The Timetabler's Year

A brief timetable of timetabling.

September - October (if the school year begins in September)

Transfer the data from ***TimeTabler*** to ***StaffCover*** if not already done; use ***StaffCover*** daily.

Evaluate the new timetable; observe it in action; listen to colleagues' comments.
If colleagues make minor room-swaps etc, make the changes in ***TimeTabler*** and/or ***StaffCover***.

November - December

Begin discussions on changes for next year.
Aim for complete agreement by New Year on any major changes (eg. in the number of periods per week, or the subjects in the options blocks/columns/electives), to allow time for 'What if ...?' experiments with ***TimeTabler***.
After any major changes, or otherwise in every alternate year, re-calculate the contact ratio and the distribution of curriculum bonuses, and check the rooming fraction.

January - March

Finalise the optional subjects to be offered to Year 9 (and Year 11) students for next year's Year 10 (and Year 12). Arrange Careers Evenings and other options advice; issue proformas of the choices to students/parents.
Collect in and vet the students' choices, and use ***Options*** to analyse and arrange an efficient pattern of option subjects/electives. Involve year-tutors, HoDs, students, parents as necessary.
Counsel any students who do not fit the pattern, until all are catered for.

March - April

Produce a more detailed curriculum plan (see the 'Curriculum Notation' sheet).
Re-check that it can be covered by existing staff expertise, or is expected to be covered by appointments that are due to be made.
Ask Heads of Department (HoDs) to nominate staff for each group, on a proforma sheet.
?Expect HoDs to draw up a Combing Chart for their own department?

April - May

Check the HoDs replies to ensure that all the curriculum is covered, with no omissions or duplications.
Check the loading for each teacher, with due allowance for other responsibilities (year-tutors, etc).

?Apply pre-scheduling checks (eg. Combing Chart, Conflict Matrix, Zarraga's Rule, on paper or within ***TimeTabler*** - see section D of the ***TimeTabler*** manual or see the 'Timetabling' book, chapters 4 - 8), especially to suspect areas of the curriculum. Or just do some automatic 'What if ...?' runs in ***TimeTabler***.

May - June

Enter the data into ***TimeTabler*** and begin scheduling.

?Print and publish drafts for consultation, especially if you use the 'Pools' feature in ***TimeTabler***. Adjust the schedule as necessary.

July

Print and publish the timetable, including (1) a 'master' staff timetable for the staffroom/office,
(2) individual staff timetables for colleagues, (3) class timetables for tutor-group noticeboards, etc.

Transfer the timetable data,

- from ***TimeTabler*** to ***Options***, and/or
- from ***TimeTabler*** to the school Admin System

and then print out (4) Individual Student Timetables, and (5) Group Lists for colleagues,
to distribute either now, or on the first day of the new term.

Transfer the timetable data from ***TimeTabler*** to ***StaffCover***, ready for next term.

September

Begin the cycle again!

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