never to allow your energy or enthusiasm to be dampened by the discouragement that must inevitably come." Students have been reminded to reflect on the great things they have done this term and to think about what opportunities they may want to take in the New Year.

There were certainly a great many opportunities taken this term by all the performers and crew of our school production Matilda, which delivered two magnificent evenings of entertainment this week. The habit of persistence has also been in great evidence as the two separate casts practised and learned lines, songs and choreography throughout the term. The auditorium was filled to capacity on both evenings and everyone thoroughly enjoyed themselves. None of this would have been possible, however, without the immense dedication of, in particular, three members of staff who have worked tirelessly with the students to get ready for this week: Mrs McIndewar, who designed and produced all the costumes, Mrs Gibbings, our musical and technical crew director, and Mrs Berriman, creator, director and producer of the performances. We owe each of them a debt of gratitude, as they show us what it means to go the extra mile.

Year 9 have been engaging well with the Guided Choices process and by the end of next week they will have watched screencasts for nearly all options subjects. Students have also been taking part in taster lessons in various subjects to get a feel for what it would be like to study a particular subject at GCSE. Provisional choices will be made by the students in January, and next week the blocks that students can

choose from will be emailed out to students and their parents and carers. Over the Christmas break, we would ask parents and carers to prepare for this decision making by talking to their child about the options they think they might like to take in Year 10. More information on the Guided Choices process can be found in the 'learning' section of the website and the Guided Choices booklet is also linked [here](#) and screencasts [here](#).

Although Christmas is a joyous time of year for many people, it can also create significant difficulties for others. Food inflation, strikes, the continuing cost of living crisis, and the increase in the cost of utilities has impacted on household disposable income for lots of us, meaning that many families will go hungry, particularly over the festive period. Financial difficulties do not discriminate; they can single you out through no fault of your own so please do not be afraid to reach out to let us know if you are in difficulty. We have contacts with many support agencies and can enable, at times, assistance to be put in place. Please contact Mrs Reece, Assistant Head Teacher (b.reece@mardenhigh.net) if you think we may be able to help.

Marden's Got Talent will be back in the spring term, taking place on the evening of Thursday 15th February. This, as ever, will be a great evening of varied entertainment and there will be further details about time and tickets in due course. For now though we are asking for auditions to be prepared and shared digitally over the Christmas break. This could be any individual or group talent from singing to sports demonstration to circus skills to comic routines - the options are endless. If your child would like to be considered for this annual event, please email mgt@mardenhigh.net to express an interest and they will be sent an application form to complete and send their digital audition by Friday 12th January.

We have so much talent here at Marden and it is always good to hear about students who are performing at the top of their game. One such student, Daniel Stephenson, has been competing at an international level in darts and recently completed a trip to Gibraltar where he performed admirably for England in the World Cup. Daniel's is certainly a name to watch for the future.

Every term we support our student voice by sharing a survey which students complete during form time. This has happened again last week, and we look forward to analysing the results and responding to the outcomes so as to continue to work with all our students to help ensure we hear their voices and respond to their needs. The initial findings are overwhelmingly positive and it is a credit to the hard work of staff and students that the enjoyment of lessons, safety around school and progress being made has been reflected so positively through these surveys.

The Year 9 Girls rugby team headed to Ponteland on Tuesday for the first of the planned County-wide tournaments this year. Despite very wet and muddy conditions, the girls were outstanding, winning all three

of their games against the Ponteland High A, B and C teams. All players were a credit to the school and the opposition coaches remarked how well they all played as a team.

On Wednesday afternoon a group of year 9 students attended a clubbercise event at St Thomas More, run by a company called "Good to Glow", with the aim of encouraging girls to take part in non-traditional sports. The students followed an exercise routine to music in a darkened room with disco lights, glow sticks and UV paint, giving them a wonderful afternoon as they sang along, had fun and exercised all at the same time.

Wednesday also saw the girls Badminton teams in action in the North Tyneside Schools competition at John Spence. The Key Stage 3 team played very well, winning their matches against George Stephenson and Whitley Bay, while the Key Stage 4 team also showed great form winning both of their matches against John Spence and George Stephenson. The results were enough for both teams to progress to the county finals to be held at John Spence next week. We wish both teams the best of luck.

The final fixture of this week was the Year 8 girls football County Cup game against Valley Gardens Middle School on Thursday. Facing a formidable opponent, the girls played some great football, but ultimately came short of victory. This was a great experience for the team as they look forward to the new year and more games against North Tyneside schools.

Just a reminder also about the last day of term which is Thursday next week when students will be dismissed from St George's Church at 12.15pm. Year 11 students will be dismissed from school at 11.00am. Any parents who wish their children to stay in school until 3.15pm should complete [this form](#) and they can walk back to school with staff and spend the afternoon being looked after at school. School will close at 3.15pm on Thursday.

Thank you for your continued support and take care.



Mr M. Snape
Head Teacher