

Dear Varndean families

Coronavirus update 18th September

Our second full week has successfully concluded and while many new routines are now established please can I ask you to reiterate the following messages to your children over the weekend:

- Please remember to arrive at the appropriate time and enter and leave the school grounds by the correct gate (Year 10 and 11 the Ditchling gate, Year 7 - 9 Balfour gate)
- Please remember to socially distance (one metre plus when outside) yourself on your way to and from school and at breaks and lunchtimes
- Please do not wait for friends or siblings at the gate at the end of the day because it creates overcrowding near the gates and makes social distancing very difficult
- Please remember there can be no physical contact with other members of the community
- Please remember your face covering each day
- Please remember good hand hygiene and sanitise or wash hands thoroughly at each opportunity during the day
- Please remember to follow the one way system at all times
- Please make sure you have your own equipment each day

We have good compliance with our systems currently and it is vital that this is maintained and poor habits don't creep in if we are to keep the risk of transmission low and so reduce the chance of an enforced closure to bubble or year group. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

A key part of keeping the community safe from transmission is making sure that anyone with COVID symptoms, or who is living in a household where another person has symptoms, or has had a positive test result **does not** attend school. The delays in the testing system have created frustrations for families and I am sympathetic but must ask that all families comply with this rule and don't send their child into school following a period of isolation until they have spoken to school base or the attendance office. Parents may be interested to know that absence due to COVID isolation does not count in attendance figures.

As yet there has not been a confirmed case within the school community. If this does happen then we will work with the Local Authority and public health team to establish the action we need to take as a result. If we need to close the school to a class, a bubble or a year group then we will write to those families affected to explain the specifics and will write to all families to update them regarding the situation.

helpful for us to know which students we cannot send home without needing explicit consent from parents to do so. We will share a short form with you on Monday so we can capture this information from you.

As we explained in the last newsletter live documents linking you in to the work to be completed during a period of isolation or partial closure have been shared and it is our intention to make sure no learning time is lost even if some students can't attend school. These documents have been linked in again here for ease of reference:

[Y7 Prep/Off site learning plan 2020/21](#)

[Y8 Prep/Off site learning plan 2020/21](#)

[Y9 Prep/Off site learning plan 2020/21](#)

[Y10 Prep/Off site learning plan 2020/21](#)

[Y11 Prep/Off site learning plan 2020/21](#)

Parent pay

There is currently an overdraft facility on all ParentPay accounts. This will be withdrawn from Monday 28th September. All balances must be cleared by Thursday 1st October.

If you have any queries or still need a ParentPay login for your student please email food@varndean.co.uk

We no longer take cash in any format but can issue a pay point card if internet access is problematic. Please email on the address above if this would be useful.

We are currently experiencing issues with transactions syncing to ParentPay and we are aiming to get this resolved as soon as possible.

Bus travel to school

I am pleased to note that I have agreed with Brighton and Hove buses that they will provide a student only bus each school day afternoon leaving at 3.10 or sooner if it is full. This bus will follow route 26 and will leave from the stop opposite Balfour Road. Students using this bus must still wear face coverings and should sit next to someone from within their year group where possible.

Water fountains

Students needing to refill their water bottle can do so safely in the canteen at lunchtime.

Making the Grade evenings

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recently and the feedback has been really positive. Please remember the slides (and webinar recordings) from these events are available on our website:

<https://www.varndean.co.uk/makingthegrade>

Open evening 24th September 2020

COVID restrictions and especially the rule of six make open evening in its normal guise impossible this year. We have therefore organised a virtual event for parents of children in Year 6 next Thursday between 5.30 and 8pm and details can be found on our website:

<https://www.varndean.co.uk/voe>

In class assessments

Many teachers have been assessing students in lessons recently. In one or two cases these have created some anxiety for students and if you have experienced this then please be reassured that these are low stakes tests designed purely to help us plan to support students as fully as possible. More detail on our approach has been / will be covered in the Making the Grade webinars.

Finally....

It has been a successful start to the year but one that has required a lot of intervention from home and school and I am grateful to you for the efforts that you have made to ensure your children have returned with such a positive outlook. We will continue to review our approach and may need to make some adaptations as September draws to a close and we prepare for some worsening weather and I will update you on these as and when they become necessary.

I hope you and your families 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

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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) - vickyanstiss@varndean.co.uk

Kerry Tester - (Safeguarding Officer) - kerrytester@varndean.co.uk

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)