Westfield School
School and Home Communications Procedure

Information	Data
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Westfield School

Chorus Education Trust

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1. Introduction and aims

Clear, open, and relevant communication between school and parents/carers at home is integral to helping our young people achieve their best.

Strong communication between school and home:

- Ensures parents, carers, and school staff have the information they need to support their young person's education
- Enables school to improve its provision through feedback and consultation
- Builds a trusting and supportive environment that continues between school and home, so our young people feel safe and supported

This guide outlines the systems we have in place to enable effective communication between school and home. It is intended to:

- Explain the roles and responsibilities around communication between school and home
- Set clear standards and expectations for how school communicates with parents and carers; and how parents and carers communicate with school.
- Provide clear pathways to parents and carers for addressing specific queries or concerns as soon as possible.

2. Roles and responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
Chorus Education Trust	• Responsible for this procedure • Regularly review this procedure
Headteachers	• Ensure communications from school are clear, relevant and respectful • Ensure communications from school are timely, effective, and appropriate • Monitor the implementation of this procedure • Regularly review this procedure
All Staff	• Ensure communications from school are clear, relevant and respectful • Ensure communications from school are timely and effective • Respond to any communications in line with this procedure and Chorus Education Trust's **ICT Acceptable Use Policy** • Use and maintain contact data in compliance with **GDPR** and safeguarding requirements as outlined in Chorus Education Trust's **Data Protection Policy** and **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy**
Parents and Carers	• Read all communications sent by school • Respond to communications sent by school in a timely manner as appropriate (such as requests for meetings) • Ensure communications with school are clear, relevant, and respectful • Ensure that school holds up-to-date data and details about themselves and their young person (like contact details, health issues, safeguarding concerns and so on)

Role	Responsibilities
Students	• If requested to, let parents or carers know about information school may have shared with them • Ensure that communications with school are clear and respectful.

3. Clear, Relevant, and Respectful Communications

We want all communications between school and home to be:

- **Clear:** Easily understood with a specific purpose, written in plain English, and in a form that is accessible to the person receiving it.
- **Relevant:** Any information sent between school and home should be applicable to those receiving it and sent in a timely manner to allow for any appropriate actions to be taken.
- **Respectful:** We do not tolerate abusive or aggressive behaviour. We know that parents and carers care deeply about their child(ren) and want what is best for them. Our staff also want what is best for them and are professionals who are trying their hardest to provide the best support for all the young people in their care. We ask that we all use acceptable language and behaviour when communicating with each other as this will enable us to reach the best outcome.

If, at any time during a conversation, a parent or carer's language, tone or behaviour is unacceptable; we will warn them about this. If the behaviour continues, our staff have the right to either schedule a short break in the conversation or to end it whether in person or through another means.

We ask our parents and carers to follow our **Parent Code of Conduct** and will respond in line with that policy if we suspect or become aware that a parent of carer has breached it.

Equally, if a parent or carer wishes to complain about the conduct of a member of staff, we ask that they follow the steps outlined in the Chorus Education Trust **Complaints Policy**.

4. Timeframes for responses and staff availability

Many of our staff spend most of their time teaching, planning lessons, assessing student work, undertaking lunch duties, running extracurricular clubs and activities, looking after the wellbeing of the young people in our care, and completing other relevant duties.

As such, we are not always able to respond immediately to all queries, though we will always seek to do so as soon as possible.

As appropriate, we aim to respond to any queries or concerns as follows:

- **An initial response within two school days** to indicate that the communication has been received by the relevant person
- **A reply within five school days,** though this may state that more time is required to provide a full response
- **A fuller reply where necessary within a suitable agreed timescale.**

Staff are not expected to monitor or respond to emails or calls outside of normal school working hours, so parents and carers should not expect staff to respond if their message is sent outside of these times.

If a parent or carer wishes to complain about our handling of any queries or concerns, we ask that they follow the steps outlined in the Chorus Education Trust **Complaints Policy**.

5. How we communicate with parents and carers

Parents and carers should monitor all the following methods of communication regularly so they do not miss important information that may affect their child(ren).

5.1 Urgent Communications

If a student is taken ill, is unexpectedly absent from school or there are urgent changes to their daily routine, we will attempt to contact home by telephone.

If there is a situation which affects a large group of students or the whole school (such as a school closure due to extreme weather), we will:

- Email the primary parent/carer (where we have an email address)
- Send an SMS text message
- Send a message through the Arbor Parent App
- Add a pop-up message to the home screen of our website
- Post an update on our school social media channels

5.2 Routine Communications

5.2.1 Emails

Our standard method for regular communication with parents is email, so we highly recommend ensuring parents and carers have provided us with an email address.

We will send emails about:

- Our weekly parent newsletter
- Upcoming school events or scheduled school closures (like inset days)
- School surveys or consultations
- Weekly emails regarding attendance, achievement points and behaviour points
- Student reports every term, containing information about attitude to learning, attendance, and relevant grades as appropriate
- Information about immunisations
- Information and links to bookings for parents' evenings
- Information regarding medical incidents or accidents and collection of medical information
- Notification of bag searches
- Arrangement of appointments with staff
- Ad hoc information such as Sheffield City Council updates, cancellations of clubs and other changes to routines

Where possible, we try to give parents and carers at least 2 weeks' notice of any events or special occasions (including non-uniform days, special assemblies or visitors, or requests for pupils to bring in special items or materials).

5.2.2 Phone

If there is a specific issue regarding your child(ren), we will call you on the relevant number you have provided to us.

This may include:

- Discussions around your child(ren)'s performance, attendance, or behaviour including suspensions
- Discussions around any safeguarding issues
- Requests for information relating to your child(ren) to update our records as appropriate
- Chasing consent forms
- To inform you of medical incidents or accidents

5.2.3 In-Person Meetings

We hold parents' evenings each year, where parents and carers are invited to discuss academic progress with teachers.

We also hold information meetings at relevant stages to provide additional guidance around important decisions or events like Key Stage 4 (GCSEs) options.

We may also occasionally contact parents or carers to arrange individual meetings at a convenient date and time to discuss specific issues like special education needs, achievement, progress, or wellbeing.

5.2.4 Letters

Sometimes we will send letters home about:

- Postcards from departments to celebrate success
- Consent Forms
- Paperwork for suspensions and permanent exclusions
- Occasional work for students to complete

5.2.5 Homework

Individual student homework information is available on a variety of platforms.

We currently use:

- Email (Outlook)
- Microsoft Teams
- Sparx Maths
- Sparx Reader
- Sparx Science

5.3 Other sources of information

5.3.1 Website

Our website, https://www.westfield.chorustrust.org/, is kept up to date with information relating to:

- our contact details;
- our policies and procedures;
- our curriculum;
- safeguarding, special educational needs and disabilities support, and wellbeing guidance;
- details on term dates, the school day, menus for meals at school, and uniform.

Parents and carers should be able to find most general information on our website.

5.3.2 Social Media

We have school social media channels on Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn which are used to share general news from our school community including student activities and achievements, life at school, and for any urgent communications for large-scale incidents.

While we would love for you to follow us on our social media channels and engage the content from our school community, there is no expectation for parents and carers to use social media to receive communications from us.

Please note, we will never contact parents or carers individually about their child(ren) on social media.

Additional guidelines on social media interactions are available in the Appendix.

6. How parents and carers can communicate with school

6.1 Urgent communications

In the event of:

- Family emergencies
- Safeguarding or welfare issues

Please call 0114 248 5221 to speak to our reception staff.

If a child is ill and unable to attend school, it is important that you let us know before 8.30am on the morning of the absence, by emailing attendance@westfield.chorustrust.org, or phoning 0114 248 5221, or by completing the Absence Notification Form for Westfield School on the website**.**

You should leave clear details outlining the absence including the student's name, year and class, and the names of any siblings, and confirmation of when they are returning.

We will contact parents and carers from 10.00am if we have not received any notifications regarding absence.

6.2 Non-urgent communications

For all other enquiries or issues, we request that you contact us by email with as much relevant information as possible to allow us to take appropriate action. If you are seeking a specific outcome like a phone call or an in-person meeting, please make this clear.

For general enquiries, pastoral queries, and subject related queries email **enquiries@westfield.chorustrust.org** including the student's name, year and form or call 0114 248 5221 to speak to our reception staff.

For careers-related queries, please email careers@westfield.chorustrust.org

For exam related queries, please email exams@westfield.chorustrust.org and include the student's name, year, and form.

For payment-related queries, please email finance@westfield.chorustrust.org

For non-urgent safeguarding queries or concerns, please email safeguarding@westfield.chorustrust.org

7. Accessibility and Inclusion

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

7.1 For those with additional communication needs

- All whole-school announcements and communications are made available in multiple formats
- All communications should be written as clearly and concisely as possible
- We aim to ensure that our website meets accessibility standards

If you need help communicating with school, you can request reasonable adjustments such as:

- Alternate formats for announcements and communications including physical copies for those without access to online technology.
- Interpreters for meetings

Please contact us directly at 0114 248 5221 to discuss.

7.2 For those with English as an additional language (EAL)

- Our website can be translated into multiple additional languages through standard browser translation tools

If you need help communicating with school, you can request reasonable adjustments such as:

- Specific language translations for announcements and communications
- Interpreters for meetings or phone calls.

Please contact us directly at 0114248 5221 to discuss.

Appendix 1: Systems and Quick Links

System	Purpose	Quick Link
Email	For general communications between school and home. Please make sure parent/carer contact details are up to date. Students have access to their own email accounts.	enquiries@westfield.chorustrust.org
Arbor Parent App or Portal	• Assessment and Reporting • Attendance Records • Behaviour Records • Exam Timetables • Payment details for school meals or trips	Login to Arbor
Website	• General Information • Curriculum • Extracurricular activities • Careers • School Calendar • Term Dates • School Policies • Safeguarding • Wellbeing • Menus and Catering • Uniform	https://www.westfield.chorustrust.org/
Microsoft OneDrive	• Homework for students	Login to OneDrive
Microsoft Teams	• Homework for students	Login to Teams
Sparx Learning	• Homework for students for Maths, Reading, and Science	Login to Sparx Learning

Appendix 2: Guidelines on social media interactions

Our social media channels are used for the public sharing of news and information about our school community.

They are not used for sending or receiving messages to or from parents and carers. The inboxes of our social accounts are not regularly monitored, so please do not attempt to get in touch through these means.

Our social media channels are intended to be a positive space to celebrate, uplift, and inform our community; so, we ask that you engage with these channels in that same spirit.

Safeguarding on social media

We will never share an image of or identify a student without the consent of the student and/or their parent/carer.

We ask that parents and carers assist in safeguarding our students by:

- Not naming a student if their name is not already published
- Not tagging students or their parent/carer in relation to a post

If necessary to ensure the safety or reputation of our students, staff, and the school in general, we will take action by removing or hiding comments. We will also remove any abusive, aggressive, or profane messages as required.

If a parent or carer is found to be in breach of our **Parent Code of Conduct**, we may be forced to ban them from access our social media channels.