

Dear Varndean Families

Coronavirus update 13th March 2020

It has been quite a week with Coronavirus declared a pandemic and several European countries taking dramatic action to contain and delay the further spread of the virus. The situation is fast moving and it is in this context that I wanted to write to you and share some details about our current contingency planning.

There is limited value in speculating about what might happen in the next few weeks but as the situation evolves we will continue to work closely with the local authority and national bodies providing advice to schools about how to respond. The current advice is to stay open and continue to prioritise personal hygiene which we are doing but we have seen the situation change very fast in some countries so we are also readying ourselves for that.

Should we have to close - be that temporarily in order to deep clean or manage staffing shortages or longer term following Government edict - we will continue to set work for children to do. We are well placed to do this using Varndean Plus and our use of google classroom and these will be the main mechanisms for continuing children's learning. We are currently considering how best to support families by coordinating how this work reaches you and will provide more detail on this should we be in that situation.

As part of this we will also be exploring what extra support we may be able to make available for our Year 11 students who are preparing for their GCSEs and especially those who are currently working on practical projects in DT, Art and Dance.

We recognise that some children may not have access to a functioning ICT device or a suitable internet connection and if this is the case please can you let your child's school base know as soon as possible so that we can find a suitable solution so their learning is not unnecessarily disrupted.

The current situation raises lots of questions about school events scheduled for the next few weeks and months. I have taken the decision to cancel the Year 11 parents evening and the Spring Show and will keep all other such events and trips under review, writing to affected parents as appropriate. We will also review our approach to daily whole school activities such as assembly and use of the canteen to further keep children and staff safe.

While we remain open we will continue to remind students of the need for thorough and frequent hand washing and ask that you reinforce these messages. You will also be aware that the Government has updated their advice about self isolation and are now saying that any individual exhibiting symptoms (high temperature or a new persistent cough) should isolate for 7 days and contact 111 if symptoms persist or worsen. If this is the case for your child please let the school know as soon as possible so that we can maintain an accurate attendance register.

It is likely that new information will become available as next week progresses and I will continue to update you on the situation at Varndean as soon as there is news to share.

In the meantime I have included the links that you might need at the end of this email.

Kind regards

William Deighan
Headteacher

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): UK government response](#)

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)

[COVID-19: stay at home guidance](#)