



15th May 2017

Dear Parents

We are writing to inform you of an exciting development that we are introducing for September 2017 that will further enhance our provision.

What is the change?

At the end of this summer term, we are reorganising all students into new tutor groups which will contain a mixture of students from each of the year groups (Year 7-13). These are known as '**vertical tutor groups**'. More specifically:

- Every student currently in Year 7 – 13 will be placed in a new vertical tutor group consisting of 4-6 students from each of Years 7 – 11.
- Sixth form students will also be allocated to a Vertical Tutor Group and we will develop their role as student leaders. In addition they will have separate sixth form guidance and Sixth form specific tutor time where sixth form tutors will prepare the students for their future destinations.
- Each tutor group will belong to one of our 3 existing Houses (Maine, Aquitaine and Rollo) and we are planning for 8-9 tutor groups in each House.
- Each of our three existing Houses will be led by a Head of House.
- The new Year 7 students will also join these groups in September 2017.

Why should it change?

The benefits of vertical tutoring fall into four main areas:

- 1. Students will receive more support and recognition**
 - During key times, such as making option choices or exams, each tutor will only have 4-6 pupils to support so your child will get much more attention than in their current tutor group, where everyone has similar needs at the same time.
 - Tutors will arrange for younger students to get advice from older students in their tutor group who 'have been through it recently'.
 - Tutors will be progress mentors to support students with their learning and set and review SMART targets.
- 2. Students will get more chance to assume leadership responsibilities**
 - For older students, each House will elect students to senior positions of responsibility such as House Captains.
 - Every tutor group and year group will need pupils to take on responsibilities such as student voice/team captains/charity organisers/buddies/mentors.
 - The tutor will use students in the tutor group to help/support others.

3. **More events recognising more talent and creating healthy competition**

- The Houses will become a much bigger feature of school life. Inter-house competitions and charity events will be part of a busy House calendar.
- The use of House points will also play a larger part in rewarding students.

4. **Better relationships**

- Under the new system, students will get to know people from other year groups in a safe environment while still working with their year group peers in lessons. Positive relationships across the school can be fostered.
- The House will become a very important group for students. The houses will have more of a 'family' ethos and prepare students for the world of work.

This is not an unprecedented change; the vertical tutor system is highly successful across the Redhill Trust schools as well as many around the country. Some staff have already visited schools who use this system and have been very impressed with the benefits. Further visits are also taking place and more staff will have the opportunity to see 'vertical tutoring' in action.

Whilst this is a change to how we tutor, it will only affect tutor time and does not affect lesson time. However, we believe that vertical tutoring will also have a positive impact on Teaching and Learning as well as supporting the progress of all students.

This week, students have been informed of these changes in assemblies and they have the opportunity to talk about this with their current tutors and Heads of Year.

As a staff, we are strongly committed to becoming an outstanding school and believe that the change to vertical tutor groups will further strengthen our progress towards achieving this. The benefits that this will bring to our school will ensure that we continue to value and support each student, enabling them to make the most of every opportunity to be successful and to feel a part of the school community.

ADDITIONAL SCHOOL INSET DAY - We are one of three schools within Redhill Academy Trust who will be implementing this for September 2017 and in order for this to be successful, we need to invest time to train staff and tutors effectively. ***Therefore, we are working alongside these schools to provide staff training on Monday 3rd July. For all of us, this is an additional school closure and students will not attend school on this date.***

For further information concerning vertical tutoring, please visit the Academy website. If you have any additional questions regarding the changes please do not hesitate to contact Tutors, Heads of Year or myself.

Yours sincerely

Mrs C Lucas
Assistant Headteacher

