

#TeamVarndean Community Newsletter 8
14th January 2022



Welcome to #TeamVarndean

Happy New Year!

We are pleased to report that the first two weeks back have been successful with regards to Covid cases in school and that for all students the start of the year hasn't been too disrupted by absence. We do have positive cases amongst students and staff but not to the extent we have previously seen and that might have been expected after the break and following the media speculation. We wish everyone at home a speedy recovery and look forward to seeing students back. Please continue to report positive cases to covid@varndean.co.uk and record LFT results each Sunday evening: <https://forms.gle/MVg9To4hh7F21ieUA>

The new term has seen new beginnings and a reminder that Sara Connolly is now our Designated Safeguarding Lead and can be contacted via safeguarding@varndean.co.uk

We would like to update you on a positive change to our behaviour policy in light of a recent student survey. Our equalities team has been working with students to establish further learning and education opportunities for students who might discriminate against someone. We are hopeful that this will be a useful addition to our learning for life curriculum whereby this is taught to all students.

We have just started our new listening campaign with Brighton & Hove Citizens UK group that we are part of. Our student team has pledged to get 2000 replies to this [very short survey](#) about what residents of Brighton & Hove would like to see improved in the city. Please do reply to this survey - our students wait in anticipation of the results so that they can present to the group at the next meeting.

Our extra-curricular offer continues to grow and so do the opportunities for sporting fixtures against local schools. To aid with transport, we are looking to recruit some casual minibus drivers. Please email lynnhill@varndean.co.uk if you or someone you might know is interested.

Excitement is building for the school show 'Les Miserables' and if the singing taking place as students leave rehearsals along the drive is anything to go by, we are all in for a treat! More information about purchasing tickets will follow shortly.

This weekend I am looking forward to watching and cheering on our U16 Boys' Table Tennis Team as they represent East Sussex in the National Schools' Team Championships SE Zone finals in London - hoping for some positive news to share in the next newsletter.

Shelley Baker
Headteacher

Covid Isolation Update

From Monday 17th January, people who are self-isolating with COVID-19 will have the option to reduce their isolation period after 5 full days if they test negative with a lateral flow device (LFD) test on both day 5 and day 6 and they do not have a temperature. For example, if they test negative on the morning of day 5 and the morning of day 6, they can return to their education or childcare setting immediately on day 6. The first test must be taken no earlier than day 5 of the self-isolation period, and the second must be taken the following day. All test results should be reported to NHS Test and Trace.

Communications from School

Letters that have been emailed home to families can also be found on the [letters to parents page](#) on our website.

We sometimes hear from families that they have not received a particular message. Sometimes we get a notification if an email has failed to deliver, and can act on this accordingly, however sometimes we don't know unless you tell us, as it looks like the message has gone through. This latter problem may occur when a recipient's email account settings treat our message as 'spam' as it has been sent to a large number of people.

If you believe you have not been receiving email communications from school, or know someone that hasn't, there are a number of things you can do which may resolve this:

- Check your email address on Varndean Plus is correct and up to date
- Add the school email address to your safe senders / whitelist:
 - for Hotmail account holders follow [these instructions](#)
 - for Gmail, Outlook or Yahoo follow [these instructions](#)
- The school's email address that needs adding to the safe senders / whitelist is:
8464012@sims-communications.co.uk

If you have tried these options and still aren't receiving messages please let us know at school@varndean.co.uk and we can look into this for you.

School Base Staff Changes

Following news from our last newsletter about changes to Heads of School for Angelou and Russell Schools, we are pleased to confirm Kate Barnes and James Waite are now Deputy Heads of School for these schools respectively. Should you need them you can find their contact details in the updated pastoral table at the end of the newsletter.

Key Dates

10th - 21st January - PPE2 for Y11
19th & 20th January - Y8 parent/carer consultation evening (telephone consultations)
25th January - Exam certificate and artwork collection day for 2021 leavers
27th January - KS3 Wellbeing and Progress evening 6.15-7.15pm
7th-11th February - School show week (details coming soon)
14th-18th February - Half term

Varndean Welcome Team

Varndean recognises how important a friendly welcome is to our students in the morning and will be focusing on making sure each of our students receive this on the front gate in the morning with more staff on duty. As well as this we will use this opportunity to check uniform and lateness.

This term we will be having a big focus on morning lateness. The school day starts at 8:45am but we ask all students to arrive before 8:40am ready for a prompt start. If students are late on two or more occasions (morning or afternoon) during the week they receive a 30 minute after school lateness detention.

As well as this, we will be adding another layer into our lateness protocols. If a student is late in the

morning, they will need to sign in on the front gate with the member of staff. They will receive a 5 minute break time detention in the main hall that same day.

Any issues please contact school bases.

Updated Bus Timetable

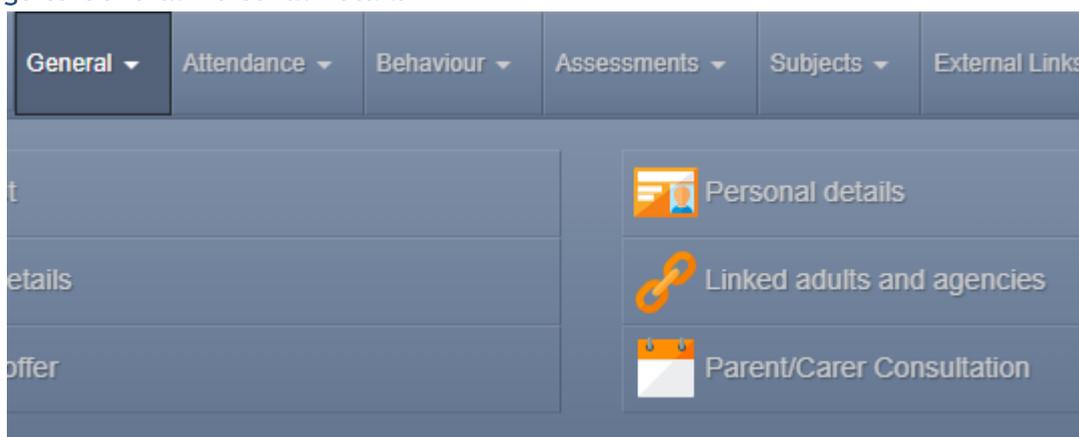
We have produced the following document with updated bus times to help families and students get to school on time - [Bus timetable 2022](#) We are in contact with the bus company so that we are kept informed when there is likely to be issues with buses.

Enrichment 2022

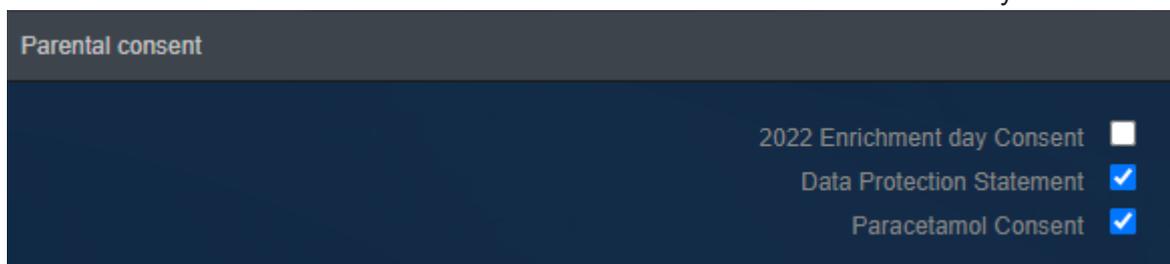
The Enrichment allocations were shared with parents and carers last Friday. If you did not receive a letter for your child by email, you can access it from your Varndean Plus account, under the 'Subjects' heading.

If you have not yet confirmed that you accept your child's Enrichment place, please could you do this using Varndean Plus by **Friday 20th January**. To accept the allocation please:

- log into your Varndean Plus parent account (not your child's)
- go to General>Personal Details



- scroll down to the Parental Consent section and tick the 2022 Enrichment day consent box



- **NB: There is no 'save' button, once you have ticked the box that's all you need to do, thank you**

If there is a problem with your child's allocation or you have trouble with giving consent on Varndean Plus please let us know urgently by emailing school@varndean.co.uk

Apologies for the delay in getting the payments ready on ParentPay for you, this is a manual process so please don't worry if the payment does not appear immediately after you have given consent, it may take a few days before the payment goes live. We have adjusted the first instalment deadline to Monday 31st January in light of this and we will notify families once the payments are live on ParentPay.

Varndean View - Extra-Curricular results

Thank you to families who responded to the recent Varndean View survey around extra-curricular provision at school. Actions arising out of the survey include:

- Families feel we do offer a broad range of activities so we will continue providing these opportunities
- Sometimes it is difficult for students to go to them all so we will look at the yearly timetable to support this
- Asking tutors to encourage students to clubs when they might feel reluctant

There was a positive response to the most recent survey around opportunities. Thank you to families who responded.

Extra-Curricular Spring Timetable

Click [here](#) to view what's on offer this half term for students.

Specials in the Canteen this Half Term

This half term we're celebrating diversity in our canteen staff by offering a meal every Thursday from their countries, selected & prepared by the chefs themselves! Joy kicked this off this week with her Thai sweet & sour chicken or Quorn. On Thursday 20th January Borja will be treating us to Spanish Garbanzos con acelgas (chickpeas & chard) or Pollo a la surena (chicken marinated in lemon & rosemary with rice and broccoli). Polish and Greek food to come later this half term!

Catering cards

We have noticed upon our return that many students are trying to use the canteen with no money on their ParentPay account. Please remember to top up student accounts on ParentPay in advance as students not having enough money on their card is causing lengthy queues and disruption in the canteen. Many thanks for your support with this.

If you have any queries about ParentPay please email food@varndean.co.uk

Singing Lessons

As well as instrumental lessons from the Music Service we also have the opportunity for students to take singing lessons at school with an independent singing teacher who has prolific experience in working with students at Blatchington Mill School. Please find some information below about Gemma, who can be approached directly by email if you are interested in lessons for your child: gemmaannroutledge@yahoo.co.uk

Gemma Routledge is an enthusiastic, experienced singing teacher with over 18 years experience in many varied styles. Her singing lessons involve in-depth work on vocal techniques, which will help to increase vocal range and strength in the voice. Vocal training will be taught through a wide variety of musical styles, from Classical, to musical theatre to pop, and students will have plenty of say in their song choices. Students will be working on tried and tested vocal techniques and having fun at the same time:

"I am committed to improving my student's ability in singing, performance and confidence and I work

to motivate them to having dedication and enjoyment as well as encourage them to work to a high standard.”

Gemma will also work very closely with the music teachers in school helping students that are taking GCSE Music with the performance part of their exams, as well as leading vocals on school productions and concerts.

“I am very excited to start working with the students at Vardean School and I hope to meet lots of you very soon.”

Courses to Support Parents/Carers of Children Experiencing Anxiety and Help with Building Children’s Resilience

Growing numbers of children are experiencing anxiety and need help to build self-esteem. It can be hard for parents/carers to know how to respond and provide effective support. The Adult Education Hub is continuing its successful online courses: *Supporting a child with Anxiety*, and *Building a child’s Resilience*. Both offer parents practical strategies to reduce anxious thinking and help build a child’s self-esteem. Sessions are run separately for parents of primary and secondary-age children.

Here’s what some parents have said:

“Listened to our concerns and gave us some great advice and tools.”

“Gave practical tips as well as reassurance. I feel I’m better able to support my child with their anxiety.”

Courses [2 x 90 minute online sessions] are free to parents on a low income/means tested benefits. Otherwise there is a fee of £15.

For dates and times of courses this term, and to book, visit our website:

<https://adulthoodeducation.brighton-hove.gov.uk/course-category/children-family-wellbeing/> or email AEH@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Unifrog Skills & Enterprise Week 31st January - 4th February

As part of Unifrog’s Skills & Enterprise Week there will be a series of student webinars, which will highlight the key skills employers are looking for as well as giving students some top tips to boost their employability while at school. Webinars will be on the following topics:

- Staying positive
- Presenting
- Leadership
- Problem solving

Y8-11 students and their parents/carers can follow this link to sign up for the webinars

<https://www.unifrog.org/teacher/webinars/series-skills-development>

Parent/Carer Unifrog information film

<https://www.loom.com/share/1d856c8220f444faa653fd7f719db5c8>

Create a parent account by visiting the Unifrog website and entering this code: VRNDparents

<https://www.unifrog.org/code>

Tim Clarke

University of Arts, London Workshops Saturday 29th January

University of Arts, London is holding £1 taster art sessions at Varndean College on Saturday 29th January for children and teenagers. This is a great opportunity for students to try something new and get to know the UAL courses. Please see the [attachment](#) for further details.

Also, here is the link to the UAL website for those students and parents that are interested in the Arts.
<https://www.arts.ac.uk/study-at-ual/short-courses/future-creatives/brighton>

Tim Clarke

Hot Chocolate with the Head

A great start to the term and well done to the following nominees for Hot Chocolate with the Head this week!

Lennox
Ryan T 8DB/L

Angelou
Esther B 8SBR/A

Russell
Soli H 7JWA/R

Turing
Gaen Kloud M 10JXC/T

Ellis
Lloyd O 7SJA/E

Safeguarding

Please direct any safeguarding concerns to...

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Sara Connolly
Safeguarding Officer: Kerry Tester
Using the email - safeguarding@varndean.co.uk

We encourage you to contact safeguarding, tutors or school bases to let us know if there is a concern about your child or challenges they are facing that might be impacting on their emotional regulation in school.

We also have a worried button on our website where parents can report concerns anonymously. These concerns may be for another student or for reporting 'intelligence' relating to safeguarding children at Varndean School



Our 'worried' button looks like this and can be found [here](#). Students also have a worried button on their homepage for letting us know about concerns, but finding it hard to talk directly to someone.

The current [safeguarding policy](#) is currently being reviewed in light of the new [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) DfE guidance and we will share the updated version with you soon.

Sara Connolly
saraconnolly@varndean.co.uk

Wellbeing and Support

Information on several places that can offer support: <https://www.varndean.co.uk/familieswellbeing>

Pastoral Staff

Don't forget that you can contact your school base between 8am and 3.30pm during term time - 01273 561281

SENCO

Judith Ford - judithford@varndean.co.uk

Lennox

Sara Connolly - saraconnolly@varndean.co.uk

Emma Sutton - emmasutton@varndean.co.uk

Angelou

Kate Barnes - katebarnes@varndean.co.uk

Fiona Hall - fionahall@varndean.co.uk

Lorina Ventura - lorinaventura@varndean.co.uk

Russell

James Waite - jameswaite@varndean.co.uk

Lucy Smallwood - lucysmallwood@varndean.co.uk

Rachel Christy - rachelchristy@varndean.co.uk

Turing

Georgina Maltby - georginamaltby@varndean.co.uk

Donna Mills - donnamills@varndean.co.uk

Natasha Didcott - natashadidcott@varndean.co.uk

Ellis

Nicola Wright - nicolawright@varndean.co.uk

Caroline Ball - carolineball@varndean.co.uk

Donna Mills - donnamills@varndean.co.uk

Safeguarding

Our safeguarding team is available if you would like advice on an issue or wish to report a concern:

safeguarding@varndean.co.uk

Sara Connolly (Designated Safeguarding Lead) - saraconnolly@varndean.co.uk

Kerry Tester - (Safeguarding Officer) - kerrytester@varndean.co.uk

To access safeguarding advice (**outside school hours**) please contact Front Door for Families

Phone: 01273 290400 9am to 5pm Monday to Thursday, 9am to 4.30pm on Fridays

Out-of-hours: 01273 335905 (Emergency Duty Service)