



16 March 2023

Dear Families

## Proposal for a House System from September 2023

I am thrilled to share with you plans for an exciting new development at Sackville School, which we believe will not only enhance the pastoral support we offer, but open up many new opportunities for our students.

As you may know, the house system is a tradition that has been a part of many schools for generations. Many of you will have experienced something similar throughout your own schooling and many of our current students belonged to houses in their primary schools.

The benefits of a house system are many, including:

- Helping to foster a sense of **belonging** and **pride** in being part of a community that is larger than their tutor group but smaller than our much larger whole school community.
- It encourages students to **work together** and support each other, regardless of age or ability.
- It can provide ample opportunities for **leadership** and personal **growth**.
- The development of our **extra-curricular** offer through new clubs and **competitions**.
- For families, it will also mean a **consistent team** being in place throughout your child's time at Sackville, helping to further strengthen those important **relationships** between home and school.

We have taken a considerable amount of time and effort to research different house systems to help design a structure that we believe will benefit Sackville students. This has included a range of staff and students visiting a number of other schools and assessing the impact of things such as student engagement, leadership, behaviour, attendance and sense of belonging, alongside the daily pastoral support that is so key to keeping students safe and happy in school.

We have based our research on four key strands that are closely linked to our school vision and values. This has enabled us to come up with our own proposed structure:

1. **Identity** - Knowing every student and building even stronger relationships with families; giving every student a greater sense of belonging in a smaller community
2. **Collaboration** and **Teamwork** - Of students within and across year groups but also of staff. Five equal 'houses', supporting one another, sharing best practice
3. **Leadership** - Increased number of student leadership opportunities across a variety of roles and across all year groups.
4. **Competition** - 'Friendly' competition used to provide new opportunities for students and support us in realising our vision and ambitious aims for every student.

## What will the new structure look like?

Essentially, our Heads of Year and Year Assistants will remain in post but move over into new roles that will mean instead of overseeing one whole year group of 270 students, they will instead oversee a 'house' of students, made up of tutor groups across years 7-11. A **new role will also be created** giving us greater capacity to achieve our aims. Therefore 5 equal houses (or **communities** as we would like to call them), will be created, to replace our current year group structure.

Whilst these teams will still retain oversight of the same number of students, the new system will allow the Community teams to focus on a smaller number of students at key stages throughout their Sackville journey. For example, at the point of transition into year 7, instead of one pastoral team getting to know all 270 students, each Community team would very quickly get to build relationships with 60 students and their families. Another example would be how each Community will be able to focus on their 60 year 11 students in the build up to their exams and so on.

#### Will my child have a change of form tutor or Head of Year?

We felt it was important to retain the relationship you and your child already has with their tutor and to keep all tutor groups the same. So unless your child's tutor is moving on to another role, they will retain the same tutor.

Your child may however have an initial change of Head of Year and Year Assistant. If you have more than one child coming to Sackville, they would be placed into the same house/Community as an older sibling, meaning you only ever have to engage with one pastoral team, therefore further strengthening the communication and relationship between school and home. (This will take time to build up as we cannot guarantee all current siblings go into the same house/community).

#### Will there be a change to uniform?

In order to help students identify as a community it is important to have something visible as part of the uniform. So whilst we are not proposing a major change in the Sackville uniform, we would like to introduce a **new tie** incorporating stripes to denote the colour of their house/Community as well as the Sackville Rose. This would be for **all students** including girls who will need to wear shirts rather than blouses in the new year, to accommodate the clip-on tie. We acknowledge that this change will mean some additional cost however there will be a saving for some families' long term as school shirts are cheaper to buy than blouses. **All existing students in current years 7-10 will be provided with one new tie at no cost to families.**

We will also be introducing the same colour stripe onto the school **jumpers**. However, our aim is that these will be **gradually phased in** as replacement jumpers are ordered, other than year 7 who will start with the new style in September.

#### Will the new system include the Sixth Form?

We think it is incredibly important that our most senior students in the Sixth Form play a **leading role as mentors, leaders and role models** in various forms. Each Sixth Former will therefore be **attached to a Community** and will wear a **lanyard that represents their house/community colour**. However, there will be **no change** to the leadership and management structure of our Sixth Form, or to the assembly and tutor provision as we believe it is important to retain the specialist support and guidance they currently receive.

I hope you can see from this initial letter that considerable thought has gone into a carefully designed house system that we firmly believe will be of benefit to our students. We believe its introduction will not only add to the vibrancy and spirit of our school but also enhance our school community by providing opportunities for us to be more cohesive across year groups and provide focused pastoral support and opportunities for all of our students.

If you would like to find out more about proposals or have a question, there are two ways you can get in touch. Firstly, we will be delivering a **presentation at school on Wednesday 29 March 2023 at 5.30pm**. Spaces will be limited so must be booked in advance by clicking [here](#) to register. Secondly, you can send in a question or note of support to [questions@sackvilleschool.org.uk](mailto:questions@sackvilleschool.org.uk) before Monday 17 April.

Your engagement and feedback will form an important part of our consultation and I will write to you again once we return from the Easter break with an update.

Thank you for your continued support.



Ms Jo Meloni  
Headteacher