

Dear Parent/Carer

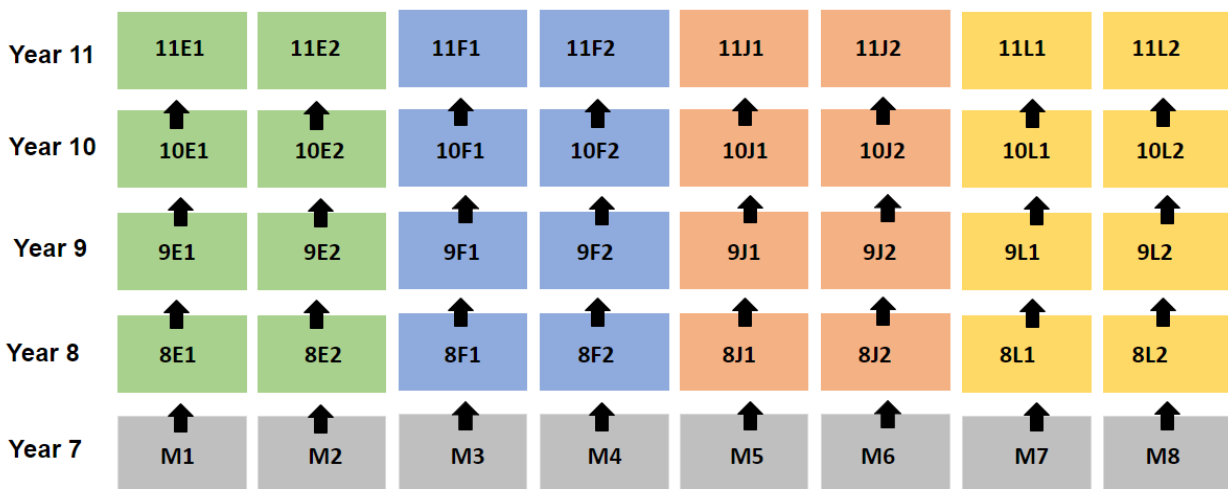
## Re: Vertical Tutoring to Horizontal Tutoring – July 2023

I am writing to update you on a significant change that we will be introducing to our pastoral structure.

Following much reflection, research, and discussion at governor and school leadership level we will be modifying our pastoral structure. The changes are in alignment with our ambitious strategic priorities and geared towards providing the very best pastoral care for our students as we address the legacy of the pandemic and current social and economic challenges we face as a city.

We currently have a House system with horizontal tutor groups in Year 7 (Muller House) and with vertical tutor groups from Year 8-11. From July 2023 we will be moving to horizontal tutor groups with a House structure.

We will maintain our five houses Müller, Equiano, Franklin, Johnson, and Liddell. However, tutor groups will consist of students from the same year group rather than tutor groups having students from Years 8-11 in the same group. This will be what our Year 7 students currently experience but will be a change for other year groups.



The new structure allows us the flexibility to maintain and develop mixed aged groups House activities as each Year 8 to 11 tutor group will belong to a House as indicated by the letter (E, F, J or L). Year 7 will continue to be Muller House (M) but there is also the opportunity for our Year 7 students to collaborate with our older students through alignment with the one of the other Houses as indicated in the diagram above.

As part of this change, we are also increasing opportunities to strengthen collaboration between our students in the main school and those in our thriving Sixth Form. We are looking forward to seeing these fantastic opportunities developed following the impact of the pandemic.

To further develop capacity our Learning Mentors will join a Year Team to ensure we have a non-teaching member of staff supporting each Year group.

<b>Pastoral Leadership and Support Structure – Main School</b>				
<b>Year 7</b>	Head of Year (Head of House for House events)	Deputy Head of Year	Year Team Learning Mentor	School Leadership Team Link
<b>Year 8</b>	Head of Year (Head of House for House events)	Deputy Head of Year	Year Team Learning Mentor	School Leadership Team Link
<b>Year 9</b>	Head of Year (Head of House for House events)	Deputy Head of Year	Year Team Learning Mentor	School Leadership Team Link
<b>Year 10</b>	Head of Year (Head of House for House events)	Deputy Head of Year	Year Team Learning Mentor	School Leadership Team Link
<b>Year 11</b>	Head of Year (Head of House for House events)	Deputy Head of Year	Year Team Learning Mentor	School Leadership Team Link

In addition to the main school change we have also created additional capacity for our Sixth Form students with the introduction of new Deputy Head of Year post and will be mirroring the structure in the main school.

<b>Pastoral Leadership and Support Structure – Sixth Form</b>				
<b>Year 12</b>	Head of Year	Deputy Head of Year	Year Team Learning Mentor	School Leadership Team Link
<b>Year 13</b>	Head of Year	Deputy Head of Year	Year Team Learning Mentor	School Leadership Team Link

### **Why are we making these changes?**

We feel that students will benefit from sharing experiences with students of their own age. However, we will still create opportunities for all students to continue to mix with other year groups, building on the experiences provided by vertical tutoring and events such as our House Eucharists. Tutor time will be more focused for particular year groups, which will be invaluable at key points during the year. Messages, activities, and tutorial lessons will be directed to meet the needs of a single year group and not four within one group. We feel that this is a more effective use of time and will benefit all students. There will be opportunities for clearer and more differentiated tutor activities and assemblies. Tutors will be able to focus their efforts towards one year group; this will help communication across the school and supports the tutor's delivery of sessions. The tutors and pastoral team will move through the years with their tutor group/year group, watching their students grow up and progress together. Strong relationships can be formed between tutors, students, and parents/carers. This will support tracking, monitoring, and evaluation of academic progress.

We will be able to improve consistency and support across the year group as the role of Head of House will become that of Head of Year and allow them to have a full overview of their year group and to meet regularly with their tutors. Heads of Year will be able to ensure greater consistency in the monitoring of attendance and punctuality, and rewards and sanctions. There will be increased opportunities to create a year group identity and competition across tutor groups and Houses. We hope this will further the sense of belonging for students whilst we utilise opportunities to take advantage of our Houses more fully. For example, we are looking forward to holding a Sports Day for the first time in several years.

### **Why are we implementing these changes for July rather than September?**

We have decided on this change being in place during July for several reasons:

1. To provide clarity for Year 7 who would be preparing to change into vertical tutor groups at this time of year.
2. Year 11 will have left at this time, and this will allow more capacity to manage the change.

3. Completing the change at this time of year gives all students experience of the new structure prior to the holiday and this will allow an opportunity to address any immediate teething issues. All students will start the new academic year clear about the new arrangement.

I do appreciate that moving away from current tutor groups may be worrying for some students and families. Change is hard for many people, including some of our staff. We are working on the premise that siblings will belong to the same House. Please be reassured that all staff are here to support you. This is an exciting time for all of us.

We have attached some **frequently asked questions (FAQs)** which we hope will be helpful to parents and carers. I will be working closely with Mr Hare (Assistant Headteacher) who will take a leading role in the implementation of this change. We will provide a more detailed timeline in due course, including details of the wider pastoral provision that we have in place, such as School Counsellor and Mental Health leads. If you have any questions about this then please contact Mr Hare at [harej1@smrt.bristol.sch.uk](mailto:harej1@smrt.bristol.sch.uk) .

Yours faithfully



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