



Dear Varndean families

### **Coronavirus update 20th April**

Welcome to the summer term! I hope that you and your family managed to have a restful and healthy Easter break and your children are ready for what we now know will be at least three more weeks of lockdown and school closure.

As I said in my letter on the 3rd April our plans for off site learning will continue to develop this half term in response to our experience of the two weeks prior to Easter and the feedback we received from you and from the students themselves. Our weekly newsletter, published every Wednesday, will give further details about this approach and provide some tips about how you can support your child while they are working at home.

Judging from my own classes, students have already been busy today logging into their Google classroom and working their way through some of the work that has been set for them. Google classroom remains the main focus for communicating with students what needs to be learned and new resources, like those from the BBC that you may have read about, will be linked in through the classroom by teachers as appropriate.

As well as supporting the learning please may I take this opportunity to remind you of the pastoral support that is available while school is closed. School base staff are working as normal to support students and you may contact them via email if you have general questions about learning or concerns about wellbeing. Our safeguarding team is also on hand should you have more serious concerns about the well being of a child. All the contact details are listed at the end of this email.

The school nursing service is also available to support with health related concerns via their text service chathealth. A briefing sheet is available [here](#) to explain more.

If your child is entitled to a free school meal you will have received an email explaining how the Government's voucher scheme works and details of the codes that you need to access the vouchers. If you have not received this email or are having difficulties with the system then do please contact Andy Roberts [andyroberts@varndean.co.uk](mailto:andyroberts@varndean.co.uk) to discuss this further.

We were pleased to keep the school open over the Easter break to support vulnerable children and those from the families of key workers and our provision for this group continues at the start of this new term. We think we are aware of all the students who will be accessing this offer over the next two weeks but if your child is in one of these groups and your circumstances have



changed and you need to send your child to school because they cannot be left safely at home then please let Abi Holder [abigailholder@varndean.co.uk](mailto:abigailholder@varndean.co.uk) know so we can try to accommodate your needs.

Please don't forget you can find all of our previous correspondence on our website [here](#).

I also wanted to inform you that the Teacher Regulation Agency (TRA) has just published its report into the allegations of misconduct of a former teacher at Varndean school, Mr Richard Adams.

Mr Adams taught science at Varndean from 2012 until 2018. He had resigned to go to a new post but just before leaving an allegation of misconduct was received from a parent of a child at the school. Mr Adams was immediately suspended, the allegation investigated and consequently Mr Adams was dismissed from his position at the school and his new school withdrew their offer of employment.

The school took the decision to refer Mr Adams to the TRA because his behaviour fell far short of that which is expected by the school, and the profession more widely. It has taken some time for the TRA to conclude their investigation and publish their report. Therefore I am now able to share this news with you and can report that the TRA have confirmed the seriousness of the concerns and found Mr Adams guilty of unacceptable professional conduct.

There had been no concerns about Mr Adams raised with us prior to the allegation in the summer of 2018. However if there is something historic that we do not know about (or other concerns raised by this announcement) then please do let the school know as a matter of urgency by contacting [vickyanstiss@varndean.co.uk](mailto:vickyanstiss@varndean.co.uk).

That this incident happened is a sobering reminder of the importance of sharing safeguarding concerns with the school, however small, at the earliest opportunity. This information sharing alongside the school's robust safeguarding procedures were critical in making sure an incident didn't develop and that there were serious professional consequences for Mr Adams. It is vital that families continue to pass on their concerns and I want to reassure you that these matters will always be sensitively and rigorously followed up to ensure the safety of the children.

Thank you for your continued support and best wishes to you and your family.

Kind regards

Gareth Hughes  
Acting Headteacher



### **Safeguarding and school base contacts**

#### **Angelou**

Sam Whiteman - [samwhiteman@varndean.co.uk](mailto:samwhiteman@varndean.co.uk)

Fiona Hall - [fionahall@varndean.co.uk](mailto:fionahall@varndean.co.uk)

Lorina Ventura - [lorinaventura@varndean.co.uk](mailto:lorinaventura@varndean.co.uk)

#### **Russell**

Abi Holder - [abigailholder@varndean.co.uk](mailto:abigailholder@varndean.co.uk)

Charlotte Drake - [charlottedrake@varndean.co.uk](mailto:charlottedrake@varndean.co.uk)

#### **Turing**

Georgina Maltby - [georginamaltby@varndean.co.uk](mailto:georginamaltby@varndean.co.uk)

Donna Mills - [donnamills@varndean.co.uk](mailto:donnamills@varndean.co.uk)

Rachel Christy - [rachelchristy@varndean.co.uk](mailto:rachelchristy@varndean.co.uk)

#### **Ellis**

Sandra Knights - [sandraknights@varndean.co.uk](mailto:sandraknights@varndean.co.uk)

Caroline Ball - [carolineball@varndean.co.uk](mailto:carolineball@varndean.co.uk)

Donna Mills - [donnamills@varndean.co.uk](mailto:donnamills@varndean.co.uk)

Our safeguarding team will be contactable **during school hours** if you would like advice on an issue or wish to report a concern.

[safeguarding@varndean.co.uk](mailto:safeguarding@varndean.co.uk)

Vicky Anstiss (Designated Safeguarding Lead) - 07984 221254

Kerry Tester - (Safeguarding Officer) - 07572 707214

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)