

Court Fields School

Achieve | Belong | Participate

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Dear Parents & Carers,

As you know, we have been undertaking a review of our House system over the past year. This was driven by feedback from students, parents and staff. They felt that the House system at Court Fields should fit better with the ethos of the school to achieve, belong and participate. They also felt that the Houses should reflect our local community/area more effectively. We have now completed our review process and wanted to update you on the details, ready for our House Launch on Monday 18th July.

Why was the review necessary?

Students, staff and parents wanted the House system at Court Fields to be built upon our foundation of students belonging to our community, encouraging participation and supporting progress. This was not the case with the previous House system. For many years, as students joined us, they have been allocated to one of 4 Houses and worn a specific coloured tie. With 6 Tutor Groups per Year and 4 Houses, this did not allow for fair competition or participation/reward opportunities in each Year. The House names (Emerald, Ruby, Sapphire and Topaz) did not hold any relevance for students, parents or staff, and were not even rooted in the history of the school or local community.

We also felt that the ties were rather expensive (£6.25 per tie) and when students change Tutor Groups (which happens to around 10% of students annually in Key Stage 3 as the Tutor Groups are linked to teaching groups in some subjects) this caused additional expense for parents/carers. There were also no links to the House system via the curriculum, and it was not embedded in the life of the school. Consequently, students told us that they didn't have the House system that they wanted to value and help promote.

What did we do?

As you know, communication and listening have been key factors in our school improvement, and so we talked to all those involved using a range of surveys and one to one/small group conversations.

- From all the feedback it was clear that a model of 3 Houses, each with 2 Tutor Groups per Year would ensure equal representation in learning and curriculum opportunities, as well as participation and rewards.
- Rather than closing one House, feedback suggested that we make a fresh start with 3 new Houses.
- A significant proportion of the feedback wanted to promote our Wellington roots and link the new House names to our local community/area.
- Feedback suggested that 3 names in the same theme were not easy, as one or more didn't quite fit, therefore the feedback suggested an overarching local theme.
- The three most popular names all have secure links to our town and heritage.
- Feedback suggested that the same colour tie would be cheaper to buy and bring more of a sense of whole school unity to the students. Students, parents and staff suggested a pin badge, worn on the blazer, would provide a reasonable and easy way to denote a student's House. Students and staff contributed ideas and then voted on their chosen tie, which was created from their designs.
- Students also asked to move away from the current House colours, which they felt were very similar to primary school colours, towards something more modern, which would go with our black, grey, white and teal school colours. They also felt that none of the Houses should have the school colours as their House colour.

What's next?



The PLEdge



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We will reveal the new House names and colours on the 18th July to all students, parents and staff. They're top secret until then!

Most children will not move Tutor Group, but will simply belong to a new House. Usually, at the end of each year, we review students' groupings for lessons, so that they have the best opportunities to learn. This year, alongside this, we have created House Groups that are equal across all areas, such as sports, arts, core subjects, technology subjects, computing and so on. We have also ensured they are equal for levels of rewards, behaviour points, attendance etc. Thanks to the knowledge and skills of the Heads of Year and Mrs Westwood, this has resulted in very few changes to current Tutor Groups. In fact, this is in line with our usual end of year student movement.

In the event that your child is moving Tutor Groups you will be contacted directly by the Head of Year or a member of SLT, prior to us launching the House placements to the students in the week commencing 18th July. Students will not experience anything different to our usual end of year student moves (students in Years 8 to 10 will be very familiar with this), but we do know that some students may be worried about any changes, even if they don't impact them directly, so we will make sure we speak to them and you before that happens.

The House Launch will be on Monday 18th July during Period 4. This will allow for any student questions to be answered before the end of the day, and for students to start earning House Points for their new House throughout the last week of term. Points will be awarded across House competitions, uniform, attendance, fundraising and students' academic reports. By drawing points from competitions across all curriculum subjects, plus a range of wider enrichment, for example, we ensure that every student contributes to the success of their House.

All points from this academic year will be carried over to the Autumn Term. These, together with students' House Points, attendance rewards and competition results in the first half of the Autumn Term, will contribute to the award of the House Cup at the end of that half term. The winning House will receive a House Reward Day in the final week before October Half Term. This will include the wearing of non-uniform (with no charge), an activities afternoon and a range of prizes.

What about uniform changes?

- All new Year 7 students starting in September will purchase the new tie at the full price of £4.25. This is a reduction of £2 from the price of the current tie. We will give them a House pin badge on their first day of school in September, when they discover their new House (additional replacement badges will be charged at £1).
- Year 8, 9 and 10 students (for September) will be given a reduction on their new House tie. This will mean that the tie will cost £2.00.
- Year 11 students (for September) will be given a new tie at no charge, to reflect their limited time left at school. If they have been appointed as a Prefect they will already have been awarded their Prefect Tie before the end of term.
- We have been mindful in these changes to try to lower the cost as much as possible, in line with our policy of keeping uniform costs as reasonable as we can. As usual, we can support families with the cost of uniform, simply contact the Finance Office.
- House pin badges will be given to all students on the first day in September to wear with pride.
- The PE kit will not now have any House branding, and sports tops will be black from September in line with the shorts/PE leggings. New Year 7 students will purchase the black top with black football socks (the PE Team are hoping we can channel the All Blacks in our competitions next year!)
- Any student who has the current PE top in blue with house colours in wearable condition can continue to wear this during the next academic year. We do not expect you to buy new uniform if it is not required.
- All uniform should be purchased from South West Schoolwear apart from the ties, which should be bought directly from us on Scopay and collected from school (this keeps the costs down) and the pin badges, which will be given to students in September.

- All other uniform remains the same as this academic year, and of course can be purchased from South West Schoolwear online or at their shop in Taunton. We are also running a pre-loved uniform shop at the Wellington Pop-up Shop in the week starting the 11th July. Pre-loved uniform can be swapped for another size or you can simply purchase pre-loved uniform from our stock for a voluntary donation.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for all your support and feedback during the House Review process. We are very excited for our House Launch and we look forward to seeing students in their new ties and badges in September, working across all aspects of their school life to contribute to their House and develop the characteristics of Court Fields School students that will equip them for their successful futures.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Polly Matthews
Headteacher