



South Dartmoor Community College

Executive Head teacher | Mrs J Veal

Balland Lane | Ashburton | Devon | TQ13 7EW

01364 652230 | www.southdartmoor.devon.sch.uk



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Dear Home,

I am writing to inform you of an important update regarding the class structure for students in Year 7 to Year 11 in the Science Department. This change is based on current educational research and aims to provide the best learning experience for your children.

Starting this academic year, Year 7, Year 8, and Year 9 students will be placed in mixed ability classes for their science subjects. The number following the year group designation indicates the specific class your child has been assigned to. This decision has been made in consideration of the evolving educational landscape and research that suggests the benefits of mixed ability groupings, particularly for students in these crucial years of development.

For Year 9 students, this change is particularly significant. Historically, students were set by ability based on early assessments. Research has consistently shown that setting students in mixed-ability classes during the early stages of GCSE topics, especially when the tier of entry has not yet been determined, does not significantly impact their progress. At this point, students are building foundational knowledge and skills that are essential for their future success in science.

In Year 10 and Year 11, the structure is different. Students will be set into tiered classes - foundation or higher - for their science subjects. However, within these tiered classes, we will continue to promote a mixed ability approach to foster collaboration and peer learning among students with diverse strengths and abilities.

Please rest assured that our dedicated teaching staff is fully prepared to support every student in their individual learning journey, regardless of their class placement.

If you have any questions or would like further information regarding this change, please do not hesitate to reach out to us.

Many thanks

Kerri McCarthy
Head of Science Department

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