

WESTFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL

# Parent and Guardian Communication Policy

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## **Parent and Guardian Communication Policy**

### **Introduction**

At Westfield Primary School PRIDE values are at the heart of everything we do. We aim to provide a safe, caring and friendly environment for all our pupils and staff. This encompasses all interactions within our school community, between pupils, staff, parents and any visitors. We aim for our PRIDE values to show through everything that is said and done in school.

Schools have many lines of communication to maintain: with parents and carers, with other schools, with the community, with outside agencies, and within the school. Good communication between the school and the home is essential, and children achieve more when schools and parents work together. Parents can naturally help more if they know what the school is trying to achieve.

At Westfield Primary School we aim to have clear and effective communications with all parents and with the wider community. Effective communications enable us to share our aims and values through keeping parents well informed about school life. This reinforces the important role that parents play in supporting the school and their children's education.

We have various strategies for communicating with parents. Some of our communications are in accordance with a statutory requirement; while others simply reflect what we believe is important for our school.

We try to make our written communications as accessible and inclusive as possible. We seek to avoid bias, stereotyping or any form of discrimination. We wish to recognise and celebrate the contributions made to our society by all the cultural groups represented in our school. Parents have access to the school website to view electronic versions of documents to support communications.

### **Collection of children.**

Children must be collected promptly at the end of the day and from all after- school clubs.

Staff offer clubs on a voluntary basis and therefore persistent late collectors will be advised they will be unable to attend due to a lack of adequate supervision.

### **Annual written report to parents: children's achievements**

Every year we provide a written report to each child's parents on the child's progress in the various National Curriculum subjects. This report identifies areas of strength and areas for future development. In our school we ask the children to comment on their own progress, and we ask parents to make a similar comment. Teachers are asked to report their 'Teacher Assessment' in Reading, Writing and Maths and we also give parents in Years 4 and 6 the details of their child's performance in any national checks or tests, and in Year R the EYFS profile outcomes.

As well as receiving the annual written report, parents are provided with the opportunity to speak to their child's teacher twice a year for a private parent-teacher consultation. This gives them the opportunity to celebrate their child's successes, and to support their child in areas where there is a particular need for improvement. Parents are also given information on where their child is performing in relation to age related expectations and targets which the child is currently working on in core subjects. We encourage parents to contact the school if any issues arise regarding their child's progress or well-being throughout the academic year. Prior to these parent consultations, parents have an opportunity to attend school to look at their child's books with them.

When children have special educational needs, or if they are making less than the expected progress, we find it helpful to speak to and/or meet with parents more regularly. A child, whose progress is causing concern, or a child who has identified Special Educational Needs (SEN) will be reviewed and supported in line with the 2014 SEND Code of Practice and within school policy, protocol and procedures. Parents/carers will be kept informed of all monitoring outcomes and educational provision made.

In accordance with the 2014 SEND Code of Practice parents are encouraged to be involved right from the initial stages. Parents are given the opportunity to express their views, be active in decision making and participate in their child's education, at review meetings, parent consultations and induction meetings. Where appropriate, pupils are given the opportunity to express their views and comment on their success and how best to support them.

### **School Prospectus**

The school prospectus contains a range of specified information to give parents a full picture of provision at our school. A copy of this is available on our website.

### **Prospective parents and carers**

Prospective parents and carers are invited to an Open Evening in the November of the year preceding their child's year of entry to the school. They are provided with a recorded presentation prior to the opportunity to attend published tours to enable them to see the school operating.

### **Public access documents**

The school makes a range of documentation available to parents on the website, including a range of policies, and the school office can make a copy of these available on request. Minutes of governors' meetings are available to view from the school office.

### **Home-school communication**

#### **Marvellous Me App**

Class teachers regularly communicate with parents and carers through the Marvellous Me App.

#### **Newsletter**

We send, with parental consent, a newsletter to parents electronically every month throughout the year. It contains general details of school events and activities. Parents appreciate the newsletter and the regularity of the contact.

#### **Website & Twitter**

Information about school events are also posted on the school's website and Twitter account.

#### **Information Letters**

We send other letters of a general nature when necessary, such as:

- Progress Meetings
- Letters re. out of school visits, payments, confirmation and approval
- Invitations to SEN Meetings, School Performances, Sporting Events etc.
- Letters regarding curriculum enrichment activities - Music, Sport, Modern Foreign Languages etc.
- Information about assemblies

At the beginning of each term all teachers write to the parents of the children in their classes with details of the work to be covered during the forthcoming term; our 'Class topic webs' and class news. We invite parents to support their child's work through discussion and shared interest. We also invite parents with DBS' to support educational visits that are linked to the work, recognising their valuable contribution to our curriculum enrichment activities. Parents have opportunities to visit their child's class and are able to see their child's work during some of these visits. Parents can contact class teachers via the individual class email addresses or the school email address or telephone number to book an appointment for any communication - [info@westfield.surrey.sch.uk](mailto:info@westfield.surrey.sch.uk).

### **Reading diaries**

Children in Years R-2 have reading diaries that are sent out (and returned) on a daily basis each week. Parents are requested to sign the diary each time they listen to their child read. It can also be used for messages between home and school.

### **Homework diaries**

Children in KS2, have homework diaries that are sent out (and returned) on a daily basis each week. We request that each task be acknowledged by the home-adult. They can do this by a signature, or through comments written in the book. Children also receive homework and feedback on a regular basis each week (**see Assessment and Feedback policy**).

### **Direct contact with teachers**

The school encourages parents and carers to share any issues about their child at the earliest opportunity. They are encouraged to write notes to the class teacher, or catch them at the end of the day or email them via the class email address. Where this is not possible, the parent should make an appointment.

We provide the opportunity for many parents to speak with the teacher in Early Years or Key Stage 1, when they collect their children after school; we find that this 'immediacy' and 'availability' enhances the home-school communication. At Key Stage 2 (Yrs 3 - 6) we promote independence to prepare the children for secondary school. Children may be given messages to take home verbally or communication may increase in the Reading/Homework Diary. The parents do not necessarily get daily contact with the class teacher for this reason.

Direct face-to-face contact with class teacher or class staff at the end of the school day should be focussed and of a short duration recognising that the class teacher has numerous calls on their time. Should the frequency of these meetings be deemed overly onerous, the Headteacher or member of SLT reserves the right to withdraw or place limits on this communication channel.

We arrange 'Curriculum Meetings' for Parents. These meetings enable staff to explain areas of our curriculum as requested by parents/carers through either verbal feedback or through parent questionnaires. 'Training' for parents is scheduled through a series of workshops that demonstrate how parents could support their child at home in core subject areas.

We hold a meeting for new Early Years Foundation Stage parents each Summer. We schedule a communication via letter for Year 1 parents regarding phonics and for Year 6 parents via letter, and/or recorded presentations regarding the national statutory tests. In the summer term we offer a "meet your new Year team teachers" session alongside a presentation.

## **Absence**

If a child is absent, parents and carers are asked to contact the school as soon as possible on the morning of the absence notifying their child's absence using the Study Bugs App.

If a child is absent from school, and we have had no indication of the reason, we contact a parent (by telephone, if possible) to find out the reason for the absence (**see Attendance Policy**).

## **Behaviour**

Parents are contacted in line with our **Behaviour Policy**, should behaviour concerns arise.

**Questionnaires** are issued each year. These take the form of an online electronic response, or a hard copy form.

## **Responding to letters received**

Staff will always reply to a letter from parents and carers as quickly as possible. A response to acknowledge receipt of a letter will be made by telephone, letter or email within 2 working days and responded to within 10 working days.

## **E-mail**

E-mail is a quick, effective way of communicating necessary information and is the school's preferred method of communication. Emails received will be treated in the same way as letters: acknowledged within 2 working days and responded to within 10 working days.

Parents and carers may wish to contact the school via email for a general enquiry as an alternative to telephone or letter. The school's email address for general enquiries is:

[info@westfield.surrey.sch.uk](mailto:info@westfield.surrey.sch.uk).

Parents and carers are encouraged to provide the school with a current email address for prompt and effective communication.

## **Telephone Calls**

Effective telephone communication can sometimes be a problem in a school, where teachers may be teaching full-time and running clubs or working with pupils at lunchtime or after school. Parents and carers may be frustrated if they feel that a message elicits no immediate reply, when in fact there has been no available opportunity for the member of staff to reach a telephone to return a call.

In a non-emergency a return call will be made within 2 working days, with any follow up action from the request /query/problem being dealt with within 10 working days.

## **Texts**

Automated texts are sent to parents/carers when appropriate (including in the event of an emergency closure of the school).

## **Accessibility**

We will endeavour to make any reasonable adjustments that may be necessary to enable a parent or carer with a disability to participate fully in a meeting or to receive and understand a communication.

Documents printed using a larger font can usually be provided upon request.

If a translation of a document is required, in the first instance parents/carers should access Google Translate. Where appropriate and possible and where required a translator provided to ensure effective communication.

### **Medical Incidents and Medicines**

If a child has a minor accident (e.g. grazed/cut knee) in school, this will be noted in an incident book, but parents/carer will not necessarily be informed. When discussing the day with their children, their child may therefore inform them about any minor accidents they had, such as a cut or graze.

If a child has a more significant injury, an accident form will be completed and sent home with the child to inform parents, these are usually in the child's book bags, which parents should check daily.

For more serious issues, sickness or diarrhoea or where a child has received an injury to the head a parent/carer will be contacted.

Please note that only prescribed medications will be given in school. However a form must be completed in the office first, and medicines must come in their box as prescribed by the doctor.

In cases of headlice, a letter or email is sent out to all the children in the class to ask parents to check their child's hair and treat where necessary. If a child is exhibiting distress due to head lice, the parent will be rung and informed to enable them to act quickly to alleviate their child's discomfort.

ALL medicines must be collected by the parents/carers at the end of the school year. This is so parents can ensure their child's medication is in date. It will be parents/ carers responsibility to then bring children's medications back in for the next school year.

### **General home/school communication**

We always try to do the best for all our children and ask parents to check their child's book bags for notes, particularly if they are in the Infants (Years R—2). At Key stage 2 (Years 3—6) we promote independence to prepare the children for their transition to secondary school. Children are encouraged to give messages themselves, including passing on an accident form, we ask parents to encourage this too.

### **School Inclusion Team**

Our school Inclusion Team are available to offer help and support to both our pupils and their parents and carers, across the whole school on a wide range of issues affecting education and general family life.

The team members are:

**Mrs Julia Findlay:** Inclusion Leader / DSL (full time)

**Mrs Rachel Sadler:** SENCO ( Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday & Friday)

**Ms Tina Weaver** - Nurture Lead (full time)

**Ms Hannah Anderson** - Well-being Assistant (full time)

A member of the Inclusion Team is available on the two entrance gates for a quick word each morning and on the playground in the afternoon alongside the class teacher or LSA dismissing the class.

They all aim to be as accessible as possible to parents and carers; but as we have 420 pupils at our school, the demands on their time are high. They have to work on a priority needs basis and always put the needs of any children first. Therefore, there are times when they may not be able to meet with or speak to you or respond to a query or request that you have made immediately.

Wherever possible please always book an appointment to see any member of the team with the Office. : Tel: 01483 764187 or info@westfield.surrey.sch.uk

For non urgent matters they will always aim to reply to queries and meeting or other requests within 5 working days.

Please always attend any meeting booked, or notify us as soon as possible if you can no longer attend. If 2 support meetings with the team are missed without a good reason we reserve the right not to schedule any further meetings.

### **Communication with other schools and outside agencies**

Towards the end of their final term in Year 6, we pass on information about the children to their intended secondary schools. We try to give a view of the whole child, and we include their expected national test results, their strengths and weaknesses, their interests and responsibilities (e.g. prefects, sports team member, school council representative, playground friend, etc.). There is also an electronic transfer of further information about the child, organised by the government. We may also send on several items of work. We also arrange visits for named children to attend 'welcome sessions' in addition to those arranged for Y6 as a whole, through the secondary schools invitation.

We recognise that children have diverse needs, and we are supported by various agencies and groups of professionals who keep us informed on better ways to meet these needs, so that children may participate more fully. Support comes from medical services (such as speech and language therapy, occupational therapy and physiotherapy), from child development centres, from doctors and specialists, and from school nurses. It also comes from our in-school Mindworks NDS team, external counsellors and various welfare-focused services, such as Education Welfare, Social Services and Behaviour Intervention Services.

We recognise that children have a fundamental right to be protected from harm, that their protection is a shared responsibility, and that our school should provide a safe and secure environment. During the school day we are the people most in contact with your children, and we are therefore in a unique position to identify and help abused children. So when any member of staff has concerns about a child, these will be passed on to the Designated Safeguarding Leads and the Head Teacher, who may share this information with the Social Services, through a C-SPA referral (**see Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy**).

We hold information on pupils in our school, and from time to time we are required to pass some of this information to others for educational purposes. Parents have a right to view the information we hold, and we have contact details of the agencies to which our information is passed.

### **Severe weather and emergency closure**

In the event of emergency closure communication will be made to parents and carers via text or email. Parents and carers should also tune in to local radio and check the school website.

### **Acceptable tone and behaviour**

Parents agree to "maintain good, open communication with my child's class teacher and other staff and respond to school letters and correspondence promptly and demonstrate how to be a good role model, supporting our PRIDE values in school and home life by my attitude and behaviour'.

We welcome visitors to Westfield Primary School. We will act to ensure it remains a safe place for pupils, staff and all members of our community. If you have any concerns, we will listen to them and

seek to address them. Please be aware, however, that abusive, offensive, threatening or violent behaviour will not be tolerated in this school. Visitors behaving in this way are likely to be removed and may be barred from the premises and/or prosecuted. See the Appendices A and B and the school's full **Code of Conduct for Parents, Carers and Visitors**, and **Anti-Bullying and Harassment (Including Sexual Harassment) policy**, copies of which can be found on the school's website.

### **Maintaining a respectful school environment**

We are committed to fostering a respectful, safe, and professional atmosphere for all staff and children. As part of our zero-tolerance approach, the following behaviours are considered unacceptable and will not be tolerated:

- Aggressive or inappropriate emails, phone calls, or messages
- Shouting or raised voices directed at staff or visiting adults
- Use of offensive, abusive, or inappropriate language (including swearing)

### **Zero-tolerance approach**

We operate a zero-tolerance approach to any form of aggression, intimidation or personal attack towards staff.

In our school community "zero tolerance" for aggression, intimidation, or personal attacks towards staff by parents/carers in our school may include:

- Written warnings
- Permanent or temporary bans from school grounds
- Restrictions on communication (e.g., only via written channels or through a designated liaison)
- Police involvement for serious threats or harassment

Where the school considers any complaints raised to be unreasonable and/or persistent complaints the school may follow the procedures set out in the school's **Complaints policy**, a copy of which can be found on the school's website.

We look forward to working in Partnership with all members of the community in a positive manner, supporting our PRIDE values and ethos.

## Adult Conduct in School



We have an expectation that all adults and children in school are always respectful to each other. This includes parents and visitors.

Adults who use offensive language, shout, are aggressive, threaten or are violent towards staff...

- Will be asked to leave the school site.
- If they refuse, the police will be called.
- Adults may be banned from entry to the school site in the future.

Staff will not continue with the conversation and will walk away.

...whilst on the phone:

- The phone call will be terminated by the member of staff on the receiving end.
- The police may be notified.



## Appendix B

### Information Poster



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**If you have concerns we will always listen to them and seek to address them.**

**Please be aware, however, that abusive, threatening or violent behaviour will not be tolerated. Visitors behaving in this way may be subject to a bar from the school site.**

**No meeting at the school may be electronically recorded without the express permission of all parties. Information obtained without such permission will not be admissible in any proceedings.**

