



Dear Varndean families

Coronavirus update 19th June

Wider opening

It has been wonderful to reconnect with our year 10 students on site this week as they came in for their one to one reviews with their form tutor or Deputy Head of School. These meetings have been both enjoyable and vital as we have been able to assess both academic progress and wellbeing issues. Phase 2 begins next week and Year 10 families should have now received the details they need confirming dates, times and venues - if you haven't had this confirmation then please email the school at vickyanstiss@varndean.co.uk .

Alongside this we have seen further increases in the scale of our provision for the children of key workers and those who are vulnerable and this aspect of school is now bursting its capacity. The number of children on site is still a tiny fraction of what it would normally be but it has felt this week like we have taken some baby steps towards normality. We look forward to involving years 7-9 in these developments as soon as we can.

Off site learning

There have been many highlights this week. As well as an increasing range of subject content we have also offered a wonderful live interview with author and illustrator Chris Riddell, a step by step guide to a really effective revision method (Cornell note taking) and in depth tutorials for art GCSE students. These events are enhancing the google classroom work, increasing engagement and are positively received by students. If your child has not yet joined please encourage them to do so. Next week's timetables can be found here:

[Year 7](#)

[Year 8](#)

[Year 9](#)

[Year 10](#)

I am pleased to inform you that we are developing an enrichment offer for the last 2 weeks of the summer term. Much like our normal summer term enrichment activities this week will include sports day, tours of European cities and immersion activities in subjects/topics of interest; although this year these events will necessarily be virtual. We are excited about this programme which will be finalised in the coming days with more detail to follow.

Please can I remind you about the protocols for zoom conferences. More and more tutors are now using this approach and so it is important that all families are aware of some basic safeguarding procedures - these can be read here [click here to view](#) and we encourage you to review these with your child if they have an upcoming event.



To what extent schools reopen in September has been the subject of lots of speculation this week. The media debate, coloured by politics as it is, doesn't get us very far and my view is we should plan to be open fully and adapt from there as the situation demands. With this in mind your children's engagement in learning for these last few weeks of term is vitally important as it will help support their successful transition back into school in September. I continue to urge them to engage as much as is possible whilst school is closed. We stand ready to work in partnership with you on this aim and so please get in touch with the relevant staff so that we can work through any obstacles.

Varndean: from 4 schools to 5.

The 4 small schools model has been at the heart of Varndean's approach to excellent pastoral care and academic success for a number of years now and Ofsted, Challenge Partners and parents have all recognised the impact it has had. Our ambition has always been to grow this model as the school grows in size and so I am delighted to announce that in September we will be opening a 5th small school.

The school will be named Lennox, after Annie Lennox who is an inspiration as a result of her activism and charitable work. Ms Lennox wrote to us about her commitment to excellent education for all and explained that she is thrilled to give her name to this initiative. Mrs Baker has been appointed as Head of School and Lennox will open to year 7 only in September 2020 growing organically from there so that in 5 years time we have 5 equally sized schools of approximately 300 students each.

We are very excited about this development, not least as it comes at a time when pastoral care and well being support for our students will play a bigger part in their success at school than ever. We are currently working on the logistics and will have more details for you in future weeks.

Staffing

We are pleased to inform you that Mrs Fairbank returns from maternity leave next week. She will resume her role as Head of Ellis school as well as taking on other whole school responsibilities and teaching geography. She and I are grateful to Ms Knights who has done an amazing job steering Ellis school through the ups and downs of this academic year.

ParentPay

Activation codes for the new ParentPay accounts were emailed out to families at the beginning of the week and it's lovely to see that many of you have set up your new account. We are aware



of some 'teething problems' with sibling linked accounts and we are working through these issues with ParentPay. The balances from Wisepay have been transferred to the school till system for all students and we have also added an 'overdraft' facility to all student cards. If your child is due in school from next week, please ensure that they have their cards with them as they will be able to buy food at break. Please contact lynnhill@varndean.co.uk if you have any questions around ParentPay.

Term dates 2021/22

The Local Authority consultation on term dates for the academic year 2021/22 closes on Monday 22nd. You can see the proposal [here](#) and if you would like to express a view please do via email to governor.support@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Year 11

Local 6th form colleges made commitments earlier in the school closure period to provide "bridging" work for year 11 students from June half term onwards. Most colleges have information on their websites and so if your child is in year 11 please make sure they have looked for these details and are aware of the opportunities available to them.

I hope you and your family have a restful weekend.

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

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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)