



Marden High School

Friday 18th July 2025

Dear All

I would like to start this newsletter, the final one of the school year, by saying a huge thank you to everyone for another fantastic year at Marden. Staff, students, parents and governors have all worked so hard to provide our young people with some excellent opportunities. Many of these are featured in our half termly newsletter published on the school website today, and I hope that you enjoy reading about some of the amazing things the children and staff have been doing.

It was with sadness that I let staff know earlier this week of the passing of Wendy Dowse, a much loved and valued member of our cleaning team. Wendy was such a consistent presence in school, and seemed always to have a cheery and kind word for everyone. Our cleaning team is second to none and are such an integral part of the caring atmosphere here at Marden, and Wendy led by example in this team. Wendy will be terribly missed, and we pass on our deepest and sincere condolences to her family.

We have been honoured to host Leodhais Macpherson in school this week, as he led an assembly about his famous and amazing feat of running 128 marathons in 128 days. Leodhais raised a huge amount of money doing this for charity, and in addition raised awareness of support for mental health as this enormous feat was in memory of his older brother Connor who the Macpherson family lost to suicide six years ago. Students and staff were suitably amazed at and appreciative of such an inspirational talk. We are looking forward to Leodhais coming into school in the autumn term to work alongside some of our classes.

We are delighted to have received confirmation that we will be continuing our work in the *Voice North East Oracy Project* next academic year. This fully-funded programme, led by national charity *Voice 21*, will allow us to continue to explore ways of effectively building speaking and listening opportunities into our curriculum, teaching and learning, and wider school life, further enhancing our students' learning and life chances through oracy. To celebrate the work completed as part of the project this year, we were thrilled to have two Marden students invited to compère the *Oracy Exhibition*, an event bringing together the 95 schools involved, held at The Biscuit Factory in Newcastle. Presenting across the day with impressive

confidence and flair, the students welcomed and thanked each speaker with their own thoughtful comments and reflections; took questions from the audience to ask to a panel of experts; and assisted in teaching a live oracy lesson. This is what one attendee at the conference emailed:

"I just wanted to pass on my thoughts further to the Voice 21 Conference in Newcastle on Thursday to the headteacher, teachers and pupils. It was so great to have two such articulate and genuinely amazing pupils help with the presentation of the day. They were both amazing and on behalf of myself and my two colleagues, I just wanted to pass on my congratulations. What a credit they were to you and your school. No easy task when faced with a sea of 300 teachers."

This week the Year 10 Girl's Network mentoring cohort reflected on their successes at their end of year Celebration Event. Each student was presented with a certificate and commemorative pin to demonstrate their progression to 'Ambassador' status within the network, having completed their mentoring program this year. The students are now lifelong members of The Girl's Network, and will be able to access development opportunities, careers support and networking events via The Girl's Network for as long as they need.

Yesterday afternoon we sent an email to every student with contacts and suggestions for self care over the summer. We want all students to feel safe and happy and that they are making progress and part of this is how we look after ourselves when we're not in school. The links include Childline, Samaritans, CAMHS Crisis and Kooth, and the self care advice includes useful information from Anna Freud and other organisations that have strategies for managing mental wellbeing.

I hope that everyone enjoys a relaxing summer and I look forward to seeing everybody on our return in September. Staff return on Monday 1st September, and students on Tuesday 2nd September, at the normal time.



Mr M. Snape
Head Teacher