



18 June 2024

Dear Parents/Carers,

I am writing to you to inform you of an important change in our Academy's pastoral care framework. The changes will come into effect in September and, in our opinion, will enhance our current House system whilst strengthening our pastoral support by incorporating a year group structure, which we already have in Year 11 and the Sixth Form. This enhancement aims to provide more comprehensive support to our students, fostering a nurturing and dynamic environment for their growth and development. As is the case every year, we will be losing some staff to other opportunities. This year, Miss Farrell and Miss Brown will be leaving the Academy and Mrs Twigg will be taking on the Director of Behaviour, Safeguarding and Attendance role and will relinquish her position as Head of Portland House. Our pastoral changes will start with our remaining Heads of House becoming our new Heads of Year. Mrs White will be Head of Year 8, Mrs Hitchins will be Head of Year 9 and Miss Tavinor will become Head of Year 10. I am delighted to announce that Mr Edwards will be joining the Academy as Head of Year 7.

The House system will remain the central tenet of our pastoral care and each student (and by association their parents/carers/families) and all staff will become members of a House when they join us. They will stay with the same House throughout their time at the Academy, giving continuity and a sense of belonging. One of the main benefits of a House system is the ability to group students into smaller communities within a larger school. Each House then becomes a tight-knit family where students can form strong bonds with peers across different year groups. This system promotes a sense of identity and belonging, which is crucial for students' emotional well-being and academic success. Furthermore, encouraging healthy competition should be at the forefront of successful systems.

Whilst we are proud of our House Charities and Sports Day activities, we believe we could expand our opportunities with a variety of inter-house competitions, ranging from academic challenges like spelling bees and maths challenges, to creative arts/music, debating and community service as well as sports. Therefore, our intention is to appoint a 'House Coordinator'. This role will ensure regular opportunities for healthy competition and recreation as a House, which will also offer all our students increased opportunities to be involved in representative activities. This healthy competition encourages students to be ambitious for excellence, develop their self-confidence and resilience, and learn the value of teamwork and sportsmanship. The House system will also offer numerous leadership opportunities. Students can take on roles such as House Captains, Vice-Captains, or strive for half or full 'colours' in a particular area. This helps them develop their leadership skills, confidence, and a further sense of responsibility, strengthening the overall Academy culture.

Whilst the House System brings all these benefits, coupling it with a new Head of Year system will ensure that each student receives tailored, age related, pastoral support. Heads of Year will understand the unique challenges and milestones of each developmental stage and can offer personalised guidance and intervention when needed. As with our current Heads of House, Heads of Year will maintain regular contact with students, monitoring their academic progress, behaviour, attendance and well-being. This consistent oversight ensures that any issues are promptly addressed, and students receive the mentorship they need to thrive.

By working closely with the House Coordinator, Heads of Year will gain a broader perspective on each student's experiences and contributions within their House. This collaboration allows for a more holistic approach to supporting students' development and addressing any concerns. The integration of the Academy House system with our new Head of Year structure represents a significant enhancement to our pastoral care provision and ensures that students receive both the focused guidance of their Head of Year with the community support of their House, creating a nurturing environment where they can flourish both academically and personally. Furthermore, parents/carers will

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now have a single point of contact for all matters related to their child's year group. This simplifies communication and ensures that any concerns or queries are addressed promptly and efficiently.

We are confident that this dual approach will benefit your child immensely and contribute to a positive, supportive, and engaging Academy experience. Should you have any questions or require further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Finally, that leaves me to thank Miss Farrell and Miss Brown for everything they have done to support students in Hurst & Kingswear and for their service to our community. They will be sorely missed and I am sure you will join me in wishing them every success for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Mr M Avoth
Principal

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