

Dear Varndean Families

Coronavirus update 18th March 2020

Thank you for your support in making sure today ran smoothly.

The situation continues to evolve and as expected we have been informed today of more staff who need to isolate as a result of the latest guidance. Consequently our capacity from tomorrow onwards is further reduced and therefore I have taken the decision to **close the school tomorrow to students from years 8, 9 and 10**. We will **remain closed to these year groups until Friday 27th March** unless there is a change in the guidance.

The one exception to this is if you work in the frontline for essential health, social care or education services and believe that your children in years 8-10 need to come to school in order for you to be able to attend your place of work. If you are in this situation please send an email to your child's school base alerting them to this attendance and ask your child to report to school base at 8.45 in the morning where they will be registered. We will then organise a suitable timetable for these children depending on the need.

I deeply regret having to interrupt childrens' learning in this way but the pressures caused by staff absence mean there is no other way to run the timetable and keep children safe than to limit what we can do. Our priorities are to ensure continuous learning for year 11 students as they prepare for GCSE exams and to ensure the safety of our youngest students who may find it difficult to be home alone during the school day while parents are at work.

As I have explained previously we have set up systems for work to be completed by students so that learning can continue during this closure. Further detail on this work will be sent to all the relevant families tomorrow. We will also try to make sure there are activities available to year 11 students who are unable to attend school at the moment.

This remains a fluid situation and I know that later this afternoon the Minister will make a statement to Parliament that may change our position. With this in mind we will continue to provide a daily update and **post news on our website by 7am in the morning to confirm** what is happening. Parents of children in year 7 and 11 will need to keep themselves informed of these developments.

May I also remind you to continue to contact the school if your child becomes ill or needs to isolate due to symptoms within the household so that we can maintain accurate records. May I also remind you that if your child has been isolated they **cannot return to school** until the recommended isolation period is at an end.

Given the speed with which this situation is evolving I will update you again tomorrow.

Kind regards
William Deighan

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

