22nd June 18

Dear Parent/Carer,

I am coming to the end of my first year as the headteacher of Tanfield School and I would like to thank all of you for the ongoing support you have given me. I feel privileged to lead such fantastic students and staff.

Whilst we have made good progress on lots of things this year, we are still not where I want the school to be. Your children deserve the very best and as a parent I want to ensure your child gets the education that I want for my son. Therefore, we are going to be introducing morning and afternoon meetings.

Morning meetings will be replacing tutor time. They will start at 8.40am and finish at 9.00am. Afternoon meetings are going to be introduced to allow us to split our lunches.

Currently all students have the same lunchtime, which runs from 12.20pm to 1.00pm. We have 610 students in the school. This is a lot of students to get through the dining hall in 40 minutes. If you ask your children, they will tell you that we have a very long queue!

The year 11 group that have just left had 81 students in the year. However, we have 170 students starting year 7 in September. With these extra 89 students, it will be impossible to get students through in the 40 minutes. Therefore, we are going to split the lunchtime so that year 7 and 8 will have their lunch between 12.15pm and 12.45pm and years 9, 10 and 11 will have their lunch between 12.45pm and 1.15pm. This will mean that there will be around 340 students going through in each sitting.

Whilst year 7 and 8 are having their lunch, year 9, 10 and 11 will be in their afternoon meeting and then they will swap over. Year 11 will be in their extra GCSE tutor groups that they have been in for the second part of year 10.

I know one of the biggest issues students and parents have had with our behaviour system is the fairness with which it has been implemented. I have not been happy with some of the inconsistent application of the behaviour policy because I fully agree that it isn't fair when students appear to have been treated differently. For example, when two students turn up late in the morning and one gets a detention from their tutor and the other student doesn't. We believe that introducing morning meetings with all of the students from two year groups in one place, we will ensure greater consistency.

We have also listened to the students and parents who have expressed the view that we have often focused on the negative. Therefore, in morning meetings we will be using that time to praise students for their positive behaviour. Staff will give appreciations to students who have displayed our core values of hard work, trust and fairness the previous day. We hope that students will also do this to each other.

The afternoon meetings will be used for retrieval practice, literacy and numeracy development; strengthening of school culture (we are all part of Team Tanfield); value expectations reset; and further appreciations / recognition of the positive behaviour from our students.

Therefore, the school day will look like this:

8.40am – 9.00am - Morning meeting
9.00am – 10.00am – period 1
10.00am – 11.00am – period 2
11.00am – 11.15am – break
11.15am – 12.15am - period 3
12.15pm – 12.45pm – year 7 and 8 lunch and 9, 10 and 11 afternoon meeting
12.45pm – 1.15pm – year 7 and 8 afternoon meeting and 9, 10 and 11 lunch
1.15pm – 2.10pm – period 4
2.10pm – 3.05pm – period 5

At Tanfield School we have many minds but one mission: to get students to attend the best university, or real alternative, succeed in their dream job and thrive in all aspects of their life. We believe these changes will help us to achieve our mission.

Having a successful home – school partnership is extremely important to Tanfield School. We recognise that the quality of this partnership will play a crucial part in the support your child receives to reach their academic potential and maintain a strong sense of well – being. Therefore, if you have any questions, please do get in touch.

Thank you for your continued support,

S. Clough
Headteacher