

Spring Term Newsletter April 22

Dear Parent(s)/Carer(s)

I hope that this newsletter finds you and your loved ones well. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support during what has been a disrupted term due to staff sickness. Please accept my sincere apologies for this. Whilst I am wary of tempting fate, our covid rates are continuing to decline so we are hopeful that we are past the very worst of the disruption. There are many of you who ask for our covid rates; we have had 515 confirmed cases in our student body since Christmas, 234 of those since the start of this half term and 76 in the staff body since Christmas with 35 this half term. Sending our well wishes to those still affected or isolating across our community.

The isolation rules have now changed and the government is recommending that under 18's isolate for 3 days if they are positive and return to college after 3 days if they feel well enough to return. Over 18's should isolate for 5 days and return if they feel well enough to after 5 days. Young people who are unwell and have a high temperature should stay at home and avoid contact with other people, where they can. They can go back to school, college or childcare and resume normal activities when they no longer have a high temperature and they are well enough to attend. There is no need for a negative Lateral Flow Test. Please see this [link](#) should you require further information.

This year's Spring Update is linked, I highly recommend it as a joyful and cheering read; it offers a glimpse of some of the many activities which enrich students' experience here at College and the ways in which staff make learning fun and relevant. [Varndean Update](#)

Please see [Dates for Your Diary](#) for your reference.

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Exam and Assessment Updates for IB, Vocational, A level and GCSE

Many of you will be supporting at home, preparing for a very busy examination period for Year 2's and for our GCSE students. We are aware that this is the first time for many students that they will be sitting a public examination so we are building in support and guidance where we can.

The examinations run over a longer period this academic year so that, in theory, students are able to sit at least one paper should they be symptomatic or Covid positive.

We are continuing to collaborate with Andrew Wright from Action Your Potential who has designed a fantastic series of Study Support seminars that are focused on building good study habits and looking after your well-being at the same time. This information has gone out to students via the tutorial programme. There is some further information [here](#). Andrew will also be running some in-person seminars at College on 'Getting Ready for Exams' on Tuesday 3rd May and Thursday 5th May at 10am, 11am and 12pm. Students should speak to their personal tutor if they would like to sign up.

Our learning coaches are working intensively to support students and if you would like to contact them directly their email address is: learningcoach@varndean.ac.uk

Exam Dates

Our IB students begin their exams very soon after the Easter break from the 28th April until 20th May. Some BTEC Assessments are also running from the first week back from Easter; GCSE exams begin from 17th May continuing to 17th June and A Level exams begin from 16th May until the final exam on 27th June.

For Year 2 A Level students, lessons run up until 13th May but there will be a revision week in class from Monday 16th May until Friday 20th May. Departments will confirm the details of these revision sessions and students will be expected to attend them. A level students will be on exam leave from 23rd May. Vocational lessons will continue in most cases and teachers will be supporting students in their final coursework submissions.

Pre-Advanced Students

GCSE lessons and Level 2 vocational courses will continue to run until Friday 27th May and students will be expected to attend all timetabled lessons up until their exam date. After May half term students will be on exam leave for any further examinations although vocational courses may continue in order to support final coursework submissions.



Year One Students

For advanced notice, this year's End of Year Practice Examinations begin from the 22nd June through to Friday 1st July. ([full detail can be found here](#)). **Term ends for all Year 1 students on Friday the 12th of July.**

Higher Education Day at Sussex University - Monday 27th June

We are delighted that Sussex University are hosting our Year 1 students for a day on higher education. It's an absolutely wonderful event and is only offered to our students.

In the morning, talks will include choosing courses, student finance, writing personal statements and there will be a tour of the campus to give students an insight into what it would be like to go to university. In the afternoon there will be subject talks already chosen by the students. We expect all Year 1 students to attend.

Contacting the College

It is my experience that many of the queries that parents have are addressed via the parent portal. However, if there are any unresolved queries, please do not hesitate to contact me at parents@varndean.ac.uk. It is possible to contact teachers, via email, directly from your child/ward's timetable on the Parent Portal and our teachers will do their best to get back to you as soon as their workloads allow.

Finally, I hope you and your families have a wonderful, healthy and happy Easter break.

With very best wishes,

Donna-Marie Janson

