



## Marden High School

Friday 21st February 2025

Dear All

World Book Day is coming on 6th March, and this year has the theme 'Read Your Way'. Research into reading for pleasure suggests that children are more likely to enjoy reading when their choices are championed and we make reading fun. With this in mind, students in Year 7 have been piloting Sparx Reader as part of Monday Form Time *Reading for Pleasure* session this year. The online reading programme uses an initial reading quiz to ascertain students' reading ages and provide them with a selection of suitable e-books to choose from, taking into account their interests and age. During reading, they are given regular short quizzes to check their understanding and ensure 'careful reading'. There are also options to alter the text, change the background colour, use a reading guide, or check the meaning of unfamiliar words. For each minute of 'careful reading' completed, students earn 10 Sparx points. This has led to a Year 7 challenge of completing 15 minutes of 'careful reading' (earning 150 Sparx points) , and 7M have been the winners of the Sparx trophy an impressive 5 weeks out of 7 this half term! The challenge continues over the half term holiday and the top 3 Year 7 students will be awarded house points upon their return. As we go forward this year, we are looking at rolling the programme out to other year groups. If you have any questions about the programme, or think your child would benefit from taking part, get in touch with our Literacy Coordinator, Ms Taylor, [a.taylor@mardenhigh.net](mailto:a.taylor@mardenhigh.net).

I would like to take a moment to give an early notification of the arrangements for Year 11 GCSE exams. Our aim is always to support students in the run up to and throughout the exam season to achieve the best grades they possibly can, which means that once the exam season starts, we require all students to remain in school where they can continue to benefit from their timetabled lessons. That means that from Monday 12th May through until Friday 23rd May all students are required to attend school as normal, starting at 8.45 and finishing at 3.15. When students are not sitting an exam they will be in their normal timetabled lessons, receiving support from their teachers. If there are no more exams in a particular subject, for example, geography, and it is a geography lesson, then the teacher of that lesson will supervise students with their own private study as they prepare for remaining exams. The half term break is 24th May - 1st June and from Monday 2nd June, as GCSE exams continue, students will still be able to go to their timetabled lessons to benefit from their teachers support when they have not got an exam, though from this date this is

not compulsory. They will, in other words, be able to study at home if that is what works best for them and their parents/carers. The final exam is on Wednesday 18th June and the exam boards have designated Wednesday 25th June as a contingency date should they have any issues during this exam season.

Regular readers of my newsletter will be aware that I have mentioned a number of times preparations that are being made for additional students to join us in September. I will continue to update everybody via this newsletter of these developments which include additional buildings, increased recreational space and extra staff, but I would also like to offer parents and carers the opportunity to come into school for my next Parents Forum where I can show people some of the things we are putting in place. Parents Forums are very informal and there is no expectation that anybody brings particular topics. It is really just an opportunity to get together as a community and have a chat about all things Marden. I find the conversations I have with parents and carers invaluable, and often quite influential in terms of future planning, and everyone is welcome. The date of the next Parents Forum is Wednesday 12th March at 4.30. Please let Mrs Scott, my PA, know if you'd like to come along, just so we know how many cups of tea we need!

We had an extra special celebration of our togetherness this week with students becoming contestants as our in-house game show host Mr Richards led our House assemblies with the theme of 'Deal or No Deal'. With the mystery 'banker' hidden in 'The Vault', trying to get students to make a 'Deal' and not win the top prize of 10,000 House Points, it was nail biting stuff. Students had posters in the crowd, staff were urging students to 'deal' at the right time as their knowledge of probability and ratio meant that carrying on held the possibility of losing out on a big win whilst the cheers echoed down the corridors as smaller numbers were swept aside and Houses saw their totals increase by hundreds each time. The House competition is one of the many strands to why our school is a vibrant, exciting place to be where people thrive. Many thanks to Mr Richards for leading these assemblies and congratulations to Bamburgh who currently lead the House competition.

Monday evening saw the Year 7 girls football team make their debut in a game against Valley Gardens. The girls have been training together well and were eager to put that training into practice. On a bitterly cold evening, the girls started the game brightly, playing some neat passes and creating a few chances of opening the scoring. It was the hosts that struck first, but to their credit, the Marden team kept their heads up and in the second half had the better of the play. They were rewarded for their efforts with a goal midway through the half to level the scores. The game finished 1-1, a draw, a fair result on balance.

The Year 10 Girls rugby team played in a three-way game on Tuesday afternoon against Kings and Dame Allen's. In their first game against Kings, the girls played magnificently, producing some fantastic attacking

play and eventually winning the game 40-20. In the second game, they continued where they had left off, putting the Dame Allan's team under pressure from the first whistle. After a tough game, the Marden team emerged victorious with a 30-15 win. All of the team played very well, with 3 girls playing their first ever game of rugby.

On Tuesday evening, 30 Marden pupils took part in the North Tyneside Schools Dance Festival held at The Parks leisure centre. They had received expert tuition from a professional dancer from Dance City for the past 6 weeks and had prepared well for their performance. Despite some anxiety on the night, all of the pupils were outstanding and gave a stellar performance. They received praise from many parents present on the night, as well as the dance teachers from other schools. The dancers are looking forward to next year's opportunity.

Thank you for your continued support.



Mr M. Snape  
Head Teacher