

SWS/JCo

11 February 2009

Dear Parent/Guardian

I am writing regarding an important change to the pastoral structure of Fulford School. From September 2009 students will be arranged vertically in their form groups in four Houses rather than five year groups. The form groups will be made up from students of all years not just from one year and will be led and guided by the Director of Learning for each House.

The reason why we have made this change is to further strengthen our excellent pastoral support. The benefits that this new system offers are summarised in a FAQ section which is on our website and is available in hard copy from School Reception. In brief, we feel the change to Vertical Tutoring offers us improvements by:

- Enabling us to reduce the size of the tutor groups to allow better interaction between our form tutors and their students
- Allowing us the opportunity to harness the potential of our student body as peer mentors through the guidance that our older students will offer to their younger form members
- Enabling our Directors of Learning to be strategic leaders in school
- Extending the use of our Student Support Officers to provide quality guidance support and behaviour intervention for students
- Enriching students' experience through wider social interaction and developing a sense of pride and belonging through a clear House identity
- Involving parents further in students' learning through more regular contact with school staff and early intervention when concerns exist

Our sixth form students will continue to enjoy the benefits of their own tutor and one to one tutorials to aid their learning will remain. They will also be active contributors to our Vertical forms and be attached to a group for some of the afternoon tutor sessions where they will provide invaluable support for the group and the tutor.

In due course your son/daughter will be able to nominate up to five students, from any year, that they would like to be placed with next year. We will endeavour to ensure that they will be placed with one of these students. The new groupings will be decided by the current Heads of Year and the Senior Leadership Team and will be made public before the end of this academic year.

You are invited to attend an information meeting on either the **26<sup>th</sup> February** or the **3<sup>rd</sup> March** at **6.00pm** to hear further information about this. This will provide an opportunity to raise questions regarding this change with Senior Staff, plus students, teachers and parents from local schools who have successfully changed to Vertical Tutoring in recent years.

In the remainder of the year we will run activities to bond the houses and new forms together and some students will be able to visit other schools to discuss with the students and staff there about the implications and benefits of the change we are making.

This change has been carefully planned, researched and investigated and has been decided in full consultation with staff and governors. We are excited about the benefits that the change will bring and the improvements it will lead to at Fulford School.

Yours faithfully

S W Smith  
**Headteacher**