



Marden High School

Friday 20th November 2020

Dear All,

So, we come to the end of another busy week, during which we have been reflecting on our quote for the week from the great scientist Margaret Mead, "I learned the value of hard work by working hard". Simple, but true, this is something that is clear to see as I walk around the school, observing the focus and concentration of our students. I hope everyone has had a good week, and I hope that even where it might not have been the best, that you have been able to find some little part of it that gave pleasure, comfort or solace. In form time this week we have been considering how we interact with each other, and about small or random acts of kindness which can make all the difference. As the students have identified, these can be simple, but not necessarily easy things to do, such as telling family members how much you love and appreciate them, helping parents with household chores, or making a cup of tea for a friend or family member. The power of these acts, however, can be quite huge, bringing much joy to people's everyday lives. Some interesting and entertaining thoughts and ideas on this topic can be found at:

www.mentalhealth.org.uk/blog/random-acts-kindness

Cullercoats Education Trust have been in touch with us with an invitation to receive applications for grant funding from our students. The criteria for applications are as follows:

1. Providing religious instruction according to the doctrines of the Church of England for people who regularly take part in activities of the churches of St George's and St Paul's or people resident in the area comprising the Ecclesiastical parishes of St George and St Paul Cullercoats.
2. Promoting the education, including social and physical training of such people (taking part regularly in church activities or living in the Parish of St George's or St Paul's).

Our Heads of Year have been speaking to students about this and it may well be that parents will be able to identify their child as someone who may benefit from this financial support. If you know of anyone who might, please contact me or the child's Head of Year so that we can support the application.

Year 11 students have been hard at work over the past two weeks with their mock exams, and we have been impressed with their focused attitude towards them. Their teachers have commented on the high levels of maturity and engagement that they have seen from them during this time. Indeed, Year 11 have demonstrated excellent role modelling around the school, and on their way in and out of school, for all students. I am aware that some of our Year 11 students will be understandably concerned about what will be happening with GCSE exams in the summer. Both Scotland and Wales have cancelled GCSE and A level exams next summer, whilst the government here have suggested that delaying the exams in England by three weeks will be sufficient to make up for any ground lost over the past 9 months. It is without doubt, however, far from a level playing field for the thousands of students across the country who have missed varying amounts of time in classrooms, and so there is still a degree of uncertainty as to whether England will follow the example of Scotland and Wales. I have no doubt, however, that our Year 11 students will do very well, whether they sit exams or whether there is a combination of school based assessment and professional judgement, just as the Year 11 students last year got excellent grades, and progressed on to their chosen post-16 route. They have superb teachers who are working very hard with them to ensure their best outcomes. It has been great to hear that many of the students have also commented on how supported they feel.

Parents and carers may not be aware that Marden is part of a national trial called The Early Career Framework (ECF). This is a development programme for all teachers in their first and second years in the profession. Next year the programme will be rolled out to all schools nationwide but we are privileged to be able to contribute to the programme in its pilot stage. The teachers who are a part of this are assigned a subject mentor, an experienced teacher who will observe and discuss their practice with them. While new teachers at Marden have always been supported in this way, the Early Career Framework provides participants with a wealth of videos and reading materials that help focus on the key aspects of practice that, once embedded, will make newly qualified teachers feel confident and give them a firm foundation upon which to build their professional skills.

We were disappointed that the last mentoring sessions for students taking part in The Girls' Network programme have not taken place this term. However, all of the girls have been offered the opportunity to take part in three online celebration workshops in early December. The programme adopted the strapline '#your future isn't cancelled' at the beginning of lockdown and has been inspirational in the way it has sought creative solutions that still allow the girls taking part to access the programme. Participants in the programme have already been emailed the details of the online workshops and we are hoping many will access the events from home.

Further to the information in last week's newsletter regarding children with food allergies, it is worth mentioning that we have seen a review of food provision in our kitchen over the last few weeks, and it is pleasing to hear the many positive comments from students and staff alike about improvements that have been made since the start of term when Catering Services were still adapting their food offers in the new COVID landscape. The Catering Services staff we have working here at Marden have been great in their response to our suggestions and in meeting the needs of our children. Parents whose children have a food allergy of any sort will be contacted in the very near future by Catering Services to further discuss their children's needs to ensure that they are fully supported in making dietary choices.

Thank you for your continued support and take care.

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

Mr M. Snape
Head Teacher