



Dear Varndean families

### **Coronavirus update 22nd May**

As we approach the half term holiday I thought it is worth reflecting on how much has changed since the start of the Easter holidays 7 weeks ago.

- There is now a complete suite of google classrooms, including one for each tutor group, which are used to deliver the full extent of the curriculum.
- Interactivity between students and teachers has increased markedly, students are receiving feedback for their off site efforts and webinars have now been introduced to create more “live” opportunities for learning and personal development.
- A virtual pastoral structure has been established to keep children safe, support their emotional wellbeing and keep them connected to their tutor group and school base.
- Through the digital badges scheme and the Varndean Challenge Classroom, for example, a wide range of different opportunities are now on offer to replicate the breadth of school experience.

Working together we have transformed education and I am very proud of what we have achieved and so my message today is one of gratitude.

Firstly I would like to extend my thanks to the students, your children, who have engaged so well with what has been on offer. They have helped us get through this crisis, often made us smile and shown true Varndean characteristics by being kind, creative and resilient. I am very proud of all that they have achieved

I would also like to thank parents and families for all that they have done in the last 2 months. You have worked with us to successfully balance learning and wellbeing, provided invaluable feedback on our approach, supported your child’s off site learning while managing many competing demands and been incredibly generous with your supportive words of encouragement to us. Your contribution has been incredibly helpful and you have made the last few difficult weeks easier than they might otherwise have been. Thank you.

Finally I would like to publicly thank the staff team at Varndean. They have approached the last few weeks with energy and creativity and responded extremely well to the challenge of school closure. Organising remote learning and pastoral care is a hard task and everyone has had to adapt their ways of working, learn new skills and adopt new approaches. I am very grateful to them for all that they have done.

Each week I have said that our off site learning offer will continue to develop and this is still true. As school closure persists I am very aware that there is more that we need to do to minimise its



impact on learning and wellbeing and we have already developed initiatives to respond to this challenge. These continue to be detailed in the weekly [newsletter](#). Please do encourage your children to sign up to the year group assemblies on the first day back to find out more about the term ahead.

With regard to opening more widely after half term I wrote to families of year 10 students yesterday saying that there has been too little information as yet to enable us to develop our plans and that more news would hopefully be available after the half term holiday. I have been asked to share with you a letter from the local authority on this issue and you can read this [here](#).

You will know that Mr Deighan has been unwell for the last two months. I spoke to him last week and am pleased to report that he is making a good recovery and looks forward to being back in work later in the summer. He asked me to pass on his best wishes to you all.

Next week is half term. School will be open to the children of key workers but otherwise closed. Teachers will not be setting any off site learning activities and pastoral teams will not be available. If there is an urgent safeguarding concern please contact a member of the team on 07984 221254.

I hope you and your families are able to enjoy some rest and the promised sunshine over the long weekend and that you all stay healthy.

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**

#### **Angelou**

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

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#### **Russell**

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### **Turing**

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### **Ellis**

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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)