

Wednesday, 23 July 2025

Student Groupings for Next Academic Year

Dear Parents and Carers,

As we approach the end of the academic year several tasks inevitably take place in the final weeks to ensure our next academic year is organised for students from day one. One of these important tasks is creating staff and student timetables.

Please note that final timetables will be provided to students upon their return in September and anything a student hears or sees prior to this is purely provisional.

However, each year several changes inevitably occur with the grouping of students and these decisions are often based on a multitude of factors, including behaviour, attitude, relationships with peers and performance in assessment throughout the previous academic year to name a few.

Key Stage 3

In key stage 3 (years 7, 8 and 9), students are initially placed into one of three bands (X, Y or Z). Generally speaking, there are no differences between these bands. Depending on the year group, there are 3 or 4 groups within each band and staff use their knowledge of students (gained over time) to strategically place them into the most appropriate group from September. Students are not always placed into a group based on their ability alone, and several other factors, described above, are also considered.

We monitor these groups throughout the year (particularly at our key assessment points) and often make specific changes when we feel it is appropriate to do so for individual students.

For your information, we structure our groups in a parallel fashion. This means that (for example) X1, Y1 and Z1 are very similar in terms of the ability levels with these groups, whilst the same can be said for X2, Y2 and Z2. Some subjects are grouped primarily in a mixed ability format (Technology is an example of this). Regardless of the group students are in, they will all be taught our ambitious curriculum by our specialist teachers who endeavour to give students the best experience possible.

Key Stage 4

In key stage 4 (years 10 and 11) there are several other factors we have to consider when putting these groups together, including:

- Which tier a student is expected to sit in Maths (Higher/Foundation).
- Which Science qualification a student is expected to sit (Triple Science or Combined Science).
- Which tier of Science qualification a student is expected to sit (Higher/Foundation).
- Which Language (French or Spanish) a student studies.
- Which GCSE options a student studies.
- Class sizes across all groups – there are only so many students we can fit in an individual class.

The above, combined with the other factors mentioned at the start of this letter mean we must be even more strategic with groupings at key stage 4 and our options are often limited as to where individual students are placed. Ultimately, we ensure students are placed into the most appropriate group which leads to them having the best chances of success by the end of year 11.

Please trust that a lot of thought and consideration goes into this process and several key staff are involved in the decision-making, including:

- Senior Leadership
- Heads of Department
- Heads of Year
- Teaching staff
- Pastoral staff
- Inclusion staff

Students may find that they are placed into similar groups as the previous academic year, whilst some may inevitably move groups. We always ensure the groups given to students provide the most appropriate pace and challenge to ensure your child achieves their potential. As mentioned above, we will then monitor how students progress within their groups to ensure they have been placed appropriately.

I hope this letter has helped provide a deeper insight into the processes that we undertake, and we thank you so much for your continued support.

Please have a great summer when it arrives.

Yours sincerely,



Mr S Brown
Deputy Head