



February 2022

Dear Varndean families,

As we enter the second part of the Spring term, Year 8 students will be making decisions about options and the courses they wish to study through Years 9 to 11. For your information I have outlined the main events below.

Week commencing 21st February: Options booklet is published

Options booklets will be emailed out to all families and available on the website (those who wish to have a paper copy can request one from their school base). The booklet contains information needed to help them select courses and explains the full options process, including some frequently asked questions. An assembly on **21st February** will explain to students the details of the process. Please take the time to look through the course information in the booklet with your child and begin discussions about the possible choice of courses.

Thursday 24th February: 4.30 - 7.30pm Options Evening

This evening provides two opportunities for students and families. Firstly there is the chance to come and talk to subject staff about the different subjects on offer, this is particularly useful if you want to find out about subjects which have not been studied previously or to help choose between two equally desired subjects. This part of the evening is like an 'Options Fair', **no appointments** are necessary, you will be able to speak to staff in their own department areas around the school and see the learning environments and facilities first hand. There will also be a few students from Years 9 and 10 available to speak to who are already studying those courses.

On the same evening there will be a talk given in the main assembly hall which we ask that **all families attend**. Here you will be given an important overview of the whole options process and courses on offer, as well as information on how to apply and key dates.

There will be 2 talks available in the main hall at 4.30 and 5.45 pm available on a first come first served basis. Families will need to decide how they organise their time on this evening to ensure they have an opportunity to visit all departments and one of the main talks in the hall. If you have any access requirements, e.g. wheelchair access, please contact Mel Thomas on 01273 561281 or email melthomas@varndean.co.uk who will advise accordingly.

Tuesday 8th March: Learning Enhancement Day 2

Each student will take part in a series of options taster lessons. Students will be able to choose their taster lessons in advance by submitting their preferences via a google form.

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Week beginning Monday 14th March

Each student will be given a 1:1 interview with a member of senior staff to discuss options and help to support their decision making process. The options form will go 'live' at the end of that week **Friday 18th March** on Varndean Plus.

Tuesday 29th March: Options Deadline

After the deadline we will begin the process of constructing the options blocks and students will be informed as to whether or not their choices have been possible. There may be some choices which do not work out because a subject may not receive sufficient support or may be heavily oversubscribed. Similarly, students may have made a combination of choices which is considered to be too narrow or restrictive or possibly not suited to their needs, despite the advice given previously. If this is the case we will negotiate any changes which may be necessary with individual students.

Final options will be released to students **Friday 17th June 2022**.

Choosing options is an important time and I do hope you will find our processes helpful. If you have any queries about the options process, please contact myself in the first instance timclarke@varndean.co.uk or Gareth Hughes (Deputy Head) garethhughes@varndean.co.uk.

Yours faithfully

Tim Clarke

Curriculum Development Manager

