



Marden High School

Friday 10th May 2024

Dear All

The engagement with our latest parent/carer survey has been excellent and, as promised, I would like to feed back some of the results. As we might have expected the outcomes were very favourable with, for example, the responses to the three opening statements: *my child is happy at this school; my child feels safe at this school; the school makes sure its pupils are well behaved*, being almost 100% in agreement. It was also good to see that the majority of parents and carers feel that their child has never been bullied, and that when they have been, that this has been dealt with quickly and effectively by the school. This reflects the school's zero tolerance stance on bullying, but also our acknowledgement that there is the potential for bullying in any organisation, even in a generally harmonious and happy place like Marden. The area of biggest disagreement was around communication of the curriculum where just over 10% of parents and carers felt that we do not inform them of what their child is learning during the year. Whilst there is information on the school website, on Google Classroom, and included in students reports home, this is an area we will be looking at in the future to see if we can make it clearer to everyone what topics the children are covering at different times of the year.

Building on last year's professional development programme which focused on strategies for *checking for understanding (C4U)* in lessons, we have now centred our professional development around the concept of *retrieval practice*. Retrieving prior learning plays a pivotal role in fostering sustained knowledge in learners. It is important to recognise that mere exposure to information is insufficient for long-term retention and we have embraced strategies that actively engage students in recalling and applying previously learned material. The aim is to retrieve this knowledge from memory (without clues or notes) in order to reinforce neural connections and solidify learning. The strategies we use include regular, low-stakes testing in the form of quizzes, discussions, and games alongside feedback to support further understanding. By prioritising retrieval as a key part of the learning process at Marden, students become more capable, confident, and independent learners. They also begin to recognise the value of getting answers wrong in order to develop crucial knowledge where gaps exist. Further success can be gained of course through independent study outside of lessons including at home. Parents, carers and other family members can provide great support with this by testing learners and encouraging knowledge recall. This is a much more

effective use of time in comparison to, for example, creating posters to revise for exams. If you would like further guidance with this, Mr Tueart would be more than happy to help.

Through research conducted over the past decade it has been found that young people in schools now may have upward of ten different careers, whilst roles that they may find themselves in during adulthood may not even exist yet. Navigating Year 10 and Year 11, together with thinking about a future career can pose opportunities for students but also questions that students may struggle to answer. This is why *Careers* has a high priority at Marden High and our work with Connexions, GlobalBridge, The Girls Network and M10 Boys Network alongside colleges and universities helps our young people take the next steps in education, training and employment after their GCSEs. Another strand to our support mechanisms employed at Marden High School that we are currently developing is that of a KS4 raising achievement programme which will help students with targeted revision, careers conversations, character development and confidence whilst working with a member of the Senior Leadership Team or Pastoral Team. This opportunity is launching this term and it will be exciting to see the progress of students involved.

You may have noticed in the news recently that there are plans to change the way young people experience online activity. Ofcom, a regulator overseeing TV, radio and internet in the UK has published a set of new guidelines for social media companies to follow. It comes after the Online Safety Act was introduced, making online and social media companies legally responsible for keeping children and young people safe online. The new guidelines would require companies to have stricter age-checking measures and to change the algorithm - that ranks and prioritises content - so children are less likely to see harmful things on social media. At Marden, we have a dedicated online safety page to help (<https://www.mardenhigh.net/e-safety-at-marden-high/>) meanwhile, our dedicated 'Wake Up Wednesday' social media posts are a great resource for support with life in a digital age. This week's focus is Snapchat, which, despite its very young age limit of just 13 years, does require very careful navigation and monitoring by parents and carers. Our values of hope, agency and leadership are core to our work here at Marden High School and therefore it is with that in mind that we are signposting everyone towards useful sources of help.

Sadly this week I have received complaints from parents about the way in which other parents are driving and parking outside the gates at the start of the school day. I have asked before in this newsletter that everyone pays due attention to safety and courtesy if they are dropping their children at school. In the past this has elicited a positive response, and I look forward to this reminder achieving the same.

On Wednesday evening the U16 Girls football team travelled to John Spence to represent North Tyneside in the finals of the Northumberland 7-a-side competition. On a glorious evening, the Marden team played Cramlington Learning Village, Whitley Bay High and Prudhoe High in the round robin tournament. Although the girls played some fantastic football, they could not find the victory they desperately wanted, finishing the competition with 3 defeats. Despite the results, the girls all played with smiles and thoroughly enjoyed the experience.

Thank you for your continued support.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'M. Snape'.

Mr M. Snape
Head Teacher