

Ref: MS/ES

Friday 20th March 2020

Dear All,

“We are a strong community, each individual full of hope, looking forward to many possibilities.”

This is a line taken from our statement of Marden Values, the product of numerous conversations involving students, staff, parents and governors, that took place last term. It's what I have shared with students this week to remind them all that we have what it takes to come through this period of challenge, and to move on to a bright future.

However, we all know it won't be easy, and we'll have to continue to work hard and to look out for each other. With this in mind I want to try to summarise what we'll be doing as a school to support our children and families.

So, just to remind people, tomorrow will be the last full 'normal' day of school. Schools will then close indefinitely from Friday 20th March 2020 for most children. This is an attempt to keep the spread of the coronavirus to a minimum. However, schools are to remain open for children whose parents are identified as 'key workers', and for children with Education Health Care Plans.

Whilst students are at home it is important that they continue their learning. Detailed information has been shared with students via email explaining how they will receive work at home. They should login in the morning and check the lessons they have for that day. The teachers, who would normally teach them, will email them the work to complete. The work may be a googledoc, via google classroom or specific tasks on SAMlearning, My Maths or Hegartymaths. Students should complete the five hours of lesson work that they would usually in a day, taking appropriate breaks where necessary. Teachers will check that work has been completed regularly and email parents if work is incomplete. Teachers will closely mark key pieces in line with their planning. Students who do not have computer or internet access have been issued with a set of tasks, an exercise book and a set of text books.

Students are able to contact their teachers, form tutor, head of year or senior staff as usual by email and will be responded to appropriately during work hours, as is the norm.

Our pastoral team will continue to keep close contact with the students and therefore there will be regular emails from each Head of Year to their students. This email will contain information about the theme of the week, the activities which usually take place in form time (such as numeracy, literacy, the quiz and reflection time) and also updates on matters specific to that year group. Heads of Year and the senior leadership team remain available via email to discuss any questions that parents and carers may have over time.

In addition to the daily email contact from subject teachers, and communication from Heads of Year, my weekly newsletter will continue which will keep you up to date with any news, developments and additional resources for home learning. Parents and carers will of course still be able to communicate with staff by email, as normal, and the school phone line will be in operation as normal during school hours.

We understand that this will be a potentially worrying time for young people and parents for lots of reasons, and so each student will be emailed a letter containing information on where they can access safeguarding and mental wellness support. This letter will also be available on the school website and on the Student Bulletin.

We understand that North Tyneside Council are arranging for lunches to be sent out to families where children are eligible for free school meals, and details will be posted on our website when they become available.

The Department for Education has launched a new helpline to answer questions about COVID-19 related to education. Staff, parents and young people can contact the helpline as follows: Phone: 0800 046 8687 Email: DfE.coronavirushelpline@education.gov.uk
Opening hours: 8am to 6pm (Monday to Friday)

As you are no doubt aware we have had to cancel forthcoming educational visits, and we are currently in negotiations with travel companies trying to get refunds which, if successful, will be returned to parents.

We have also made the decision to not hold the practice expedition on the 11th and 12th July 2020. The course itself will still continue. Mr Jewell will provide the students with all of the information needed to still achieve the award. The organisation has already sent out information about leniency and has stated that no one will be unfairly impacted by the situation. The assessed expedition will still go ahead as planned in the new academic school year 2020/21.

To end this newsletter I would like to say how privileged I have been to witness how our students and staff have pulled together in such magnificent fashion during this challenging week. I know that the commitment, the authenticity, the trust, and the encouragement we share here in this Marden family will continue through the coming weeks.

Take care and look after each other.



Mr M. Snape
Head Teacher