



Dear Varndean families

Coronavirus update 24th April

There has been much speculation recently that schools may reopen soon however the Government and local authority has been quick to counter these stories and it is perhaps worth stating clearly that Varndean won't be re-opening prematurely and certainly not until we know it is safe to do so.

In this context our continued commitment to making the remote learning offer as good as it can be remains important and the teaching and learning team have been looking at further improvements this week. Your feedback has been really helpful and as a result the organisation of work via the google classroom and the reduction in the number of emails has helped. We have started to increase interactivity and develop opportunities for students to link to some of their teachers and our first video messages to year 7 and 11 have gone out today with more to follow as this initiative embeds over the next two weeks.

Knowing that school closure has some time to run will increase anxiety for some students who are missing school, its routines and social contact and perhaps struggling to engage with work without the direct support from their teachers. We have heard from some of you in this situation and we are aware of the impact that this can have on the children and the whole family and add to the stress and tension already caused by the fear of the virus and constraints of lockdown.

In this context school work must find its place and I say again that while we want learning to continue as much as possible parents should determine how much is done and when it is completed using what you know about what is best for your child.

Communication remains critical so do please continue to contact teachers directly (or encourage your children to do so via the google classroom) if it is work in particular subjects that is problematic or your child's tutor or school base if the issue is more general.

School remains open for the vulnerable children and the children of key workers. It is difficult for these students as it is such an unusual experience of school. They have remained positive and responded well to the home learning tasks, daily PE and environmental projects on offer this week. Any questions about participation in this provision should be addressed to abigailholder@varndean.co.uk.

If your child learns a musical instrument with Brighton and Hove music service then please note that their offer still exists and tuition is continuing on line. They should have written to you



directly to explain this so please look out for their correspondence. Links to details of the programme will be in next Wednesday's newsletter if that is of interest to you.

We are currently working with the Governing body, Local Authority and our insurers to finalise our position regarding enrichment for this academic year. Clearly a decision will have to be made soon regarding cancellation or otherwise and I thank you for your patience while we gather the information we need in order to make a final decision on this. It is my intention to finally decide on this no later than Friday 8th May.

Ramadan has started and I know that some of our students and their families will be fasting over the next month. If you are participating it will be a very different experience this year with mosques closed and gatherings not permitted and so we wish you and your family all the best for this important month. I am also aware that Ramadan might create extra challenges around home learning and if this is the case do contact your child's school base so that you can discuss how we can support your child during this time.

Finally you may wish to take advantage of the National Theatre's decision to make a recording of Shakespeare's Twelfth Night freely available on youtube as part of Shakespeare's birthday celebrations.

[Official Twelfth Night featuring Tamsin Greig | Free National Theatre Live Full Performance](#)

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

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

Fiona Hall - fionahall@varndean.co.uk

Lorina Ventura - lorinaventura@varndean.co.uk

Russell



Abi Holder - abigailholder@varndean.co.uk

Charlotte Drake - charlottedrake@varndean.co.uk

Turing

Georgina Maltby - georginamaltby@varndean.co.uk

Donna Mills - donnamills@varndean.co.uk

Rachel Christy - rachelchristy@varndean.co.uk

Ellis

Sandra Knights - sandraknights@varndean.co.uk

Caroline Ball - carolineball@varndean.co.uk

Donna Mills - 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

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)