

20th April 2020

Dear Parents, Carers & Students,

Amendments to tutor group structures for September 2020

Firstly, I hope this finds you and your loved ones well. Thank you also to the parents, carers and students who have made contact with the school with positive comments during the current lockdown. I share these comments with staff twice a week and they have been so important for morale. The kind way parents, carers and students are interacting with school staff since our temporary closure has been wonderful.

Planning for our return to school and the new school year is continuing and I write to make you aware of amendments we are making to our pastoral structures from September 2020. These have been informed by both our core staff values as detailed below as well as feedback from students, parents, carers and staff:

<u>Students considered first</u>	<u>All of our decisions should put the needs of students first.</u> <u>All students will be known well, included, valued and heard.</u>
High expectations - no limitations	We do not prejudice potential by preconceptions about individuals or groups of students.
The right curriculum experience for each student	We respond to the aspirations and needs of individual students with a broad and balanced curriculum and diverse co-curricular offer.
<u>The best support for each student</u>	<u>Students are individuals with their own needs and requirements; our care and pastoral support systems need to reflect this.</u>

From September 2020 we are moving away from our current vertical tutoring structure to a horizontal year group structure. Students will no longer be in tutor groups made up from individuals in Years 7 to 11, rather they will be pastorally supported in tutor groups made up of their peer group. Tutor groups will be overseen by a dedicated Year Leader and Pastoral Leader. The teams are likely to be made up as follows and will ultimately be led by our new Deputy Headteacher Mr. Riain Vernon who joins the school this September:

Year	Year Leader	Pastoral Leader
7	Ms C Hodgson	Mr D Bass
8	Ms C Kenny	Ms J Hodgson
9	Ms C Yewman	Ms C Egan
10	Ms D Naylor	Mr J Fox
11	Mr A Punt	Ms E Proctor

We are also planning to physically relocate the Year Leader/Pastoral Leader teams in offices around the school, as opposed to the two areas we have now, to allow students easy access to support whenever they require it. This decision has been largely informed by feedback from students who have reported that access to their pastoral staff has sometimes been difficult at times of their need.

There has been a great deal of merit in vertical tutoring, not least the opportunities for peer support, competition and the support of family members in a House. There is also a sense of loyalty to the Houses and it is very much part of the school's heritage. However, despite many positives, high quality pastoral support at the point of need within and beyond the formal curriculum and the monitoring of key criteria such as attendance, punctuality and recognition of positive behaviour is not as effective as it could be in our current structure and this has driven the momentum for change. We would also like to significantly strengthen the lines of communication parents, carers and students have with the pastoral staff in school so queries and concerns can be addressed in a timely and efficient manner by named, dedicated staff teams.

Vertical tutoring will not disappear completely, and there will be planned opportunities for year groups to mix to provide peer support at appropriate times e.g. Year 9 students working with year 10 & 11 students during the Spring term on making their Key Stage 4 option choices; Year 11 students working with Year 12 students during the Autumn/Spring terms to consider post-16 options.

To help maintain the House structure we will have ten tutor groups across the five main school years (7-11) that will be linked to each House. Sixth Form students will also retain their vital House leadership roles. To facilitate this, we will need to collapse one of our six Houses. As one of the two 'younger' houses, will be disbanding Wharfe House. This House also contains fewer sibling groups that would need to be reallocated. If your child(ren) is/are in Wharfe, please be reassured that Miss Buckley is currently very carefully placing them into another House/tutor group. Wharfe House students and parents will be informed which House they will be joining later in the summer term. Siblings will be moved into the same House and we will also provide House ties to the new Wharfe students at no cost.

If you have any queries with regard to this change to our pastoral care structures please do not hesitate to contact your existing House Leader or Deputy Headteacher, Ms C Mulhern.

Yours sincerely,

Mr A. Parkinson
Headteacher



Finally, a picture of one of our cherry trees taken this morning as a small reminder that school life definitely goes on.

