



## Marden High School

Friday 16th October 2020

Dear All,

I have spoken to several parents this week who have been very supportive in letting me know about positive COVID test cases in their households with the consequent effect that their children would be absent from school while they self isolate. Parents have also spoken to me about people in their household feeling unwell and booking a test for COVID, and that they are therefore keeping their child at home until test results come through. Having this conversation with me as soon as anything is known is very supportive of our school community as, clearly, it helps to prevent the potential spread of the virus by ensuring conversations take place about the correct durations of isolations.

I must emphasise the importance of communicating any change in the health of households straight away. If anyone in a household has symptoms of COVID, then everyone in that household needs to self isolate until such time as any test result comes back negative, and, of course, if anyone in the household tests positive for COVID then all members of that household will need to isolate for 14 days.

Our staff continue to work hard to maintain high standards of hygiene inside and outside classroom settings and in grouping students in 'bubbles' to help reduce the risk of virus transmission and therefore ensure that all students have access to high quality education enabling them to thrive and progress. A special thanks should go this week to those often unsung heroes behind the scenes, our cleaning team, who continue to do such fantastic work in keeping our school clean and looking still so new.

The government has recently made the announcement about exams for next summer which said that they will go ahead but most will be delayed by about 3 weeks, taking place between 7 June and 2 July. One maths and one English GCSE will be held just before the May half term to give students affected by COVID a better chance of still sitting a paper in each of these subjects. It is said that the government will be developing contingency measures "in partnership with the sector" to address the range of scenarios which might impact students' ability to sit exams. With mock

exams for Year 11 fast approaching, we hope that these plans are published sooner rather than later so that we can put them in place within our school calendar.

Our mock exams will take place between Monday 9th November and Friday 4th December, and as ever, this will be a great opportunity for all Year 11 students to test themselves out, find out where their strengths lie, and very importantly find out what their weaker areas are and therefore what they will need to work on over the coming months. This information also helps teachers to adapt their teaching, and helps parents and carers to support their children at home. Because mock exams will be in lesson time, we can plan to give students more of the papers that they will sit in the summer, giving them a broader experience. We are also aware of anxieties around missed teaching time and home learning and so want students to complete the mocks in a supportive environment. It should be added that Year 11 have shown an exemplary attitude towards the recent science exams they have done which bodes well for the future.

I do hope that people take a look at some of the excellent work that is being done by our students. This can be done by clicking on the 'Work of the Week' button on our homepage, and this rotates each week as the recipients of the weekly Headteacher Awards changes. It really is lovely to see how the children are enjoying their learning and putting so much effort into their work.

On that note, next week is our termly Golden Ticket Week, where students are recognised for their 'over and above' positive behaviours with a Golden Ticket. As we are seeking to minimise the exchange of papers between people where not absolutely necessary, we will not be handing out tickets to students as normal, but instead digitally celebrating them on our plasma screens around school. When a student demonstrates especially good work or behaviours, that is, goes 'over and above', they will have their name added to our slide show around the school explaining why they have won their 'Golden Ticket'. This way, their success is shared with all, their efforts are acknowledged and there is an opportunity for every child in the school to be a part of our celebratory firework display, which forms the backdrop to this digital display.

The Year 9 Guided Choices process will be starting after the half term holidays, and this year, as we are now becoming accustomed to, we will be doing things a little differently. Curriculum leaders have produced screencasts which describe the various subjects available at key stage 4, which will be shown to students during form time and then available on the website. There will also be a video explaining the process of choosing option subjects from Mrs Robson, and we hope that parents and carers will enjoy watching these, and that they help in the discussions at home about

each child's future GCSE choices. Information on option blocks will be presented in January, when there will also be a straw poll so that we can gain an insight into which subjects will be popular next year, to help with our planning.

And finally, a few reminders:

- As the autumn gets potentially colder and wetter, it is a good idea for students to bring spare PE kit with them if the weather forecast is for rain so that everyone can be dry and comfortable for the rest of their lessons.
- Friday next week (23rd October) is a teacher training day so students will not be in school.
- The deadline for applications to become a parent governor is on Tuesday 20th October.

Thank you for your continued support and take care.



Mr M. Snape  
Head Teacher