

Woodbridge School
PASTORAL CARE AND ACADEMIC ORGANISATION

1 Policy statement

The School regards pastoral care as underpinning the academic and extra-curricular. Activities of pupils and its organisation reflects the needs of pupils at different ages.

2 Procedure

The pastoral organisation of the School is designed to provide the most effective care for pupils, and the most efficient communication with parents. Teenage life is not always smooth, and we believe very strongly that staff at School (which includes teaching and non-teaching staff) and parents need to share information if they are to support young people properly through this period.

We plead with parents that they will contact their child's tutor or Housemaster/Housemistress (see Pastoral Contacts); or if they feel it more appropriate then they should contact the senior master, senior mistress, deputy head or headmaster. Parents will have access to the home phone numbers of all of the above and are encouraged to telephone about any issue, or if urgent to call in and see the headmaster before the start of School on any morning. Most concerns or worries are best first directed at the tutor or Housemaster/Housemistress but in the case of concerns or worries about teaching staff these are more properly addressed to the headmaster or his deputy. In addition the School Matron is always available, as is the Chaplain.

In Year 7 all pupils are members of Junior House which is sub-divided into tutor groups, each designed to represent a cross-section of sportsmen, musicians etc. Pupils see their tutor every morning and the Housemistress's office is situated between the Junior locker room and the Junior Houserom.

From Year 8 pupils enter one of the four parallel Day Houses; Annott, Burwell, Seckford and Willard (named after benefactors of the School). Each of these has a Housemaster/Housemistress who provides a continuum of care between the ages of 12 and 16 which then in many respects passes to the Head of Sixth Form for Years 12 and 13. Each House provides a locker area, a Houserom, and a shared mezzanine area.

Year 8 and then Year 9 are each divided into eight tutor groups, two per year in each House. All things being equal, pupils and tutor will move up from Year 8 to Year 9 together.

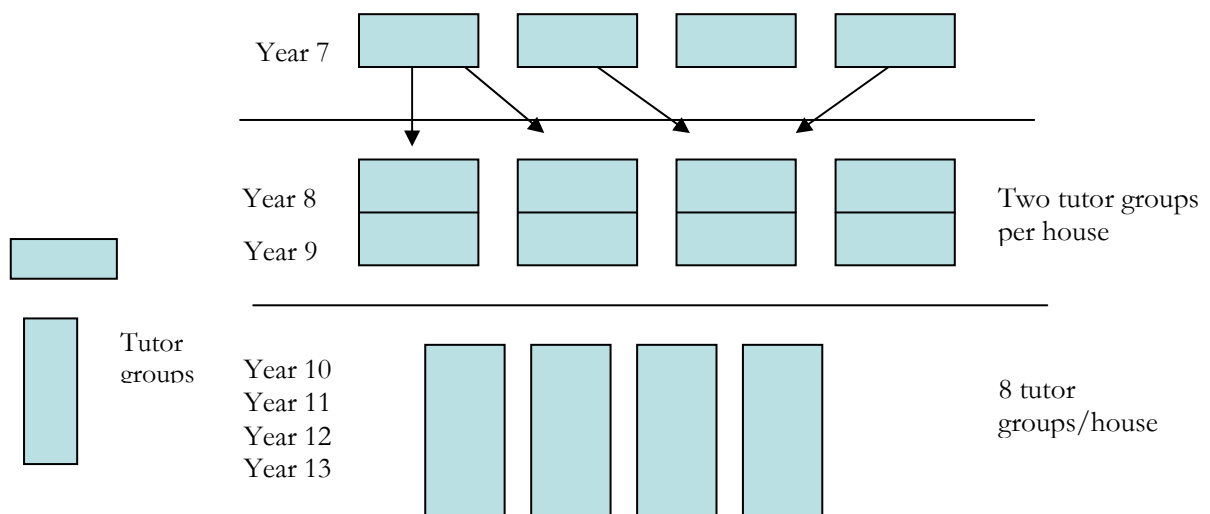
In Years 10 to 13 each pupil has a personal tutor, who will remain with that pupil for four years. Most tutors therefore have about twelve tutees spread across these four academic years. This allows the tutors to give proper advice and time to their charges, and further prevents any pupil from coasting academically. The peer support currently generated through the current single-year-group model will remain undisturbed via all the other aspects of school life, and is further enhanced by this opportunity for pupils across the age range to support each other within these smaller groups as they each in turn tackle the hurdles of public examination, and educational and personal choices.

Each tutor is responsible to a Housemaster, Housemistresses or the Head of the Sixth Form, who together with the Chaplain and Headmaster, are not tutors. The tutor is the pupils' and parents' first port of call for most matters. However, pupils and parents are encouraged to contact other staff at School if the need arises: the Housemaster/mistress, Head of Sixth Form, Headmaster and Deputy, the Director of Studies (on curriculum/setting questions), or the Senior Master (regarding absence).

All the numbers and e-mail addresses are available in the literature and on the School website, and in the case of the Housemasters/Mistresses and Headmaster, telephone calls made in the evening are quite usual.

In addition to these "pastoral heads", the Matron, the Chaplain, Senior Master and Mistress, Deputy Head, and Headmaster, there is also a pupil support group. This group of lower and upper sixth formers are identifiable by badges and can be approached by any pupil at an appropriate time. In addition to that, and obviously for more serious cases, the School provides a list of telephone numbers for specialist advice. All these are available on the pupil area of the School intranet.

The quality of care for pupils depends less on the pastoral system, and much more on the people who take part in it. If at any time parents or pupils feel that the system is not working as well as it might for them, it is very important that they contact the Headmaster or his deputy.



2.1 Academic Organisation

It is well accepted by those in education that there is no "best way" of organising a school academically. The research review "Setting and Streaming" conducted by the Scottish Council for Research in Education runs to 72 pages, and has been read by all the members of the Academic Board. (A definition of streaming/setting etc is given at the end of this section).

However, the research concludes that in general, ability grouping in sets or streams has been found to have no overall effect on achievement compared with mixed ability grouping, except in mathematics. In all this we recognise that the balance between pressure and support is unique to each pupil. The arrangements that we use at Woodbridge are flexible depending on what we know about the make-up of the year group.

In general on entry into Year 7 pupils are assigned to one of two bands (with a great deal of overlap between the two). Each band follows the same syllabus, and reaches the same end point in the same time.

The upper band can engage in a greater width of exploratory work whilst the other band can be given more practice and more support. Our only criterion for those bands is our entrance exam and certainly there is plenty of evidence that late developers benefit from the arrangement.

By the end of Year 7 we have more evidence. The bands in Year 8 (again two parallel classes in each) are assigned on the basis of:

- end of year exams
- attainment grades throughout the year
- MidYIS data (a national test taken in October)
- verbal reasoning tests
- teacher judgement
- advice of the Housemistress of Junior House

Independent of the bands, all pupils are set for mathematics (in recognition of the research), and all pupils study Latin in Year 8.

At the end of Year 8 all pupils are re-assessed, again on the basis of the above criteria. At this stage only the top band will continue in the study of Latin, whilst the others will have extra periods of English, French and ICT. In Year 10 and above there are sets for English, mathematics, separate sciences, and co-ordinated science.

2.2 Definitions

Streaming The method of assigning pupils to classes on some overall assessment of general ability, the most able pupils in one stream, the next most able in the next and so on. The classes so streamed are used as the teaching units for the majority of subjects.

Setting The regrouping of pupils according to their ability in the subject concerned. This can be carried out across the whole year group or within a band or population provided that two or more classes can be timetabled for the same subject at the same time.

Setting can therefore be used within any pattern or organisation. Schools frequently seek to make teaching groups smaller and more homogeneous by providing extra sets, for example by regrouping the 90 pupils in three classes into four or five sets, though staffing constraints make it unlikely that this can be done in more than a few subjects.

Banding The year group is divided into two, three or four bands differentiated by ability on criteria similar to those used for streaming; each band contains a number of classes, not necessarily of equal ability or size.

Mixed-ability grouping No attempt is made to group pupils by ability. Instead year grouping may be done randomly or a deliberate mix may be achieved on the basis of factors such as social background or gender.

Within-class grouping Groups are formed by a teacher within a class to reduce the number of pupils receiving direct tuition at any one time. The groups may be homogeneous, organised on the basis of ability (usually in reading, although other criteria may be used), or mixed ability (heterogeneous).

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