

Vertical Form Classes at Dargaville High School

Times are changing!

Our strive for Respect, Responsibility, Integrity and Contributing in the lives of our students is taking us to new and exciting educational developments here at DHS.

From January 2011 we are going to make some innovative changes to our form class system.

We have made significant progress on establishing a system which provides effective support and guidance for pupils' learning and personal development.

"Education is changing rapidly and becoming far more personalised so we have to look for new ways to support and guide our students," says David Bargh, Principal of Dargaville High School.

Generally, form teachers oversee the progress of nearly 30 students in a given form class. All 30 have the same experience at the same time. Take for example a Year 9 form class - the teacher has to deal with all 30 pupils in a 5-10 minute form period – a difficult and pressured task to meet the relevant deadlines and give quality support to all in a limited time-span.



We think we have the solution... Vertical Form Classes!

HIGH PERFORMING SCHOOLS IN NEW ZEALAND

Other schools are operating this system and we have visited them to learn from their experience. Senior Managers and DHS staff has visited Bream Bay College in Ruakaka and Massey High School in Auckland. Some of the best state secondary schools have changed to Vertical Form Classes, including Westlake Boys' High School (Auckland), Francis Douglas Memorial College (New Plymouth), and Marlborough Girls' College (Blenheim).

We want at Dargaville High School to be amongst the best!

We want to be high performing in all aspects of our work!

Vertical Form Classes consists of mixed age groups registering for 20 minutes twice a week and for 10 minutes three times a week.

There will be a maximum of 7 Year 9 students in each Vertical Form Class, with the numbers reducing as they move through the years ending with 3-4 Year 13 students per Vertical Form class. Form teachers who deal with different pressure points in the school calendar will only have 3-7 students to assist at any one time for age related activities e.g. goal setting, academic mentoring, options, etc.

Vertical Form Classes will be a mixture of all ages.

We will increase the number of staff who are form teachers.

Each student will have the same Vertical Form Teacher from Year 9 to Year 13

Vertical Form Classes will operate in a House system, four Houses in total

Siblings will be in the same House, but not necessarily in the same Vertical Form Class

RESPECT

RESPONSIBILITY

CONTRIBUTING

INTEGRITY

How will Vertical Form System work?

We believe that children can learn well from each other. We think this system will allow Vertical Form Teachers to track their students more efficiently and therefore tackle underachievement more quickly. Communication between school and home will undoubtedly benefit.

- ☑ Teaching groups will remain the same as they are now and affected only by movement in sets.
- ☑ House assemblies will take place on a regular basis.
- ☑ Horizontal Deans will meet with their respective year groups on a weekly basis.
- ☑ Horizontal Deans will manage academic placement, and serious behaviour and disciplinary issues.
- ☑ Vertical Form Classes will be like mini families and our Vertical Form Teachers will provide a safe and caring environment for their students, but will manage lower level pastoral issues, e.g. uniform and punctuality.

The Vertical Form Class System

- ☑ More accurately reflects the nature of society, as people rarely work with others their age.
- ☑ Supports academic intervention – we could have effectively 20+ Vertical Form Teachers working with a targeted year group. e.g. Year 11, instead of usual 4-5 form teachers
- ☑ Older students will take on responsibility for induction of younger students and positive relationships between younger and older students will flourish
- ☑ Negative gang culture in some year groups, will be eradicated and behaviour managed better.
- ☑ Vertical Form Teachers would have a wide experience of the needs of a child in each year group – hence a more holistic approach is achieved
- ☑ Students will observe the school journey through other students before it is their turn
- ☑ Students can support each other through critical events – Junior and Senior Options, Junior Modules and NCEA. Students learn most effectively from their peers
- ☑ House assemblies will have more of a community ethos and whole school impact.
- ☑ It will stop students from getting “lost” in a big school with only 3-7 from each year group, the Vertical Form Teacher can give attention and support intensively at key times
- ☑ It will allow for more individual guidance for curriculum choices and achievement during the two 20 mins registration slots so we can target support to the pupils when they need it most

How will it affect you, the parents and caregivers?

- ☑ Improved communication.
- ☑ Each House will have a House Leader whom you may contact as you wish.
- ☑ We're looking at giving each House its own e-mail address
- ☑ The progress of all members of a House will be tracked more rigorously and you will be kept informed more regularly.

Dargaville High School House Structure

