

Dear Varndean families

Coronavirus update 14th May

In the light of the Government's announcement on Monday confirming that the country will move to stage 3 of the road map out of COVID restrictions next week and that the guidance on face coverings in school has been updated as a result, I am writing to inform you of Varndean's response to these changes.

As you will know we have proceeded with caution throughout the pandemic, kept the safety of students, families and our staff firmly in mind while trying to create a sense of school as normal as far as we have been able to. These principles will continue to guide our decision making as we plan to reintroduce more normal school routines and expectations.

The background to the plans outlined here is that case rates in both school and the community are very low, asymptomatic testing is an established practice in the school community and the DfE has updated its guidance removing some (but importantly not all) of the restrictions upon us.

With this in mind as of Monday 17th May face coverings **will not be required in lessons** however please note that they **will still need to be worn** in communal areas (e.g corridors and the canteen) of the school. In line with DfE guidance at Varndean, face coverings are still needed in communal areas because there is year group mixing in communal areas.

We recognise that many students will still want to wear face coverings in classrooms too. This is perfectly acceptable, and indeed encouraged, but it is not a requirement.

It is important to note that this is the only change we are making at the moment and all of the other measures in our risk assessment will remain in place for the time being.

We do have plans to re-introduce our normal routines after half term but will do this in a staged way making sure the changes are justified by local data, which we regularly monitor. For example reopening PE changing rooms so uniform can be worn every day, returning all tutor time slots to the start of the day for all year groups to ensure a smoother start to the day and expanding our assembly and after school extra-curricular programme to contribute to the



positive ethos are all in the pipeline for after half term and we will share further details on these nearer the time.

Kind regards

Shelley Baker  
Headteacher

