



SST/jbu

5<sup>th</sup> March 2018

Dear Families

## Vertical Tutoring

We would like to inform you of an important improvement that we plan to introduce to our student support system from September. Our primary aim is to develop high-quality learning relationships that bring out the best in all who are engaged in learning and contribute to the continuing success and improvement of The Henry Box School.

From September 2018, we will organise all students in Years 7-11 into new tutor groups which contain a balanced mixture of students from each of the 5 year groups. These are known as vertical tutor groups. This will mean that:

- every student currently in Years 7 - 10 will be placed in a new, smaller vertical tutor group consisting of 4-5 students from each year group
- new Year 7 students will join these groups in September 2018
- more staff will be involved in tutoring, including members of the Leadership Team
- as now, each tutor group will belong to one of our four Houses with approximately 10 tutor groups in each House
- each House will continue to be led by a House Leader with the assistance of the Student Support Team.

The benefits of vertical tutoring fall into four main areas:

### 1. Students will receive more support and guidance

Learning relationships between students, parents/carers and tutors are the basis for successful outcomes. During key times in the academic year, each tutor will have fewer students in a particular year group to support. This means that each student will receive more attention than is the currently the case. Tutors will be able to work more closely with parents/carers, so that they can become more effectively engaged in supporting learning. Tutors can also arrange for younger students to receive advice from older, more experienced students in their tutor group.

### 2. Students will have more opportunities to take responsibility

Each House will elect older students to senior positions of responsibility such as House Captains and Prefects. In addition, every tutor group and year group will need students to take on responsibilities such as Student Voice representative, team captains, charity organisers or mentors. Tutors will encourage students to guide and support others in their group through the example they set and the empathy they show.

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### 3. There will be improved school community relationships

Through vertical tutoring, students will get to know people of different ages in a safe environment, thereby fostering a better understanding of others. Through tutor groups and Houses we aim to create a 'family' ethos and develop valuable interpersonal skills. Equally, we believe that families will benefit by having a more personal but enhanced contact with tutors who not only know each child well, but who can listen to your concerns and ideas. Vertical tutoring will support our drive to increase home-school links and to make them as effective as possible.

### 4. There will be events to recognise talent

We aim to place greater emphasis on inter-house competitions and events which will enable students to demonstrate their talents, develop their teamwork skills and receive recognition for their contributions to the school community.

This change will apply to morning registration (10 minutes) and tutor time (20 minutes) but it will not affect lessons. We also plan to dedicate 20 minutes each Wednesday afternoon to academic mentoring when students will meet tutors on rotation to discuss progress.

Students are being informed of the proposed changes in assemblies this week and thereafter they will have the opportunity to discuss this with their current tutors.

Moving to a vertical system is a significant change and is not without its challenges. We want you to feel informed and to have an opportunity to comment. For more information about vertical tutoring and the answers to some frequently asked questions, please go to the front page of our website [www.henrybox.oxon.sch.uk](http://www.henrybox.oxon.sch.uk) and click on the Vertical Tutoring link to find a number of documents and links that may be of interest.

If you would like further clarification or have any questions, there will be an information evening in the School Hall on **Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> March 2018 at 6.00pm**. If you would like to attend, please return to the Vertical Tutoring link and complete the Vertical Tutoring Information Reply Form by Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> March. There is a limited number of spaces and you will need to complete a separate form for each person in your household who plans to attend. We would ask that your son/daughter does not accompany you on this occasion in order that sufficient seats are available.

If the demand exceeds our seating capacity, we will arrange a second meeting.

The benefits that vertical tutoring will bring to our school will ensure that we continue to value and support each student, enabling them to make the most of every opportunity to be successful.

We look forward to your support in this important matter.

Yours sincerely



Ms W J Hemmingsley  
Headteacher