

Weston Secondary School's Communication Policy 2024-2027

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Introduction

We believe that clear, open communication between the school and parents/carers has a positive impact on students' learning because it:

- Gives parents/carers the information they need to support their child's education.
- Helps the school improve, through feedback and consultation with parents/carers.
- Builds trust between home and school, which helps the school better support each child's educational and pastoral needs.

The aim of this policy is to promote clear and open communication by:

- Explaining how the school communicates with parents/carers.
- Setting clear standards and expectations for responding to communication from parents/carers.
- Helping parents/carers reach the member of school staff who is best placed to address their specific query or concern so they can get a response as quickly as possible.

In the following sections, we will use 'parents' to refer to both parents and carers.

Roles and responsibilities

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Ensuring that communications with parents are effective, timely and appropriate.
- Monitoring the implementation of this policy.
- Regularly reviewing this policy.

Staff are responsible for:

- Responding to communication from parents in line with this policy and the school's ICT and internet acceptable use policy.
- Working with other members of staff to make sure parents get timely information (if they cannot address a query or send the information themselves).

Staff will aim to respond to communication from parents within 48hrs of receiving it. In line with promoting staff wellbeing and helping our staff find a suitable work-life balance, staff may work around other responsibilities and commitments and respond before the 48-hour deadline, but they are not expected to do so.

Parents are responsible for:

- Ensuring that communication with the school is always respectful.
- Making every reasonable effort to address communications to the appropriate member of staff in the first instance.
- Responding to communications from the school (such as requests for meetings) in a timely manner.
- Checking all communications from the school.

Any communication that is considered disrespectful, abusive, or threatening will be treated in line with our visitor code of conduct.

Parents should not expect staff to respond to their communication outside of core school hours 8am-4pm, or during school holidays.

How we communicate with parents and carers

The sections below explain how we keep parents up to date with their child's education and what is happening in school.

Parents should monitor all the following regularly to make sure they do not miss important communications or announcements that may affect their child.

Email: we use email to keep parents informed about the following things:

- Upcoming school events.
- Scheduled school closures (for example, for staff training days).
- Short notice changes to the school day.
- Emergency school closures (for instance, due to bad weather).
- School surveys or consultations.
- Class activities or teacher requests.

My Child At School (MCAS)

My Child At School (MCAS) is an online portal for parents that enables them to view their child's pupil information at school in real-time via the MCAS app or a web browser. If you do not have your login details please contact our Data & Admissions Manager via the school office.

The facility allows your child's attendance, assessment, exams, timetable, class list, behaviour, reports and announcements to be accessed at any time. As well as pupil performance data, the portal also provides general information about school, such as the school calendar and any important announcements.

Our school calendar:

Our website includes a full school calendar for the academic year. Where possible, we try to give parents at least 2 weeks' notice of any events or special occasions (including non-uniform days, special assemblies, visitors, or requests for students to bring in special items or materials).

Phone calls:

Staff may use phone calls to contact parents for the following reasons:

- Praise or recognition.
- Emergencies.
- Behavioural concerns.
- Permission for a child to leave school site.
- Specific event, photography, or trip consent.

We send the following letters home regularly:

- Letters about trips and visits.
- Consent forms.
- Reports.
- News and events.

Reports:

Parents receive three reports over the course of the year which provide an update on the progress their child is making across all their subjects along with their attendance for the academic year. At the end of Year 10 and throughout Year 11 the results of any internal and external assessments will also be included on each child's report.

Once during the academic year, parents are invited into the school to meet with their child's teachers to talk about their progress and achievement. In Year 7 there is also an opportunity in the Autumn term to meet with their child's tutor.

School meetings:

We hold 1 parent evening per year group, per academic year. During these meetings, parents can talk with teachers about their child's achievement and progress, the curriculum or schemes of work, their child's wellbeing, or any other area of concern.

The school may also contact parents to arrange meetings between parents' evenings if there are concerns about a child's achievement, progress, or wellbeing.

Parents of students with special educational needs (SEN), or who have other additional needs, may also be asked to attend further meetings to address these additional needs.

Social Media

The school has a Facebook page and encourages parents to follow the page. We use the page to celebrate our students' successes and promote any events and celebrations happening at the school. We ask that parents and carers respect this page and refrain from posting any disrespectful, derogatory, threatening, or abusive comments.

School website

The Weston Secondary School website is the hub for all communication, any information that is sent to a parent via email/MCAS app, will also be posted on our website.

Accessibility

It is important to us that everyone in our community can communicate easily with the school.

Parents with additional communication needs:

We aim to make communications accessible to all. We have taken the following steps to achieve this:

- All whole-school announcements and communications (such as email alerts and newsletters) are made available in multiple formats.
- All communications are written as clearly and concisely as possible.
- Accessibility is considered when designing/updating the school website.
- Staff are trained on accessibility and will endeavour to provide information in an accessible format.

Parents who need help communicating with the school can request reasonable adjustments, such as:

- School announcements and communications in accessible formats.
- Sign language interpreters for meetings.

Please contact the school office to discuss these.

Parents with English as an additional language (EAL)

Our school website can currently be changed to the following languages:

- English
- Arabic
- Chinese
- Dutch
- French
- Pashto
- Italian
- German
- Persian
- Polish
- Portuguese

- Punjabi
- Romanian
- Spanish
- Urdu

This list is always under review, and different languages will be added if a need is identified.

Parents who need help communicating with the school can request the following support:

- School announcements and communications translated into additional languages.
- Interpreters for meetings or phone calls.

Links with other policies

The policy should be read alongside our policies on:

- Acceptable use of ICT
- Online Safety
- Parent code of conduct
- Staff code of conduct
- Complaints
- Home-school agreement
- Social media policy

Appendix 1

If you have questions about any of the topics in the table below, or would like to speak to a member of staff:

- Email or call the school office on info@westonsecondary.co.uk 02380 447820.
- Put the subject and the name of the relevant member of staff (from the list below) in the subject line (for emails).
- We will forward your request on to the relevant member of staff.

Remember: check our website first, much of the information you need is posted there.

We try to respond to all emails within 48hrs (Monday – Friday).

I have a question about	Who you need to talk to
My child's learning/class activity/lesson/homework	Your child's tutor
My Child's wellbeing/pastoral support	Your child's Head of Year/Deputy Head of Year
Payments	Finance and Business Officer
School Trips	Finance and Business Officer
Uniform	Reception
Attendance reporting/holiday requests	Attendance team
Behaviour concerns	Your child's Head of Year/Deputy Head of Year
Special Educational Need	SENCO/Deputy SENCO/Assistant SENCO
Catering/school meals	Reception