

Dear Parents of Year 3 boys

We hope that your sons very much enjoyed Move Up Day last Friday, the purpose of which was to give the boys a chance to familiarise themselves with their future classmates and form tutors in advance of the summer holiday. They certainly seemed to enjoy it, and seem excited about next year.

Ordinarily, we would then wait until the end of the current academic year and the start of the new one before communicating information to parents about matters such as the organisation of classes and the working patterns of tutors. The Meet the Tutor Evening in early September is specifically designed for communication of this nature, and we have found that that timing works well. However, some among you have been asking questions that have not previously been asked so soon, or indeed at all, before, so we set out below information that will hopefully be useful to you all.

CLASS SIZES AND SPLITS

As usual, Year 4 for the 2018-19 academic year will be split into three parallel mixed ability groups. There will be 19 boys in each of Ms Valentino's and Miss Oakley's tutor groups and 16 in Mr Maitland's tutor group.

The figure of 19 compares to 17 being the size of the largest Year 4 class in the current 2017-18 academic year, so it represents an increase of two boys in that regard. Our maximum class size is 20. There are always more boys in Year 4 classes than Year 3 classes because we take on new boys in every year group but do not introduce a fourth class until Year 5. This year, the step up from being in classes of 12 or 13 in Year 3 may appear to be quite significant, but it is exaggerated compared to what we would normally expect. This is the result of good recruitment to Year 4. Notwithstanding any of the above, we are certain that your sons will continue to receive the same high quality, high value education next year, in what still remain small class sizes.

The primary reason for the small discrepancy in class sizes is that Mr Maitland's classroom is smaller than the other two spacious classrooms and would be hard pushed to accommodate beyond 16 boys (you will see what we mean when you visit the classes). Secondly, Mr Maitland having a slightly smaller group will better enable him to support the whole year group as Head of Year. It is not particularly unusual, either here at Bedford School or elsewhere, for there to be small differences between class sizes in a particular year group.

Please rest assured that the interests of all of our boys is always our number one consideration and we would never consciously place some boys at an advantage over any others. We are certain that every boy in Year 4 next year will be equally well supported.

WORKING PATTERNS OF TUTORS

Mr Maitland and Ms Valentino are full time members of staff. Miss Oakley works four days a week, with Mrs Medd (a very experienced member of staff) tutoring Miss Oakley's form on the fifth day of the week. Mr Maitland, Ms Valentino and Miss Oakley each do all of the teaching to their forms of what we determine to be the 'core subjects' of English, Maths, Science and Topic. Miss Oakley and Mrs Medd do not split any particular subject between the two of them, thus ensuring

consistent, quality delivery of curricula. Miss Oakley and Mrs Medd liaise very closely (in fact Mrs Medd is in school on other days too), and they communicate very well indeed. This arrangement has happened for the last few years; we have monitored it closely and find that the boys in this class perform to their potential. We are very happy that the boys get a very good deal out of this, and would not have allowed this arrangement to happen if we thought it compromised the boys' learning in any way.

We hope that you find this information helpful and we look forward to giving you more detail about the organisation of Year 4 in September.

Jo Christian
Head of Academic Improvement