

Dear Varndean families

Coronavirus update 11th December

This week the DfE announced that schools must be involved in contact tracing positive COVID cases for 6 days after the end of term and to this end could close on the 18th December for an INSET day to avoid this tracing period extending to include Christmas Eve.

An INSET day at this time does not fit with the plans we have for staff training this year. However we do agree with the DfE that being closed on the 18th will be helpful in reducing the risk of transmission by one day and ensuring no-one has to receive a call on Christmas Eve about needing to self isolate..

We have therefore decided that learning on Friday 18th December will be carried out at home and not at school. This one day of home learning will take place via the google classroom and we will provide more details of what is expected of your child as these plans are finalised early next week. Students will also watch the end of term celebration of achievement assemblies and join in the recognition for the huge amount of excellent work that has taken place in the last four months

I appreciate that this change to our plans has come at short notice and I apologise in advance for any inconvenience that this may cause to you and your family. I hope you will understand that this decision is made to try and ensure that the whole community can enjoy the much needed holiday free from the virus or the need to self isolate.

There are additional steps we can take next week to further reduce the risk of a case in school and the need for self isolation of others over the holiday. In no particular order these are:

- Be extra vigilant about keeping children off school next week if there are any signs of the three COVID symptoms (a new continuous cough, a high temperature, the loss of taste or smell) or if any of the family have these symptoms and may need to get a test or if anyone in the household has been asked to self isolate by NHS test and trace
- Ensure your child has a face mask for school (unless they are exempt) and wears it safely as per our guidance
- Ensure your child respects social distancing at break and lunchtime and on the way to and from school.
- Ensure your child sticks to the other school protective measures whilst in school - regular hand washing and sanitising, follows the one way system and sticks to their year group area at break times.

Thank you in advance for your support in reinforcing these messages with your children.

We will provide more detail next week about what to do if your child develops symptoms and tests positive within six days of the end of the end of term once we have finalised the mechanisms we will use.

Free School Meals

We are pleased to confirm that the FSM voucher scheme will be in place over the Christmas period and details of how this will operate will be shared with families on Monday.

It has been a demanding term for staff and students alike and there has been so much to adapt to. The students have been incredible, they have been resilient, focused on learning and adaptable. They have made the last few months much easier than they might otherwise have been. Please let them know how proud of them we are.

I would like to also express my gratitude to all families for their continued support for what we do. Our partnership is critical to the success of the school and your children. Thank you.

Finally, experience tells us that Christmas is not always an easy time for all families. With this in mind please see this link [Schools Wellbeing Service Consultation Line - Christmas.pdf](#) to the support offered by wellbeing services over the holiday period.

Wishing you all a peaceful and restful holiday.

Warm regards



William Deighan
Headteacher

Offsite Learning Documents

For **Year 7** click [here](#)

For **Year 8** click [here](#)

For **Year 9** click [here](#)

For **Year 10** click [here](#)

For **Year 11** click [here](#)

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) - 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



VARNDEAN
SCHOOL

CHALLENGE AND PRIDE

Phone: 01273 290400 9am to 5pm Monday to Thursday, 9am to 4.30pm on Fridays
Out-of-hours: 01273 335905 (Emergency Duty Service)