

Dear Parent/Carer

Re: Changes to the pastoral system at Lightcliffe Academy

I am writing to inform you about some changes that we are bringing in to make improvements to the pastoral system at Lightcliffe. For several years there has been a vertical tutoring system with students in mixed age form groups, divided between 6 houses, led by a Head of House. Whilst there are many benefits to this system, it also causes some frustrations, as well as being unpopular with our students. In a recent survey of all form groups, over 75% of students said they would prefer to be in same age form groups.

Having talked to students and looked at alternatives, the decision has been made to return to form groups in which students are all in the same year group, with a Head of Year rather than a Head of House. This allows us to be more focused in the support that we give to students through form time, as well as using assemblies to concentrate on issues that are most relevant to particular year groups. For instance, at the moment we want to talk to our Year 11 students about exams and revision, but are focused on other things, like positive rewards, with our Year 7s. The new system will make this a lot easier to manage and so provide a better system of support for our students, also allowing our Achievement Directors to look at the academic progress of students across individual year groups, and becoming specialists in removing the barriers to learning of a particular age group.

Moving to same age form groups will obviously mean some changes for our students, which we want to manage carefully and in the most supportive manner. For this reason, we have decided to start next week (13th May) with our existing Heads of House becoming Heads of Year. This will mean that quite a lot of our students, as well as parents and carers, may be approaching a different person as a first point of contact with the normal issues that you contact school about.

The Heads of Year are as follows:

Year 7: Mr Jack Greenwood

Year 8: Mrs Angela Jackson

Year 9: Mr John Simpson

Year 10: Mr Clive Truelove

Year 11: Miss Louise Williams

We recognise that for a small number of families, where there are particularly significant issues, the transition period of moving from the support of the current Head of House to the new Head of Year may take a little longer, and we have tried to anticipate this by making individual contact in some cases. Our sixth Head of House, Miss Lucy Barr, will carry out a different role moving forwards, as we set up a new support unit for students where issues are preventing them from accessing the full curriculum. At the end of the school year, Heads of Year will move up with their year group, to maintain continuity. Miss Williams, as Head of Year 11 for the rest of this year, will move to Year 7 in September.

We want to change form groups before September in order to have students used to the new system before the start of a new school year, but equally we do not want to disrupt Year 11 students at the time at which they are starting their GCSEs. Therefore, we will move to the new same age form groups in late June, after external exams are over and Year 11 students are no longer in school. Obviously this will mean a change of form tutor for many of our students, and scheduling this move for the last few weeks of the summer term will hopefully mean that they are not worried about the changes over the summer holiday. Students will be informed of the changes during assemblies this week.

Please don't hesitate to contact your new Head of Year if you have any queries about this change.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jon Norden', with a stylized, cursive script.

Jon Norden
Acting Principal at Lightcliffe Academy
Executive Principal (Secondary)
Abbey Multi Academy Trust