



Dear Varndean families

Coronavirus update 15th May

Schools opening more widely

The long awaited announcement from the Government about schools reopening came on Sunday evening and was followed by some detailed guidance from the Department for Education. The guidance can be read here: [Opening schools and educational settings to more pupils from 1 June: guidance for parents and carers](#) . You will note that the emphasis on opening more widely in June is very much focused on primary schools. For secondary schools, little has changed and we are expected to remain open for vulnerable groups and the children of key worker children and have been asked to add in some “face to face support” for year 10.

The guidance lacks detail and Headteachers nationally are seeking clarity about exactly what is expected of schools and how we might meet these expectations safely. Safety for students and staff will be paramount in determining what we can do and as much as I crave a return to normal school life this still seems some way off. The offer for year 10 is likely to be highly managed and tailored and will aim to support them in their remote learning. Once we have received further information my team can begin to formulate a plan that we will share with year 10 parents as soon as we can.

Remote learning

These announcements mean that effective remote learning remains our focus for the rest of the school year and in this regard our ongoing partnership with you is critical in making sure that the next 2 months are as purposeful as possible.

Together we have made progress in striking the right balance between wellbeing and learning and this sensible and pragmatic approach should continue to guide us in the coming days and weeks. At the heart of this has been increased communications between students, families and teachers, tutors and school bases. We will continue to reach out but if you have an issue please don't hesitate to make contact as we are finding that many obstacles can be overcome.

Knowing that we will not be back in school until September means that we can start to plan what your children will need to make that transition back into school as smooth as possible and this thinking will influence what we offer in June and July.



Our approach to remote learning has developed considerably in the last 6 weeks and will continue to evolve. Mrs Baker and the teaching and learning team have a number of new initiatives in mind and the weekly newsletter [here](#) will continue to outline these for you.

I continue to marvel at the achievements of our students during lockdown, their energy and creativity do them great credit and it has been a pleasure this week to see some of these (both school and non school related) celebrated in the weekly assemblies. Do please continue to send them in and please pass on my congratulations to your children for their hard work.

Further wellbeing support

We are pleased to be able to offer a parental workshop to support children with anxiety and also a student workshop to help those struggling to find effective sleep routines. More details can be found in our newsletter [here](#).

Year 10 Virtual work experience week

We are very excited about next week's career explorer event for year 10 students. The details are in this week's newsletter and can be found [here](#). The event will provide daily opportunities to engage with employers, colleges and entrepreneurs from a range of sectors and will help students to consider their post 16 choices. College applications are made in the Autumn and so any thinking students can do will serve them well and in addition they can gain accreditation for participating by earning a digital badge. Please encourage your year 10 student to sign up.

Year 8 options

To reassure year 8 students and parents that the options process has been continuing as expected behind the scenes despite school being closed. We now have the preferences from all students and Mr Clarke is now working on constructing the option groups for next year. Confirmation of option allocations will take place at the end of June as expected.

Cashless Payments

We currently use Wisepay to allow you to make cashless payments for school meals and trips. We are changing the provider of this service to Parentpay from the beginning of June. Further details and your individual parent logins will be sent out by email in a couple of weeks time. Hopefully many of you will be familiar with Parentpay as we know lots of the primary schools use this system but there is a full support service for parents should you have any queries or need help when we change to the new system.



Enrichment refunds 2020

Mrs Hill has now made refunds for all the enrichment 2020 trips where possible and these should be in your bank accounts. There are a few parents whose cards have expired since their payments were made and Mrs Farley will be contacting you individually to make refunds. If there are any issues with refunds please contact Lynn Hill lynnhill@varndean.co.uk.

Finally I would like to reiterate how proud the staff team are of what the children have achieved in the last few weeks and how well they have adapted to lockdown and school closure. They have demonstrated a range of qualities and it is these characteristics that will help them manage the next few weeks until we can meet back at school in September.

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

Kind regards

Gareth Hughes
Acting Headteacher

Safeguarding and school base contacts

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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)