

Waltham Leas Primary Academy



Home - School Communication Policy

September 2025

Approved by:
Governors

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Annually

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Waltham Leas Primary Academy Vision Statement:

Belong Empower Grow

At Waltham Leas Primary Academy, we foster kindness, empathy and understanding so that everyone **belongs** and knows their voice matters. In our safe, supportive school, differences are celebrated so that everyone can learn, grow and thrive together.

We work closely with families and the wider community to nurture, support and **empower** each other in times of joy and challenge.

Our aspirational curriculum, delivered through high-quality challenge and support, is enriched with engaging extra-curricular opportunities. This provides the bedstone for our pupils to become independent, resilient and critically engaged learners ready to **grow with purpose** in an ever-changing world.

We are the heart of Waltham, rooted in hope, creating changemakers of the future.

1. Introduction and aims

We believe that clear, open communication between the school and parents/carers has a positive impact on pupils' 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.

2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1 Headteacher

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

2.2 Staff

All staff are responsible for:

- Responding to communication from parents in line with this policy and the school's 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 during core school hours (8.40am – 3.15pm) or their working hours (if they work part-time). Dojo messages will be accepted between 8am and 4.30pm and will be answered within 24 hours. 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 outside of these hours, but they are **not expected** to do so.

2.3 Parents

Parents are responsible for:

- Ensuring that communication with the school is respectful at all times
- 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 parent code of conduct.

Parents should **not** expect staff to respond to their communication outside of core school hours or during school holidays.

Please see our Parent code of conduct policy.

3. 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 of the following regularly to make sure they do not miss important communications or announcements that may affect their child.

3.1 Class Dojo

Class Dojo is used as our main form of communication between school and home. Staff post messages and photos of learning on the class pages in addition to photos and messages on the Whole School page.

A calendar is also used to share upcoming events across school.

Messages will be sent to individual parents from staff regarding all aspects of school life. This service runs between 8am and 4.30pm and not during holidays.

See Appendix 3 for our Class Dojo information and contract.

Text messages

We will text parents about:

- Payments
- Short-notice changes to the school day
- Emergency school closures (for instance, due to bad weather)
- Absences / lateness

3.3 School calendar

Our calendar is on Dojo for daily events and term dates are on the school website.

Where possible, we try to give parents 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).

Any such event will be included in the school calendar on Dojo.

3.4 Phone calls

Parents are expected to ring the school to explain their child's absence between 8.15am and 9am, on a daily basis.

Staff are expected to ring parents if a serious first aid issue has occurred.

In some instances, parents will be contacted via a phone call for pastoral, behaviour or attendance issues.

3.5 Letters

We send the following letters home :

- Letters about trips and visits (payment via ParentPay)
- Consent forms for trips and visits
- In response to formal complaints
- We also provide a mixture of Google Forms and paper permission letters for new parents.

3.6 Homework

Parents are informed about Homework tasks via Class dojo and books are sent home for tasks to be completed in. These are returned to school each term.

3.7 Reports

Parents receive reports from the school about their child's learning, including:

- An end-of-year report covering their achievement in each part of the curriculum, how well they are progressing, and their attendance
- A report on Key Stage (KS) 1 and KS2 SATs tests
- A report on the score gained in the Year 4 Multiplication test.
- A report on the score gained in the Year 1 Phonics screening

3.8 Meetings

We hold two parents' evening(s) per 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 pupils with special educational needs (SEN), or who have other additional needs, may also be asked to attend further meetings to address these additional needs.

3.9 School website

Key information about the school is posted on our website, including:

- School times and term dates
- Important events and announcements
- Curriculum information
- Important policies and procedures
- Important contact information
- Information about before and after-school provision

Parents should check the website before contacting the school.

3.10 Home-school communications app – Class Dojo

See Appendix 3 for our Class Dojo information and contract.

4. How parents and carers can communicate with the school

Parents should use the list in appendix 1 and 2 to identify the most appropriate person to contact about a query or issue, including the school office number (01472 822419) and email address : office@walthamleas.net

4.1 Email

Parents may email the school about non-urgent issues using office@walthamleas.net

If a query or concern is urgent, and parents need a response sooner than this, they should call the school on 01472 822419.

4.2 Phone calls

If parents need to speak to a specific member of staff about a **non-urgent** matter, they should call the school office and the relevant member of staff will contact them.

If this is not possible (due to teaching or other commitments), someone will respond to schedule a phone call at a convenient time. If the issue is urgent, parents should call the school office.

Urgent issues might include things like:

- Family emergencies
- Safeguarding or welfare issues
- Change of person picking up / late collection

4.3 Meetings

If parents would like to schedule a meeting with a member of staff, they should Dojo message the appropriate member of staff.

While teachers are available at the beginning or end of the school day if parents need to speak to them urgently, we recommend they book appointments to discuss:

- Any concerns they have about their child's learning
- Updates related to pastoral support, their child's home environment, or their wellbeing

5. Accessibility

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

5.1 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 are made using Class Dojo and can be translated into different languages.
- 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 and time will be needed to arrange such meetings.

5.2 Parents with English as an additional language (EAL)

We currently make whole-school announcements and communications available on Dojo to be translated into different languages.

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

We can make additional arrangements if necessary. Please contact the school office to discuss these.

6. Monitoring and review

The headteacher monitors the implementation of this policy and will review the policy every 2 years.

The policy will be approved by the governing board.

7. Links with other policies

The policy should be read alongside our policies on:

- ICT and internet acceptable use
- Parent code of conduct
- Staff code of conduct
- Complaints
- Home-school agreement
- Staff wellbeing

Appendix 1 – School Communication

At our school, we understand that on occasions, issues may arise involving your child's education, well-being, or any other relevant matters. We believe in fostering open and effective communication between parents and staff to ensure a both a nurturing and productive learning environment.

To maintain consistency and streamline the resolution process, we kindly request that you follow the process outlined below when addressing any issues around your child:

Class Teacher

In the first instance, if you encounter any concerns relating to your child's academic progress, behaviour, or general well-being, we encourage you to contact their class teacher. They possess the most comprehensive knowledge of your child's individual needs and can address any questions or concerns you may have.

Year Group Leader (YGL)

If you feel that your concerns have not been adequately addressed by the class teacher or if the issue is more complex, please contact the respective YGL. YGLs oversee a specific age group within our school and have a broader understanding of the curriculum and developmental needs of the pupils in their phase.

Our YGLs are:

Foundation Stage - Mrs Larkin

Years 1 & 2 – Mrs Censi-Shaw

Years 3 & 4 – Mrs Watkinson / Mr Smith

Years 5 & 6 – Mrs Seymour

Deputy Head

In exceptional cases where you believe that the issue remains unresolved despite contact with the YGL, we kindly ask that you escalate the matter to our Deputy Head, Mrs Allenson. She has the experience and authority to address more significant concerns and can work with you to find a solution involving all parties.

Head Teacher

Should the steps outlined above fail to provide a satisfactory resolution or if the matter is of a more serious nature, please contact Mrs Thompson through office@walhamleas.net or talk directly to a member of the admin team using the school telephone number. I am here to support you and your child, and I will do my utmost to address any concerns that require my attention.

We use Whole School Dojo and Class Dojo to share information with parents/carers and in some instances Text messages are sent out. We encourage all parents and carers to engage with dojo as it allows you to communicate directly with the class teacher and keeps you up to date with the learning in the classroom and any forthcoming events – Parent Evening Appointments are also booked through Dojo via Google forms and are posted by the class teacher. Staff are more than willing to help you connect if you are having any problems.

SEND Concern:

Mrs Berry (SENDCo)

If any parent has a concern regarding their child's learning or any other difficulties, this needs to be shared firstly with their class teacher. The class teacher will then discuss any issues with the SENDCo who may contact you directly in the first instance via dojo with a view to having a telephone conversation or a face to face meeting.

If you are facing an urgent or serious matter, or any issues related to safeguarding, we encourage you to contact the school immediately, via the school office, as during the school day (staff may not have the time to check messages sent via ClassDojo due to teaching commitments) and we will take appropriate action. Our Designated Safeguarding Lead is Mrs Allenson.

By following this communication procedure, we aim to ensure that concerns are addressed promptly and efficiently. We believe that this approach allows for constructive dialogue and resolution, fostering a positive and collaborative atmosphere within our school community.

Appendix 2: school contact list

I HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT...	WHO YOU NEED TO TALK TO
My child's learning/class activities/lessons/homework	Your child's class teacher
My child's wellbeing/pastoral support	Your child's class teacher
Payments	School office
School trips	Class teacher for information, school office for payment
Uniform/lost and found	Class teacher / School office
Attendance and absence requests	If you need to report your child's absence, call the school office 01472 822419. If you want to request approval for term-time absence, come to the school office for a leave of absence form.
Bullying and behaviour	Class teacher in the first instance
School events/the school calendar	See Class dojo / message class teacher on Dojo
Special educational needs (SEN)	SENDCo
Before and after-school clubs	School office
Governing board	School office
Catering/meals	School office/Chartwells 01472 342272 ext 1

Complaints

If you would like to file a formal complaint, please follow the procedure set out in our complaints policy on the school website.

If you require a paper copy, please ask at the school office.

Appendix 3

Waltham Leas Primary Academy Class Dojo Parent / Child Contract

What is ClassDojo?

ClassDojo is an online program that we are using at Waltham Leas Primary Academy in a number of different ways.

It will be used to **reward the children** for good choices on an individual, small group, whole class or whole school basis with dojo points. Feedback is instant. The children will achieve Dojo points and be rewarded both individually (when reaching multiples of 50 dojos) and as a class (when gaining multiples of 500 dojos). Points may also be deducted when school rules are not being followed. Dojo points will work alongside the other incentives in use at Waltham Leas such as certificates and stickers.

We would also like to use ClassDojo as it is also an **effective tool for communication between the school, class teachers and parents**. There is a messaging system for individual one to one messages. This can be used between 8.30am and 5pm. Additionally, class teachers can share text, images, documents, web links and video with individual parents or the whole class. Parents of EYFS children will continue to use Tapestry rather than Dojo for messaging, but dojo points will be used in Foundation Stage and photos of class activities will be shared.

It can be accessed via the Class Dojo website or downloaded as an app. We will have a whole school page (School Story) where information and photos can be shared and Class stories for each class.

We are asking all parents, children and staff to read through and sign this home school agreement at the start of the academic year. More than one parent can sign up and parents with more than one child will be able to see each child's account separately.

Waltham Leas Primary Academy staff will:

- Promote positive behaviours through ClassDojo.
- Share information / photos about the class at least once a week.
- Send out individual messages if required. These will be short messages, rather than going into specific details online about issues, queries, other children or personal data.
- Agree to respond to any messages from parents within 24 hours.
- Use the class points to encourage collaboration in class and support pupils' learning in school.

Parents / Carers will:

- Check for individual messages and whole class stories at least twice a week.
- Make sure individual messages are concise and factual. For anything particularly sensitive or confidential, it is more appropriate to speak over the phone or in person. The purpose of the Dojo message can be to try to arrange those opportunities.
- Use the information from ClassDojo to structure a conversation with their child about what they have been learning in class.
- Not share any content from ClassDojo on social media or via other messaging services.

Use the 'comment' feature to praise classes/children.

As parents, not invite any other person onto your child's account unless they have signed their own contract.

You can visit the following website for more information:
<https://classdojo.zendesk.com/hc/en-us/categories/200185365-For-parents>

Parent/Carer Signatures:

Please note that as written in our Parent Code of Conduct, any individual who uses ClassDojo to post abusive, defamatory, threatening or offensive comments about staff, pupils or the school will be removed from the site, either temporarily or permanently.

The Pupil will:

- Make good choices and support others to make good choices.
- Use ClassDojo feedback and messages to discuss their learning and behaviour with their parents/carers.

Pupil Signature:

Safety and Protections for your Child

Class Dojo's [Privacy Policy](https://classdojo.zendesk.com/hc/en-us/articles/115004741703-Privacy-Policy-and-Terms-of-Service-Key-Terms) and information can be found on their website at <https://classdojo.zendesk.com/hc/en-us/articles/115004741703-Privacy-Policy-and-Terms-of-Service-Key-Terms>

We hope that Class Dojo will be an effective way for you to communicate with school and be part of your child's learning.

Please return this form to school by at the latest. You will then be given a log in code to access Class Dojo.

A Allenson Deputy Headteacher

Dojo points update January 25 (SLT agreed)

We would expect most children to reach 50 dojos in a 'big' term (e.g. September to December). Some may reach 100. This equates to approx. 4/5 points per week.

Consistency across classes is key to ensuring that the points are valued and class treats are equal across school.

Points across school will be given for the following..

Reading 3 times a week = 1 dojo

Homework – Bronze award = 1 dojo, Silver award = 2 dojos, Gold award = 3 dojos

In KS2, children who beat their TT Rockstars score will receive a dojo; If they beat their arithmetic score = 1 dojo. Score full marks = 1 dojo.

Children can gain points for good behaviour, kindness, achievement in different subjects e.g. 4 or 5 children per lesson. The criteria will be listed on the class points pages.

Classes may win whole class dojo points for e.g. good listening in assembly, winning the cloakroom prize each week.

Children may win a dojo for taking part in a competition.

Class dojo treats will be taken in steps of 500 points.

SLT will monitor the points in each class to ensure consistency.