



Marden High School

Friday 17th January 2025

Dear All

I suspect that for lots of people the Christmas break brought the opportunity to enjoy some reading. Catching up on some reading is certainly one of my favourite habits each holiday. Quite apart from the enjoyment of getting lost in a great story, researchers have discovered that regular reading can actually increase your brainpower. Just like running exercises your cardiovascular system, reading regularly improves memory function by giving your brain a good workout. Whenever you read a novel, you have to remember lots of information about the story's plot and subplots, the characters and their relationships, and the environment in which the story takes place. We are able to remember this information due to changes in brain neurons (nerve cells). Memories are created through the connections that exist between these neurons—either by strengthening these connections or through the growth of new connections. So reading helps this process – it can help you learn how to store new information and recall memories more effectively. We really do have a great library - our Learning Resource Centre - which is very well stocked with many interesting and exciting books, expertly curated by Ms Taylor and her student team, so I recommend all our students have a look around it at some point next week, and either continue, or start, the excellent habit of regular reading.

We have heard lots in the news this week about Artificial Intelligence and the government's drive to encourage investment in this area. As you may be aware, at Marden we have been considering how AI will impact on education for some time now, and it plays a key part in our staff professional development this year. Our staff have been embracing innovative Generative AI tools such as ChatGPT to enhance the creation of high-quality assessment and learning resources. Some teachers have also initiated discussions with students about their use of AI, fostering awareness and encouraging responsible engagement with these technologies. Resources have been developed to support students' independent study and revision, ensuring that AI complements rather than replaces traditional learning methods. This work aligns closely with the Government's AI Opportunities Action Plan, which highlights the potential of AI to transform education and equip young people with essential skills for the future. This is an exciting time of opportunity

for our students and our focus remains on equipping them with the skills and knowledge they need to thrive in a future where AI will likely play a significant role in many aspects of work and life.

"This is Creative Enterprise" (TICE) focuses on career development for young people by creating opportunities for students to experience an insight into careers within the creative industry. Fifteen successful Year 9 applicants will experience projects focusing on areas of fashion, design, illustration, photography and film. The projects are thought provoking and designed to combine the experience of new skills and knowledge through projects linked to the fashion industry. The Year 9 students will participate in a 10 week programme and will experience workshops with industry professionals at Northumbria University. They are excited about this TICE opportunity and look forward to starting work on their projects in the coming weeks.

The sports fixtures at Marden began again this week after a brief winter hiatus due to the weather before the Christmas break. Kicking off the new year were the Year 8 boys football team who travelled to Benfield School in the 2nd round of the County Cup on Thursday afternoon. The team were in buoyant mood, and pressured the home team from the get go. Somewhat against the run of play, the hosts scored the opening goal and took control of the tie. The Marden team worked hard to find an equaliser, but again, Benfield struck with a good counter attacking move, doubling their lead with a well taken goal and added a third just before the half time whistle. The Marden team were much improved in the second half, scoring early on to make it 3-1. Despite creating chance after chance, the visitors were unable to score again, and the game finished 3-1 but the boys showed great character and resilience to fight until the very end.

We are very proud of our students' sporting achievements at Marden and recognise those that compete at a level higher than school standard. This week, Elise Aitchison Wray in Year 8 travelled to the National Ice Centre in Nottingham to compete in the British Ice Skating competition, representing the Whitley Bay Club. This was her first time competing at this level and she was up against the top skaters from around the country in her age category. A marvellous achievement for such a young athlete. We at Marden wish her every success in future national events.

The behaviour of our students is something that invariably visitors to our school will comment upon. Indeed, Ofsted's judgement of pupils' behaviour was reflected in their most recent report:

"Pupils thrive. Behaviour in many lessons is exemplary. Pupils support one another in their learning. They listen attentively to staff and respond with enthusiasm when challenging questions are asked."

Similarly when students are out and about on field trips and sports fixtures, we receive so many positive comments from members of the public and colleagues from other schools. As you know we have systems in place in school to reward students for behaviour and effort in lessons and around school. These include, but are not limited to, work of the week, recognition and reward emails, postcards, house points and Golden Ticket Week, and it is always nice to be able to enhance these rewards with donations and sponsorship we occasionally receive. This week Tyne Coast College gave us ten free tickets to this evening's Newcastle Eagles game. A pair of tickets was given to a student, who expressed interest in going, in each year group with the highest house points. Well done to those students and we hope they have a fantastic evening. If there are any parents or carers whose workplaces may be able to offer potential enhancements to our rewards I would love to hear from you.

Thank you for your continued support.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Snape', written in a cursive style.

Mr M. Snape
Head Teacher