

Westfield Arts College

Partnership with Parents Policy

Reviewed by committee	10/06/2022	Policy type: Statutory
Adopted by Governing Body	26/09/2022	Review cycle: 3 year cycle
Date for next review	Autumn 2025	Signed by Chair: 

WESTFIELD ARTS COLLEGE
PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS POLICY

Rationale:

In order for the school to provide the best possible education and care for its pupils it is essential to work in close partnership with parents, carers and guardians. When we use the term parents in this policy we are also referring to carers and guardians.

It is the intention of all Westfield staff to work in ways that will support and further develop a partnership that is based on mutual respect, openness and a guiding concern for the development and wellbeing of all pupils in the school. We aim to develop a close partnership with parents, which supports and encourages all our pupils to achieve their best. We can do this by working and talking together. Parents are acknowledged as the most important people in the child's life. Parents spend more time with their own children and know them better than anyone else; therefore parents are a vital resource for both understanding and caring for the children in the school. Communicating with parents should be seen in the same light as communicating with external professionals and is seen as crucial to the development of the whole child.

Staff at Westfield fully appreciate the feeling of isolation parents can feel if they are not able to physically visit the school. This may be due to, for example, lack of transport, personal circumstances etc. Staff at Westfield aim to make the school as accessible and available to parents as possible, including the whole school community in events and celebrating the progress pupils make.

Aims:

- To develop a shared understanding of our school aims, values, policies and practices.
- To encourage a relationship based on shared responsibility and mutual respect.
- To enable parents to reinforce learning that begins in school and the school to reinforce learning that begins at home.
- To support a strong working partnership with parents/carers based on frequent and clear communication.
- To ensure, where possible, that parents are involved at a strategic level when deciding policies and curriculum involving their children and that parental input has been adequately taken into account when decisions concerning their children are made.

Implementation:

- Staff throughout the school take every opportunity to liaise closely with parents on all matters relating to the education and care of their child. These opportunities range

Policy No 80: Partnership with Parents (Spring 2022): to be reviewed Spring 2025

from a telephone call from a class teacher, informal discussion as children are dropped off or picked up at school to formal, multi-professional pupil meetings. Staff maintain close links in person or on the telephone with parents who find written information difficult to access.

- Parents will be invited to all multi-disciplinary meetings concerning their own children unless Safeguarding procedures apply.
- Teaching staff are responsible for the day to day curriculum planning and information is available on the school website to enable parents to build on the learning that has gone on in the school. Where there is a need for a significant change in a pupils expected curriculum, the class tutor will discuss the implications for the child, at school and home, with the parents.
- Westfield staff make every effort to discuss any areas of concern in a pupil's development, progress or behaviour with parents/carers as they arise, rather than wait until the situation becomes serious.
- Consent for involvement with other agencies will be sought should it be necessary.

Communication:

- We recognise that every parent will require a different level of communication according to the needs of their child and their own preferences and needs. Class teachers will discuss this with parents at the beginning of each school year.
- Every pupil has either a Home-School Book or a Student Diary through which class teachers and form tutors maintain a dialogue with parents/carers.
- Some parents and staff may prefer to communicate via email – this can be discussed with the class teacher.
- Staff will maintain appropriate communication during their working hours and will aim to respond to any queries within 24 hours where possible. Class teams are unable to take telephone calls during lessons but the school office will always take and pass on any messages.
- A parents' consultation evening is held for each year group at least twice a year. This is an opportunity for a detailed discussion on a pupil's progress in all areas of school life.
- Every child will have an annual review of their Education Care and Health Plan. This is another opportunity to ensure the right provision is in place for your child.
- Decisions about accredited qualifications at Key Stage 4 will be in consultation with parents and will be based on the relevance and appropriateness of the qualifications on offer in relation to the pupils' ability.
- Every parent/carer receives a detailed written account of their child's progress in the end of year report. Whilst they reflect the positive ethos of the school, the aim is to provide an unbiased and factual picture of the child's progress and ability.
- Information will be shared with parents when new specialist programmes are put into place e.g. OT, SALT.
- Parents will be invited to appointments with external therapists and professionals where appropriate.
- The school's website, provides up-to-date information on all aspects of life at Westfield for all parents with internet access.
- Frequent opportunities are provided for parents/carers to come into school to celebrate their child's achievements or to learn more about the work of the school.
- A school calendar highlighting key events is issued at the start of the academic year.

Policy No 80: Partnership with Parents (Spring 2022): to be reviewed Spring 2025

- The views of parents/carers are sought through the Parents/Carers Questionnaire.
- Parents are made aware of the school's Complaints Procedure through the school website and guided through the process of making a complaint by senior school staff where necessary.
- Details of communication with parents/carers that takes place prior to a pupil's admission to Westfield is given in our Admissions Policy.

Availability of Support

- Pupil and Parent/Carer Support Workers are able to work closely to provide the additional information and support that some parents/carers need if they are to build on the programmes and interventions that have been established during the school day. They can help signpost parents to external sources of advice and support.
- Parent coffee mornings offer an opportunity for informal discussion and support along with some more focussed sessions regarding topics of interest e.g. independent travel training, external agency support etc.
- Westfield's well regarded programmes of support for parents/carers of children with a diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder (NAS EarlyBird, EarlyBird Plus and Cygnets) offer structured information and guidance, both at the time of the programme and – as resources allow – in the months and years following the programme.

Involvement in the wider life of the school

- **The Friend's of Westfield (FoW)**, like other parent/carer/teacher associations, provides opportunities for parents and carers to meet together, get to know one another socially and if they wish, help raise money to support the school. We know how difficult it can be to connect with other parents and carers when a child attends a school outside their home catchment area and parents tell us how much they value more opportunities to get together. Events in the past have ranged from informal coffee mornings to family quiz nights and discos. Parents and carers have also been involved in running stalls at school fetes and providing refreshments at concerts. Funds from FoW have supported numerous initiatives across the school, enhancing the curriculum, resources and opportunities we provide for our pupils. FoW is co-ordinated from school by the Deputy Head Teacher and the Pupil and Parent Support Workers. Parents and Carers have in the past taken on committee roles where they have been able to.

Other Policies and Documents

- SEND Code of Practice 0 to 25 years (last updated April 2020)
- Westfield SEND Information Report
- 02 SEND Policy
- 05 Inclusion Policy
- 72 Single Equality Policy