



Varndean
College Brighton & Hove

UPDATE



SPRING 2020

**VARNDEAN'S
NEW £2.9M
STEM CENTRE -
OPENING SOON!**



BEAT THE BLUES

To 'Beat the January Blues' our lovely Student Union organised a lunchtime of fun and games on 23 January, together with free food and drink. A great time was had by all.



THIS GIRL CAN

Varndean students Gemma Rosam, Ella James, Niamh Hastings, Kayla Sansom have all become ambassadors for 'This Girl Can' and have attended a training day in Southampton where where they attended workshops in a variety of subjects, including; 'Breaking down the barriers for participation' and coming up with strategies to get more women and girls participating in sport and physical activity. Congratulations girls and look out for female only workout sessions in our College gym, as well as dance and gymnastics workshops.



EDUCATION AND BASS DAY

Three leading music producers from Education and Bass visited A Level Music Technology students last term to give masterclasses on remixing. Raff (Nurve), George (Guzi) and Andrew (Nomine aka Outrage), first went through a workshop on 'What is Remixing', which founder member Andrew believes is one of the best ways to get students learning about Music Production by learning other producers' techniques through listening and manipulating their audio material. After group discussions, students consolidated what had been learnt by coming together with the best techniques, followed by filling all of the techniques out with every technique they could think of. Guzi then took students through his remix of a track using Ableton Live 10. A wide variety of techniques were covered.

The enthusiasm for Music Production was extremely evident, with Andrew and Raff offering their wealth of professional insights and their historical knowledge of trailblazing artists, such as The Prodigy, Spyro and Noisia. Their wealth of tips provided great inspiration and the College is delighted to say we have joined up with Education and Bass and find their input enormously beneficial to teaching A level Music Technology. We hope to see them again here soon, but will be encouraging all students to enter their remix competitions, and use their pool of tutorials to better our production techniques here at the College.

MUSIC TECHNOLOGY STUDENTS GET TO TRY OUT LATEST SOUND RECORDING EQUIPMENT

Back in November, our A Level Music Technology students also had the opportunity to spend a day at the University of Sussex recording music using their new studio and latest equipment.



VARNDEAN COLLEGE FOOTBALL TEAM HEADING FOR SUCCESS AGAIN!

Varndean College's 1st XI football team are currently second in the Sussex Schools U19s FA League and are on target once again to reach the league cup final scheduled to take place at Lancing's Culver Road football ground later in April.

Hopefully, this achievement will result in a repeat of the College's

2018 success when Varndean were the outright winners of the Sussex Schools FA League trophy.

Congratulations also go to Reggie Ward and Tegan Freeman who have been selected to represent Sussex playing in the Sussex Schools FA U18 Representative Squad.



THIRD TIME LUCKY FOR JUSTIN

Congratulations go to second year student Justin Nye, who after overcoming lots of adversity in his personal life, is thrilled after three retakes to have finally passed his GCSE Maths exam! Justin, who came to Varndean from Longhill School on a Level 2 programme in 2018, could never quite secure the Grade 4 he needed in Maths, despite achieving a Grade 5 in his GCSE English, Grade 4 in Biology and a Grade B in his HPO project. Justin is now delighted to have said goodbye to any further Maths exams and is looking forward to focusing on his two Level 3 courses, BTEC Business Studies and Applied Law, which he started in September. Next year, he hopes to be able to add BTEC Applied Biology.

Justin (aged 18), who comes from a family with six older siblings, says that after college he wants to go into criminology or forensics and hopes to follow a foundation degree. He has already been on several trips to law courts, is a regular attendee at the College Politics Society, and came second in the College's 10k run back in the summer. Outside of college Justin is a very keen sportsman; having obtained a Black Belt in SAMA karate, as well as participating in boxing, kickboxing and running.

Well done Justin, you are a shining example of resilience and hard work paying off.

CONGRATULATIONS...

Congratulations go to former IB student, Monica Richards, who has been awarded a place on the International Relations Career Challenge in July 2020 organised by the UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) in which she is only 1 of 20 students worldwide to be selected.

To gain this outstanding achievement, Monica had to partake in three gruelling competition rounds (a CV, 2 essays and a Skype interview with the Founder and Managing Director of YPUN), in which she managed to beat Masters and PhD students! Monica is currently studying PPE at King's College, London having come to Varndean from Blatchington Mill to study the International Baccalaureate from 2017-19.





PHYSICS & MATHS STUDENTS' VISIT TO CERN IN GENEVA

A mixture of 35 A Level and IB Physics and Maths students, plus 3 members of staff, had the opportunity to visit the Large Hadron Collider at CERN (European Organization for Nuclear Research), Geneva in October 2019. Not only did the students have the opportunity to acquire new knowledge about particle physics delivered by experts in the field, but they also visited the Red Cross Museum, the UN building, had a cheese fondue evening in a traditional Swiss restaurant, as well as a sightseeing boat trip on Lake Geneva.



STUDENT SUCCESS IN UK MATHS CHALLENGE

Throughout the winter students have been sitting individual and team maths challenges, organised by the UK Maths Trust. Thirty-one students entered the UK Senior Maths Challenge and we achieved 4 Gold, 7 Silver and 8 Bronze awards. One student achieved a Merit on the Kangaroo competition and one student qualified for the British Maths Olympiad where she obtained a Certificate and got 100% on two of the questions. Four students also travelled to Bexhill to enter the Senior Team Maths Challenge. We were narrowly beaten by Bedes in a very tight competition, however the students were very proud of their Silver certificates.

VARNDEAN COLLEGE INSTALLS 180 SOLAR PANELS

Varndean College has partnered with Brighton & Hove Energy Services Cooperative (BHESCO) and installed 180 solar panels. The rooftop solar array, which was installed by local supplier EcoSphere over the 2019 summer holidays, will generate 51,660 kilowatt hours of electricity annually, which is estimated to save the college up to £4,500 each year.

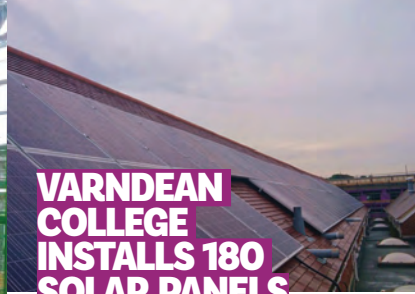
In addition to financial savings, the project will significantly reduce the College's environmental footprint. Over a 20 year lifetime, the solar panels will reduce carbon emissions by 271 tonnes - that's the same as planting 4,481 trees!

The cost of the project is met by a community share offer. Brighton residents are invited to invest in the project in return for a 5% annual interest payment. Information is available at <https://www.ethex.org.uk/BHESCO2019>.

VARNDEAN WIN 'CYCLE SEPTEMBER' CHALLENGE

Members of Varndean College staff once again took part in the 'Cycle September' competition and after having come 2nd in 2017 and 3rd in 2018 were proud and delighted to win 1st place in 2019!

A team of 22 cyclists took part in the 200-499 staff members category, clocking up 1,792 miles between them and gaining a winning total of 3,262 points. Well done everyone.



NEW £2.9M STEM CENTRE OPENING SOON!

April will see the much-awaited opening of Vardean College's new £2.9m STEM Centre. The newly constructed two-storey building, housing 4 science labs, 6 teaching rooms, prep rooms, as well as a fabulous main foyer and atrium, will be opened on Friday 24 April by well-known professor and scientist, Lord Robert Winston, and will be the new home for all science and maths courses from September.

Through its teaching of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) courses, Vardean trains and encourages students to move on to higher level STEM courses and hopefully into STEM careers. STEM subjects are the foundations of the industrial and corporate world and students who study these will gain a diverse and

comprehensive skill set, sought after by a wide range of employers.

Vardean College offers A Level courses in Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Maths and Computer Science; and new from September, a Level 3 Diploma in Engineering. Alongside their courses, specialist support is given to those students applying to Oxford and Cambridge Universities, as well as Med/Vet/Dent for those wishing to move into careers in medical sciences. The College enters students into the RSC's annual Chemistry Olympiad

and Analytical Competition, the Cambridge Chemistry Challenge, as well as the British Science Association's STEM Crest Awards. Vardean also has strong working relationships with the two local universities (including the Brighton & Sussex Medical School) and each year organises an annual Chemistry Conference at the University of Brighton. Last year, science student Anya-Niamh Tidey, was the recipient of Uptree's 'UK Young Scientist of the Year' award. Maths students compete in the annual UKMT Senior Maths Challenge, British Mathematical Olympiad and the Senior Kangaroo.

Just before Christmas, management were invited to take a tour of the new STEM building and were excited to see the new facilities which will be available to students from this summer. Head of Science & Maths, Alison Frost said: "It was wonderful to see the progress inside the STEM Centre and the Science and Maths Departments are very much looking forward to working in this new building and delivering our aspirational teaching in this new exciting environment."



BIOLOGY STUDENTS UP FOR GOLD CREST AWARDS

We are delighted that four of our Year 2 A Level Biology students have been entered into this year's Gold CREST Awards. CREST is a national scheme which helps inspire young people to think and behave like scientists and engineers. With six competition levels available, the scheme helps children and young people become independent and reflective learners through an enquiry-based project. In the 16+ age category, taking a minimum of 70 hours, students must complete a project which makes an original contribution to a STEM field of study, whilst working with an external mentor from their chosen STEM field category.

Varndean students, Sophie Baker, Ella Newmarch, Keni Patel and Sonja Raju are all being mentored by specialists from the University of Sussex and hope to go on to study in the field of biochemistry, medicine or biology in the future.

Sophie (ex King's Academy in Ringmer) studying Biology, Chemistry & Maths, mentored by Dr Edward Wright, Senior Lecturer in Microbiology, has received offers to study Biochemistry at UCL, King's College London, University of Sussex and University of Southampton.

Ella (ex Varndean School) studying Biology, Psychology, Modern History & Graphic Design, mentored by Prof Paul Graham, Professor of Neuroethology, has received offers to study Biology at University of Sheffield, Bristol, Nottingham, East Anglia and waiting to hear from Leeds.

Keni (ex Varndean School) studying Biology, Chemistry & Maths, mentored by Dr Jon Baxter, Reader (Genome Damage and Stability), has received an offer to study Biomedical Science at the University of Brighton and invited for interview at BSMS.

Sonja (ex Seaford Head) studying Biology, Chemistry & Psychology also mentored by Dr Jon Baxter, currently waiting to hear from Leeds, Southampton and Nottingham.

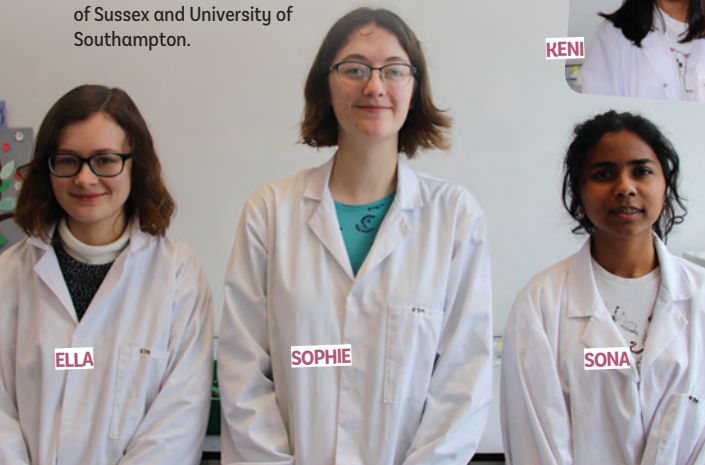
CREST Gold awards can be used by students to enhance their UCAS personal statements and are recognised and respected by universities and employers.



LAURA WALLACE REACHES FINAL OF UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD COMPETITION

IB student, Laura Wallace (ex Cardinal Newman) has reached the final of the University of Oxford's Practical Ethics and Responsibility Competition. Run by the Oxford Uehiro Centre for Practical Ethics, the competition is open to teams aged between 16-18 who must submit a video about an ethical problem and how they think responsibility is involved. The best entries are invited to Oxford in March, where they will spend a day taking part in debates, discussing ethics with university researchers, as well as gaining a taste of university life. There is also a cash prize for the overall winner!

Laura found out about the competition via BrightMed, a widening participation scheme run by Brighton and Sussex Medical School, as well as through Varndean's Med/Vet/Dent group run by Chemistry tutor, John Luton, in which she attended an introductory session on ethics. Along with two teammates, Laura produced a powerful video titled 'Clinical Responsibility & Prearranged Euthanasia' based on the controversies of euthanasia and learned in January that their entry had reached the final. She is now looking forward to visiting Oxford where she will be debating firstly on whether it is a Governmental responsibility to place tax on sugary drinks and whether alcoholics deserve liver transplants.



ELLA

SOPHIE

SONJA



KENI

CHEMISTRY NEWS

STUDENTS ATTEND TALK BY TOP VASCULAR/TRAUMA SURGEON ON 'CUTTING OUT YOUTH VIOLENCE'

Year 1 A Level Chemistry and IB students visited the Brighton and Sussex Medical School in November to listen to a talk on 'Cutting out Youth Violence' by London consultant vascular/trauma surgeon, Mr Martin Griffiths. Mr Griffiths, who works at the Royal London Hospital has spent years touring schools to educate young people about the reality of knife crime and teaches undergraduate medical students at Barts and Brighton University, as well as teaching on postgraduate courses at the Royal College of Surgeons. Varndean student Fечи Kamalu said: "Mr Griffiths brought a current, real world issue into an

educational, engaging lecture that easily led one to understand how working in a hospital can be more than trying to 'save and discharge'. Instead, he emphasised the idea of listening and keeping in communication with patients to prevent those vulnerable to falling into a destructive cycle and be re-admitted. He left us all inspired and more aware of how important a community is to those we might not consciously think about."

Pictured L to R are: Nadeen Alay, Fечи Kamalu, Madeleine Ruben, Mr Martin Griffiths, Laura Wallace, James Doyle, Miaya Harman



COMPETITION TIME AGAIN...

A strong team of A Level Chemistry students have been entered into the Royal Society of Chemistry's annual Chemistry Olympiad again this year. The first round of the competition requires students to sit an extremely demanding exam, in which 25-30 students throughout the UK are shortlisted to progress to round two, a residential weekend hosted by the University of Cambridge. Last year we finished with 2 Bronze, 5 Silver and 2 Gold awards.

Chemistry students are also due to compete again in the RSC's Annual Analyst Competition. The competition is an opportunity for students in Year 12 or equivalent to use analytical equipment not usually available in schools and colleges, gain additional practical experience and apply their knowledge of chemistry to solve problems. Varndean College has reached the final in two out of the last five years.

FORMER STUDENT TO TALK ABOUT HIS CAREER AS A DENTIST

Our aspiring medical students will be treated to a talk by former student David Cobbett later this month. David, who left Varndean in 2014 after studying the International Baccalaureate, went on to study Dentistry at the University of Newcastle for five years. In 2019 he was named as the UK's top undergraduate dentist for clinical skills after winning The Royal College of Surgeons and Dentsply Sirona skills competition and is now completing his foundation year at a local dentist practice. This year he will be attending a dentistry conference in Chicago and applying for a hospital post in maxillofacial surgery.





ART STUDENTS INSPIRED BY BRITISH SCULPTOR

In October, A Level Art students attended a special evening at London's Royal Academy where they viewed the exhibition of widely acclaimed British sculptor Antony Gormley, as well as attending workshops with the man himself! The visit provided them with a truly unforgettable experience which has helped add inspiration to their art coursework.

PHOTOGRAPHY TRIP TO SEE TIM WALKER EXHIBITION

A Level Photography students spent an inspiring day at London's Victoria & Albert Museum in December. The trip was to view 'Wonderful Things', the latest exhibition by British fashion photographer Tim Walker where they experienced the extraordinary creative process of one of the world's most inventive photographers. The exhibition, which consisted of ten major new photographic projects,

was directly influenced by treasures in the V&A's vast collection and which sat centre stage in a series of immersive, fantastical worlds.





HUMANITIES STUDENTS US BOUND

October half term was a busy one for 38 Politics, History, Geography and Economics students as they and their teachers spent five days in New York and Washington DC, exploring the sights and learning more about their subject areas.

Our first full day in New York was a walking tour of Harlem. Here the history and politics of the civil rights movement along with the gentrification of this unique urban area were explored, before making our way to the United Nations for a look at politics on a global scale. Free time followed with plenty of time for exploring Midtown Manhattan.

The next day we travelled from New Jersey to Lower Manhattan, where we started with a moving visit to the World Trade Centre Memorial, before going on a tour of key landmarks; Wall Street, the docks and to Federal Hall where the first Congress sat and George Washington was sworn in as the first US President. After lunch we took the ferry to Liberty Island before travelling to Ellis Island to explore the history of immigration.

Sunday brought a long coach drive to Washington DC for the second part of our trip, but allowed us to stop off in Philadelphia to visit Independence Hall where the

Declaration of Independence and US Constitution was debated and signed. Arriving in DC late afternoon, we took the metro to the Mall and explored many of the memorials by moonlight.

The next day, the Geographers and Economists visited the World Bank to explore the theme of globalization, while the rest went on a tour of Congress. In the afternoon we met up to visit the African American Museum of History and Culture. It was extremely moving to journey with African Americans through time from the first slaves to the election of Barack Obama and beyond. There was then an opportunity to visit another museum before meeting for dinner at Union Station for our final evening. The following day, before leaving for our long trip home, we managed to pack in a bus tour of Arlington Cemetery and a visit to the Lincoln Memorial.

Head of Humanities, Avril Mackenzie-Parr, reflected, "This was an amazing opportunity for students to explore the history, politics and culture of the US. We packed a lot into a very short time, but students and staff had a great time and we look forward to organising similar trips in the future." Future trips are planned to both to the US and also nearer to home in Edinburgh.



ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY STUDENTS LEARN HOW BRIGHTON IS TO BECOME MORE SUSTAINABLE

Environmental Sustainability students were given a talk by Jamie Lloyd of Brighton & Hove City Council in January. Organised by student, Christian Brodrick, Jamie spoke to students about Brighton's Local Action Plans and what the Council is doing to help Brighton be more sustainable. Plans such as: making buildings more energy efficient, delivery energy with renewable technologies, reducing waste, recycling, encouraging low carbon modes of transport, using sustainable products, using water more efficiently, tackling local flooding, as well as protecting local wildlife, Jamie said: "I think you have a great group of students. I was very impressed at the amount and quality of questions that I was asked. I look forward to coming into college again in the future."

Jamie is pictured (centre) with Janice, Varndean College tutor and student Christian Brodrick



COMPUTER SCIENCE STUDENTS GAIN INSIGHT INTO WORKING FOR AMERICAN EXPRESS

Twelve A Level Computer Science students and their tutor enjoyed a tour of the new American Express office building in January. With a huge, bright and airy atrium over three storeys high and lots of open space, the students were at first surprised at just how quiet the building was. However, they later found out that white-noise is played to cancel out sounds and help people concentrate!

Each student was allocated an American Express apprentice to shadow, some of whom were ex-Vardean

Computer Science students. The apprentices each work in separate teams and were able to demonstrate the variety of projects which they are involved in, some of which included App development, Cyber security, Databases, Customer loyalty schemes. Students were then able to ask questions about what it is like to work for a large company and found out about the application process. They liked that there were options to continue studying towards a degree whilst still working and being paid.

VARNDEAN EARLY YEARS AND CHILDCARE STUDENT MAKES HUGE IMPRESSION AT WORK

Early Years and Childcare student, Chenise Beynon, is currently in her first year studying the full-time Level 3 Diploma in Childcare and Education. As part of this Diploma, students must spend 750 hours at a work placement, such as a nursery, primary school or special needs school.

Chenise Beynon, has made such an impact during her placement at Hungry Minds that the manager has written to the College to pass on her praise.

"I wanted to drop you a line to let you know just how well Chenise is doing at Hungry Minds Childcare. From day one she has been extremely professional. Her time keeping is perfect, she is wonderful with the children, and she is endlessly hardworking. Chenise is very popular

with all our staff members and will make the most wonderful Early Years Professional. She is a real ambassador for Vardean College and herself. We are so impressed with Chenise's work that we are hoping to employ her when she qualifies (if that is what she wants!). Thank you for sending her to us, she is a huge asset to our Hungry Minds family."

Well done Chenise, we are very proud of you.



DAISY FIRST AID

Our first year Early Years students and staff successfully completed the 12 hour, blended learning paediatric first aid course last term (6 hours online and 6 in the classroom). The course was brilliantly run by Sarah Russell-Davis of 'Daisy First Aid' and equipped students to know how to deal with accidents and emergencies involving young babies, children and adults.





LIFE BEHIND BARS - FROM OFFENCE TO FREEDOM

A group of released prisoners visited Varndean Psychology students in January to share their experiences of life in prison. Presented by the organisation 'Behind Bars', the convicts were from a range of social backgrounds and had served sentences of between 4-20 years for crimes which ranged from fraud to murder. They spoke explicitly about their individual experiences of prison life, the crime they had committed and the psychological effects of labelling. To demonstrate this, four students were given the opportunity to experience what it was like to wear prison clothing.

A student at the conference said: "this conference has made me value the educational opportunities which I have had at Varndean College and it has forced me to address my own prejudices."

Jas Badesha, tutor for Psychology said, "this conference has been a means for our students to broaden their knowledge of criminal psychology and test whether the theory matches reality."

The conference also marked the launch of Varndean College's new Criminology Diploma course beginning in September.

PSYCHOLOGY STUDENTS GET OUT AND ABOUT

Last term, Psychology staff and students attended the Museum of the Mind at Bethlem Royal Hospital. 'Bedlam' was one of the world's oldest hospitals dedicated to the treatment of mental ill health. Students learned about the hospital's history and approaches to treatment. They visited the museum's gallery and took part in a workshop where they analysed the paintings of a former patient.

Psychology students also attended the Post-16 Animal Behaviour Conference at Marwell Zoo in

Hampshire, where they learned about classical and operant conditioning and how it's used with positive effects. They conducted their own observational study using time sampling with two animals of their choice and delivered a short presentation of their findings.



FILM STUDIES VISIT TO THE DEPOT CINEMA: STUDY DAY ON DOCUMENTARY

A level Film Studies students enjoyed a highly informative and thought-provoking workshop day on one of their key units 'Documentary' at the Depot Cinema in January. Led by Dr Jenny Stewart, students experienced a variety of activities, lecture presentations and a screening of 'Sisters in Law', followed by a Q & A.

Lisa Wardle, Varndean's programme leader for Film Studies and also Education Officer at the Depot, has organised a series of Film Studies days for sixth formers that our students have keenly attended. Jenny Stewart asked students to explore their definitions of documentary and to consider how the actuality genre is now so diverse, creative and entertaining as fiction. Truly, this was another enjoyable, rich and stimulating day.

A number of Film Studies students have also entered The Depot's filmmaking competition, 'Love Food, Waste Not, Want Not' in which they must create a film about the problem of food wastage. Three selected filmmakers will then receive the opportunity of free expert tuition and the chance of winning £200! The winners will be announced in May.



DESIGN A COLLEGE CHRISTMAS CARD

Year 1 International student, Jiahui Yang (Yura) from China, was the 2019 winner of Vardean's annual design a Christmas card competition. Yura was presented with her prize of a £50 Amazon voucher back in December by College Vice Principal, Donna-Marie Janson. Yura, aged 17, who is studying A Levels in Graphic Design, Media Studies and Maths can be seen here collecting her prize, along with her winning design.

FESTIVE EVENING WITH THE BRIGHTON MALE VOICE CHOIR



Vardean College's Adult Education 'Singing Together' group, who meet every week at St Patrick's Church in Woodingdean, held their annual Christmas concert back in December. This year was very special however, as they were honoured to be joined by the Brighton Male Voice Choir, who sang a number of Christmas carols followed by a delightful and rousing

performance of Auld Lang Syne. From beginners to more experienced singers, the group meet every Monday evening for a relaxed and fun evening of community singing, from tailored vocal exercises through to a wide variety of songs from different genres. More details visit our Adult Education courses page at www.vardean.ac.uk/courses#adult

ANOTHER VARDEAN STUDENT WINS SUSSEX POLICE 'CADET OF THE YEAR' AWARD

For the second year running, a Vardean College student has won Sussex Police's overall 'Cadet of the Year' award. Following on from Harry Dawes's success in 2018, this year the award has gone to cadet Leo Podesta who is currently studying BTEC Level 2 Public Services at Vardean. While off duty back in the summer, Leo (ex Blatchington Mill School) witnessed a very serious incident occurring in Brighton. Using skills he learnt at cadets he identified himself to attending police officers and was able to provide information that directly led to an early arrest of a potentially dangerous and violent offender. Leo, who received his award at Sussex Police HQ at the weekend, wants to join the police force in the future. Well done Leo.



STUDENTS MAKE A WISH

Back in December, Vardean College followed the Japanese tradition of creating a Tanabata Wish tree at the front of the college. Students added coloured strips of paper, each containing their own individual wish. Tanabata, also known as the Star Festival, is an annual festival in Japan where long, narrow strips of colourful paper known as tanzaku, vibrant ornaments, and other decorations are hung from bamboo branches.



SAFE DRIVE, STAY ALIVE

Last term, Year 1 Level 3 students participated in the 'Safe Drive, Stay Alive' road safety campaign. Representatives from the three main emergency services came to College to give presentations on road safety and the serious consequences of speeding, no seat belts, drink & drug driving, and using a mobile phone whilst driving.