

## **Vertical Tutoring – Frequently Asked Questions**

### **1. Communication of this change to students.**

#### **What has/will be done to inform/ support/reassure students before the change?**

Each year group has had an assembly and will have the chance to talk to their tutors or Heads of Year. Representatives from every year group will have the opportunity to talk over the issue and put questions to senior staff. Student Council members will visit a school that operates in a Vertical Tutoring system this term. An opportunity will be provided to feedback to every year group through assemblies on these visits and it is also the intention that assemblies from all year groups will hear presentations from other schools where vertical tutoring operates.

#### **When is the actual start date?**

Students will begin in their new groups in September 2009. However, the students will engage in team work and bonding activities with their new form during the current academic year.

#### **What about the Sixth form?**

All Year 12 and 13 students will continue to have a sixth form tutor who will meet them regularly to discuss their progress, well being and future ambitions, including UCAS applications. There will still be horizontal Heads of Year for the sixth form. However, the sixth form will also be members of a vertical form and two or three times a week they will attend the form period of this group to provide support and leadership for the lower school students. This could take the form of peer mentoring, peer reading schemes and organising inter House competitions amongst many other possibilities. This responds to a consistent student request from the sixth form to be more involved with the lower school students and builds on the successful support already offered by sixth form students within Science, Maths and History lessons and through school schemes offering peer mentoring and peer reading. We believe our older students are a considerable asset and want to offer them the opportunity to act as leaders in the lower school.

### **2. Creating the new groups**

#### **Some really good friendship groups have been formed already in Year 7 as have long friendships in other year groups.**

We realise that change is difficult, but it is important to remember that teaching groups will continue to be organised by year group for the twenty five hours a week of class time. It is only during the twenty minutes of tutor time that students will be in their vertical tutoring group.

#### **How are the current year groups going to be divided up?**

There will be four Houses each run by a Director of Learning and comprising between twelve and fifteen forms. These form groups will consist of approximately twenty lower school students. Tutors and Heads of Year will construct the new groups and will endeavour to ensure that everyone is with someone they know in the new groups. Each group will be a cross-section of the school.

### **Who will the Directors of Learning be?**

These posts are being advertised nationally and appointments will be made before Easter. This information will be shared with pupils and parents during the summer term.

### **Will students be placed in tutor groups with at least one friend?**

Students will be asked to nominate five students from across all year groups and we will endeavour to place them with at least one of these students in their form group for next year.

### **Will siblings be in the same tutor/House group?**

Siblings will not be in the same tutor group unless a special request is made, but they may be in the same House.

### **How will my son/daughter adapt to a new tutor?**

It is always difficult when a tutor changes or leaves, but each tutor will be very keen to meet their new groups and bring them together. Students will develop a strong relationship with their new tutor and the smaller group size will provide increased personalised support and guidance.

## **3. New Year 7 students for September 2009**

### **Will students be placed in tutor groups with at least one friend?**

Year 6 students coming to Fulford will be able to choose five names of students they know or with whom they work well with. When we create new tutor groups we endeavour to place students together with at least one of these nominated friends.

### **How can Fulford School ensure that students know others in the class when they start?**

On the induction days in the summer term next years new Year 7s will have the opportunity to meet other Year 6s in their House as well as their new tutor groups.

## **4. Being in the new groups**

### **How will the older students and younger students interact in a Vertical Tutoring group?**

We believe our older students offer excellent role models and that the peer mentoring opportunities this will offer are very positive and exciting. This has been a strength in schools we have visited who operate a Vertical Tutoring structure.

### **Who will I contact next year if there is a concern regarding my child?**

You will be able to contact the Director of Learning for your child's House. We are also extending our excellent Student Support services that are available throughout the day which will enhance the communication between home and school. With smaller tutor groups the form tutor has greater opportunity to be involved in monitoring each student's progress.

### **What will the new Houses be called?**

The new Houses will be named after discussions with the full student body – we have an open mind on this issue!

**Will the uniform change?**

It is not the intention to change the current uniform but we are considering ways of individualising the student's appearance to their House. Each House will have individualised planners.

**How will assemblies operate?**

There will be an assembly for each of the four Houses every week. This also provides the capacity for a year group assembly when necessary.

**5. Extra-Curricular****How will non-curriculum activities change with vertical tutor groups?**

There will be opportunity for inter-House competitions that promote a wide range of skills and activities. There will be leadership opportunities for sixth form and older students to help with the organisation of these. There will also be the possibility of each House having a Captain, Vice Captain and prefects. This has been a suggestion that students themselves have raised in the recent Student Improvement Plan.

If you have further questions there is the opportunity to attend our information evenings on either the 26<sup>th</sup> February or 3<sup>rd</sup> March from 6 -7 pm – these will provide further detail and the chance to speak to students, staff and parents from local schools that successfully operate Vertical Tutoring structures. If you cannot attend these meetings then please contact any member of the Senior Leadership Team who will be happy to help you with any further information.