

02 June 2026

Dear Parents/Carers,

Following careful consideration, we will be changing the way that we group students for learning in Year 8. We want to share these changes with you now, explain the thinking behind them, and ensure that you understand the benefits for your child.

Changes to class groupings from September 2026

As you will be aware the school has previously set students into teaching groups based on their attainment at KS2. We will be moving from this process to mainly mixed-attainment teaching in all subject areas in Year 8 from September in line with the majority of schools in the city. Whilst class codes will still be in number order, we will make it clear that these classes are equal.

The nurture group will remain separate to this change, and will continue to receive specialist support and teaching. Tutor groups will also continue to remain the same.

Why are we making this change?

Research shows that mixed-attainment classes provide more significant benefits for students. For example, students tend to be more confident and to engage more during discussions and group work; feel able to make progress in subject areas and have improved self-esteem and perception of themselves as learners. At Woodlands we believe that mixed-attainment teaching will raise the aspirations of all students; leading to better progress for all.

Movement between groups

The teaching groups will be carefully created by the pastoral teams, and will represent a full range of prior attainment in each mixed-attainment group. As any groupings will be carefully considered and data driven, we hope that you can understand that we will not be able to consider changes based on friendships.

Thank you for your support as we make this change. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the year team.

Yours sincerely,



Miss D Sutton

Deputy Head Teacher

deb.sutton@woodlands.southampton.sch.uk



Minstead Avenue, Harefield,
Southampton SO18 5FW
Telephone: 023 8046 2322
023 8046 3303 (24hr)
023 8047 4866 (Community Office)
Fax: 023 8046 2342
Email: info@woodlands.southampton.sch.uk
Website: www.woodlands.southampton.sch.uk