



December 2019

Dear Parent / Guardian

As the Christmas break approaches we would like to thank staff, students, parents and governors for their hard work and support this term.

Ensuring our students aspire to be the best they can be has been an important theme throughout many of the enrichment activities on offer this term:

- In September Key Stage 4 visited Cavendish Laboratories at Cambridge University. The purpose of this visit was to encourage students to aim to attend university.
- In October there was a further visit for Key Stage 4 to Cambridgeshire University as part of their 'Hope not Hate' programme. This enrichment activity was aimed at developing our students' understanding of discrimination and prejudice, as well as to explore the benefits of studying at university. Some of our Key Stage 3 students are being mentored as part of our partnership work with Cambridge University on their Insight Discovery programme. Once again this is seeking to raise aspirations and ambition around a university education.
- Several of our Key Stage 4 pupils attended the residential week at Brecon Beacons Adventure centre as part of their GCSE PE practical work, participating in climbing, canoeing and kayaking. Some of our GCSE historians visited London Whitechapel, incorporating a visit to the Old Bailey and the Museum of London. In November, our GCSE drama students went to the New Wolsey Theatre to watch the play 'One Under'.
- December played host to our Super Learning Day where our students were involved in a range of new learning experiences:
  - Year 7 students attended Hautbois outdoor pursuits centre, developing their personal skills at part of our LORIC (Leadership, Organisation, Resilience, Initiative, Communication) programme.
  - Year 8 students had first aid training. The company that came in to deliver the training commented: *"The children were superb and although they were excited with their enthusiasm spilling over into lots of conversations, each and every one of them did what was asked, supported each other and were a credit to themselves and the school. I was so impressed and they were a pleasure to teach. I look forward to hopefully returning in the future"* and *"I thoroughly enjoyed the day and working with this group was an absolute pleasure. The teachers were really helpful and supportive and got involved in the sessions too. I teach in a lot of schools and can honestly say what a delight the children were to work with and a real credit to Marshlands School"*
  - Our Year 9 students were engaged in a programme designed to develop their strategies for improving their own mental health and wellbeing.
  - Year 10 spent the day exploring career opportunities linked to GCSE English, specifically journalism.
  - Lastly our Year 11 students spent a very intense and focused day developing their skills for the required practical as part of their GCSE Science.

A key priority for the school is to improve attendance. You may have read in the press recently that schools in West Norfolk and North Cambridgeshire have amongst the worst attendance record. Marshland although better than most, is no exception. We must ensure that student attendance improves. To support families and students the school has recruited a new Attendance Officer, who starts on 6<sup>th</sup> January 2020. This extra capacity will enable the school to provide additional support to families and students with poor and/or declining attendance. If your child has 10 or more days off school over the course of the academic year, their attendance will be below 95%. This amounts to 50 lessons being missed. Consider the negative impact this could have on your child's education. Please ensure your child is in school every day. Attendance is always the responsibility of the parent.

Moving on to end of term arrangements, Friday 20<sup>th</sup> December 2019 is the last day of term. Teachers will be teaching their normal lessons right up until the end of period 5 on Friday. It is therefore essential that your child attends school for the whole week, despite local primary schools finishing Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> December. The attendance team will be in contact with parents whose children fail to be in school. Any failure to attend school as normal may result in parents being issued a fixed penalty notice from the local authority.

Feedback from staff and students has been very positive regarding the introduction of the new behaviour policy in school. Behaviour at Marshland continues to be good and is improving further. We continue to aim for all our students to exhibit nothing short of excellent behaviour in and outside of lessons.

At a recent local authority meeting of West Norfolk schools, Marshland school was identified as having the strongest performance (based on progress) of any secondary school in West Norfolk.

Looking forward, school returns on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> January 2020; this is a normal school day for all students. As per the school calendar, there is a Teacher Training Day scheduled for Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2020, meaning the school is closed to all pupils on this training day.

On behalf of our school we wish you a happy and restful Christmas and a prosperous New Year in 2020.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C Jansen', written over a horizontal line.

Mr C Jansen  
Headteacher