December 6, 2013

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Work is now well underway to ensure that our transition to the new timetable in January is as smooth as possible. Some of the work included has involved modifications to schemes of work and lesson plans so that they fit the new timings of the day and this work is being undertaken by teachers. However, the biggest part of the task has been the actual writing of the timetable in a way that closely mirrors the current situation in terms of the proportions of time allocated to each subject, and that also maintains the allocation of staff to teaching groups as much as possible. That work has been undertaken by an experienced timetabler who has managed to bring about a number of beneficial improvements to the positions and timings of lessons. New timetables will be issued to students before the end of term.

We know that students usually feel most settled and comfortable when they keep the same teacher for an entire year or longer, and we agree that this is very important. However, the new timetable will enable us to run teaching groups in Years 9, 10 and 11 in English, Mathematics and Science at the same time, thus providing us with the opportunity to much more finely group the students according to ability.

Ability setting is a teaching tool which is widely used and is recognised as leading to greater levels of success for students of all abilities. Chatham Grammar School for Boys has been unusual in not having fully utilised ability grouping in the past, but we are keen to change that now as we know that the result will be improved examination results for our students. Of course, this will require changes of teaching groups for some students, although this has already recently occurred in Maths because of the early GCSE entries.

To keep you informed between now and the end of term you will receive a further letter telling you which teaching group your son has been placed in for English, Maths and Science. Should you have any questions about this please do not hesitate to contact the appropriate member of staff.

Yours sincerely,

Juliet Diaz
Deputy Headteacher