



Houlton School
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Paul Brockwell
Executive Principal

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Lorna Pountney
Head of School

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Dear parents/carers,

I hope that you have had a lovely summer and that your child is coming back to school ready to learn and grow.

This year we were excited to have our first cohort of GCSE results which were very successful and allowed our students to access many of the courses that they wanted to follow at 6th form and college. We wish all of our amazing students the very best for their futures. A great many of those students are staying at 6th form, either at Houlton or at our sister school Ashlawn.

While we are incredibly proud of the work that we have done to enable our year 11 to gain great results, we are constantly looking at how we can continue to support and challenge our students, regardless of their ability.

Over the past 5 years, students at Houlton have been taught in their college groups. This has enabled them to build strong relationships with that small group of students within a much bigger school context.

We have spoken with many of the students over the past year about how this structure has supported their learning. Some have shared that they have struggled in lessons while some have mentioned that the work is not challenging enough at times.

We want all of our students to be their very best and to be able to access all of their teaching all of the time. Having considered all of their comments and in discussion with the staff of the school, we have taken the decision to make some changes to the way in which students are grouped for their lessons.

We are moving to having some of the core subjects taught in new groups based on ability. Not only will this allow our students to develop wider social groups but we can also provide more targeted lesson planning and support.

In years 10 and 11, students will be in mixed ability option groups while they will be placed in different groups in maths, science and English. This allows for students following the foundation or higher tier in maths to be better prepared for their final GCSE and in science those following the triple science option have been grouped together.

Years 8 and 9 have been placed in mixed groups for creative subjects (art, music, dance, design technology, PE, drama) while maths, English and science are in groups according to ability.

In year 7, students will initially be in their colleges for the first term. This allows them to build the relationships with their form group while we get them settled into Houlton School. There will then be some adjustments made to groupings once we know the children better.

I recognise that this change of approach may be unsettling to some students but it allows Houlton School to focus on ensuring that all of our students can achieve their full potential. Please be assured that they will remain in their college groups for many activities, including form time, throughout their journey at Houlton School.

If you have any questions or you wish to discuss this change please feel free to get in touch to arrange a meeting.

Yours sincerely



Mr Paul Brockwell
Executive Principal

Yours sincerely



Mrs Lorna Pountney
Head of School