



## Marden High School

Friday 19th April 2024

Dear All

We have enjoyed a busy first week back after the Easter break. Our Year 11 students have hit the ground running, picking up where they left off working hard on their continued preparation for the forthcoming exams, with the maths and English departments in particular spending some extended time with students in exam preparation workshops. It is one of the privileges of my role at school to be able to visit classrooms each day, and it has been good to witness once again the great interest and enthusiasm of our students as they engage so well with their teachers in their learning.

I have shared with all staff this week our continuing priorities for the year. Whilst it feels as though there are always a thousand priorities in any one week, there are four key priorities within our School Development Plan which by now I hope will be familiar with everyone.

- Each subject area will continue to highlight in lessons where links can be made between subject content and career opportunities
- We continue to promote and enjoy the House System and develop the competitions available to our students
- Teachers will continue to use appropriate Check for Understanding tasks. This will often include starter tasks that activate prior knowledge so that students are ready to build on existing knowledge.
- We are continuing to develop and embed the use of effective Retrieval Practice as a way of sustaining knowledge and understanding over time.

This week we have also enjoyed our new catering service run by Dolce. Dolce is a well established catering

company serving a large number of schools across the country. Marden is, however, the first high school north of the Tyne to work with Dolce, and, so far, it is going very well indeed. As ever when introducing something new, it takes a little time to get used to, and as people become more familiar with the till system this will see speed of service increase still further. There has been some very positive feedback from students and staff on the quality of food, and we already have a meeting in the diary with the management of the company next month so that students can give feedback directly.

On Thursday this week we held another of our now well established face to face evenings. This was a great opportunity for Year 8 parents and carers, together with Year 8 students, to come in and look at their children's books ahead of Parents' Evening this coming Tuesday. There was a high turn out and it was a great opportunity to have parents and carers in the school building, and for them to engage in conversation with members of the Senior Leadership Team and with Mrs Stafford, Head of Year. It was also very rewarding to see so many fruitful conversations between parents and carers with their children about their learning.

We often receive positive comments about how smart and responsible our students appear around school and in the local community as they wear their uniforms with pride. The Marden uniform is worn well and represents the community we are part of and reflects the pride there is in being part of it. It is important that we provide value to our community with the purchasing of the uniform and having attended a 'Uniform Summit' at the Local Authority we continue to identify ways to ensure all students can access good quality uniform at an affordable cost. One way we are able to support families is by providing uniform from school when something is missing or damaged. This supply is supported through the 'pre-loved' scheme where families donate uniform no longer needed to the school. We wash the items donated and ensure they are in good condition before redistributing and therefore thank anyone, in advance, who might be in a position to donate spare uniform to our reception. We will always be able to make good use of it. Parents of Year 11 students in particular may wish to consider this in due course as they approach the end of their time at Marden.

The summer term is a busy one with respect to our careers programme. Year 10 students have two big events coming up, mock interviews and work experience. The students have been supported by their form tutors during registration to help them prepare for the mock interviews, which take place next Tuesday. This has included advice on how to complete application forms, on body language and on questioning techniques. All the students will have a fifteen minute one to one interview with an employer from across the North East, with twenty-one employers coming in to support us with this event.

Our work experience week is happening during the 1st - 5th of July, and thanks to parents and carers who have supported their child in finding a work experience placement so far. Any outstanding placements should be entered onto the Unifrog platform by the end of the month.

As part of our Personal Development scheme of work our Year 7 and Year 8 students are exploring the careers information platforms Globalbridge and Unifrog. Both websites offer an array of resources which are designed to support students throughout their career pathway. A lot of the information on these sites is useful to parents and carers such as post-16 options, a careers library with information on over a thousand different careers and apprenticeship vacancies. Students will have their login details and I would encourage parents and carers to spend a little time viewing the websites alongside their children.

All Year 7 and Year 8 students will be participating in workshops run by our Connexions staff. One of the main focuses of these is helping students to identify their skills and interests and finding out about careers linked to these. We also have representatives from Leeds Building Society coming in to run a workshop focused on improving financial literacy, which is an area that students, through our focus groups, have requested more information on.

Thank you for your continued support, and take care.



Mr M. Snape  
Head Teacher