

1 Introduction

This booklet is for parents and carers of children at Boston Spa School. It has been produced in close collaboration with our Parent Focus Group and gathers in one place information from across the school which you may find helpful at various points during the year.

We have tried to keep the contents of this booklet practical, explanatory where necessary and jargon-free. We would like to hear whether or not you find this booklet helpful and any suggestions you might have to improve it. There's a tear-out page at the back that you can return via your child's Tutor, or at school Reception, or electronically if you're reading this on our website (www.bostonspa.leeds.sch.uk).

2 The school mission

Everything we do at Boston Spa School is focused on achieving the best possible outcome for every pupil. This means providing the conditions in which every pupil can attain the results and qualifications that reflect their talents. We communicate this in our mission as investing in three sorts of "capital":

- Academic capital - achieving outcomes that match or exceed those which they would have achieved in any other school
- Moral capital - to be young people who know right from wrong and make good moral decisions, especially in the company of their peers
- Social capital - to be 'nice people to know' who understand and model what it is to be an adult member of their communities

To make this mission real for staff and pupils alike, we promote three core values and base our school life around them:

- Everyone is treated with respect
- Everyone makes progress
- No one steals learning

In this way we aim to create "A path to the future for all".

3 Your role

It has been proven time and again that if all the links in the pupil-parent-school triangle are strong then the pupil stands the best chance of succeeding. We hope that the information in this booklet, together with that in your child's planner (see below), will equip you to ask any questions you need to about your child's progress, as well as giving you enough information for you to support them in their school life.

We ask that you:

- Read through this booklet
- Read and sign the Home-School Partnership Agreement that is in your child's planner
- Look at and sign your child's planner once a week.

As well as getting in touch if you have any concerns, we'd also like you to let us know of things that have gone particularly well. It is wonderful to be able to praise good work (by pupils or staff), but we have to know about it in order to do this. In a large school community such as ours we rely on parents as much as staff and pupils to let us know how things are going, so please don't hesitate to pick up the phone or drop us an e-mail.

4 Who is who and who does what

We have recently restructured our staffing model. There are four main staff teams to be aware of:

Senior Leadership Team (SLT)

This team is responsible for all aspects of whole school leadership and is held accountable by the Governing Body.

Chris Walsh – Headteacher

Georgia Westerman – Deputy Headteacher

Philip Harper – Director of Business

Jeanette Craig – Assistant Headteacher – Community & Ethos

Rhi Gully - Assistant Headteacher – Individual Needs

Liz Tuchmann –Assistant Headteacher – Timetable & Staffing

Mike Brennan –Head of 6th form Assistant Headteacher

Year Teams

Your child is part of a Year Group made up of all the pupils who started at Boston Spa at the same time. They will begin in Year 7, then 8, 9 and so on. Each child is a member of a tutor group, led by a Form Tutor who registers them each morning and leads them through extended tutor time every Tuesday.

We have three Progress and Guidance Leaders who each have overall responsibility for a Key Stage – PGL KS3 & Transition, PGL KS4 and Head of Sixth Form. The PGLs lead the tutor teams for each of their Key Stages.

Progress and Guidance Leaders are each supported by a member of our admin team and if you need to contact school for any general, non-subject-specific matters then that is the best place to start. If they are unable to help they will be able to tell you who can. As Year Offices tend to be bustling places, please make use of the answerphone when it is on and leave a message - they always get back to you!

The first part of the telephone number is: 01937 846 followed by the appropriate three digits from the following list:

Year	Phone number
7	607
8 & 9	608 / 609
10 & 11	611
Sixth Form	612

The Behaviour Team

Each Key Stage is led by a Team Leader. Team Leaders are in charge of securing good behaviour for learning. They do not teach and are therefore able to devote their whole day to looking after the needs of their Year Group.

Learning Teams

If you want to talk with someone about a subject-specific issue, for example homework, then ring the relevant Learning Team office. Please be aware that the majority of teaching staff will be in the classroom most of the school day so be prepared to leave a message.

Dial the main school phone number 01937 846636 and ask for the relevant extension as listed below:

Subject/s	Team Leader	Extension
Creative Arts & Technologies (CATS)	Mr Heaton	754
Economics, Business & ICT (EBIT)	Mr Hunt	320
English, Drama & Media	Miss Viglianisi	734
Humanities	Miss Hayes	738
Languages	Mr Dodds	737
Mathematics	Mrs Jespers	736
PE, Dance	Mr Potter	740
Science	Mr Norton	774
Student Support (SENCO)	Miss Gully	312

5 How we keep in touch

There are a number of ways that you can keep an eye on how your child is getting on and keep up with what is happening in school.

For information specific to your child, their timetable and progress:

- Log on to our E-Portal via our website (www.bostonspa.leeds.sch.uk). This is a password protected system where you will find information about your child's progress in all subjects, their attendance record and positive and negative behaviour entries. If you've not yet done this you will need a password which you get by contacting our Data Administrator, Pete Magee at mageep@bostonspa.leeds.sch.uk. If you want more help we will show you how to use this at our Year 7 Settling in evening
- Take a regular look in your child's planner. This is where homework and any messages from teachers are noted down and reward stamps are recorded
- Come along to Parent Consultation evenings. These are listed in our calendar so you can make sure your child makes appointments with the teachers you want to meet.

For more general school information:

- Take a look at our website and especially the weekly Head's Blog
- Follow us on Twitter
- Make sure we have your mobile phone details so you will receive texts from us. We use these to alert you to information your child will be bringing home, as well as for whole-school information in the case of exceptional weather.

We prefer to communicate with you via e-mail and regularly send letters home in this manner, so please make sure all your contact details are up-to-date when we check them at the start of each school year. If any of your details change mid-year then alert your child's Year Office.

If you phone your child's Tutor or a subject teacher about a specific issue then you can expect a return phone call within three working days. Similarly if you raise an issue via e-mail you should receive an acknowledgement within three working days and a full response within ten working days.

If we need to contact you during the school day - a very rare occurrence - we will use the phone numbers you give us at the start of each school year. It is important that you keep these updated and if any of your contact details change during the year simply let the relevant Year Office know.

6 The Planner

We give each pupil a planner to encourage them to organise their time and manage their homework. In essence, the planner is a diary that also contains all the information a pupil needs to know to contribute fully to the school community.

Whilst the planner is first and foremost for the pupil to use, it is also an important tool for home-school communication. You are asked to sign it once a week and you can use it to let teachers know something relevant about your child (e.g. if they can't do PE that day). Teachers use it to note a particularly excellent piece of work, or the re-issue of a piece of homework that wasn't handed in on time. Making a little time each week to look through that week's page and discuss it with your child will keep you in touch with how they are getting on.

7 Year Areas

Our school covers a large area so we designate different parts of it to different Year Groups and these are called Year Areas. They contain the Year Office and only that specific Year Group is allowed in their Year Area at break and lunch times. We hope this gives pupils a focal point as well as supporting staff in supervising social time.

8 Houses

There are four Houses in school and each pupil belongs to one. They are named after people who are sadly no longer with us, but who contributed hugely to the life of Boston Spa School. Each House has a colour associated with it:

- Bucktrout - green
- Cooper - blue
- Donaldson - yellow
- Thompson - red

Houses are smaller units within what is a pretty large school community. They are an important way of encouraging every pupil to feel engaged with school and able to contribute in some way. We usually allocate pupils to Houses by Tutor Group to ensure an even number of pupils in each House in each Year but occasionally due to numbers tutor groups belong to a mixture of Houses. If you have more than one child at our school they may well therefore be in different Houses.

9 The school day & punctuality

You won't be surprised to know that we expect all pupils to arrive punctually for each lesson with all the necessary equipment so they are ready to start work from the start of the lesson. This includes arriving in good time for the start of the school day at 8.40am.

If pupils arrive late for school they are given a same-day after school detention which lasts twenty minutes. You will be informed of this by the Year Office.

Timings for lessons, break and lunch are the same on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday:

Time	Activity
8.45	Tutor time
9.05	Lesson 1
10.05	Lesson 2
11.05	Break
11.35	Lesson 3
12.35	Lunch
13.20	Lesson 4
14.25	Lesson 5
15.25	End of school

On Tuesdays we follow slightly different timings to include an "extended Tutor time". This allows us to deliver a Personal Values programme of Personal, Social and Health education and to spend time preparing pupils for key events in the academic year such as the Options process:

Time	Activity
8.45	Tutor time
9.30	Lesson 1
10.25	Break
10.55	Lesson 2
11.50	Lesson 3
12.45	Lunch
13.30	Lesson 4
14.30	Lesson 5
15.25	End of school

Assembly

Pupils will have an Assembly on a regular basis when they are gathered together as a House or a Year Group. Assemblies cover a variety of significant themes such as Holocaust Memorial Week, Black History Week and Armistice Day. Assembly is also used to focus on achievement and motivation so we often invite guest speakers in.

Lunch

We provide a variety of healthy meal options at lunchtime. The meal of the day costs £2.15 and a meal deal is £1.80, with snacks costing from 40p to £1.10. Water is available free from the fountains. You can pre-pay for school meals by cheque or cash on a weekly, monthly or termly basis. Our catering manager, Mrs Brown, handles all aspects of payment and she will also e-mail you when your child's funds are running low.

If your child is eligible for a free school lunch the staff simply make a note of their number when they get their lunch. If you think you may be able to claim free school meals you can find more information on our website. If you have any questions about lunches or lunchtimes then contact your child's Year Office.

Pupils who prefer to bring a packed lunch can eat this in their Year Areas, dinner hall or outside.

Please note that fizzy drinks are banned in school.

Clubs and extra-curricular activities

We encourage all of our pupils to take part in some form of extra-curricular activity and they can earn Community Contribution points for doing so. Your child will be given information about all the activities on offer and if you want to check what there is then go to our website and click on the 'Extra Curricular' heading under the 'Curriculum' tab. If your child chooses to go along to one of our many lunchtime clubs then they can take their lunch early, at break. If they choose an after school activity and would normally get a bus home, then there is a late bus which leaves school every day at 5pm and which costs £1 per journey. A place on the late bus needs to be booked on the morning of the day of travel and is done at break time in Reception.

School buses

The school bus service is provided by Metro MyBus. You will receive information directly from the bus company about the specific bus your child is allocated a seat on and about renewing their bus pass.

At the start and end of the school day a number of staff are always on bus duty to make sure buses arrive and get away promptly and that there are no problems. We expect the same high standards of behaviour on the bus as we do in school and liaise closely with the bus company if there are any issues.

MyBus make every effort to keep the same driver on a service for the whole school year, so that pupils get to know them and are confident to draw a problem to their attention. In addition all our school buses are fitted with CCTV cameras.

If your child has any concerns about their journey then encourage them to talk with their Tutor about it. We do understand that, especially for the first year or so, the bus journey can loom large for those of our pupils who have been used to walking to their primary school. To date we have always been able to resolve a problem once we have been alerted to it.

10 Learning

As we've already mentioned, your child's planner and E-Portal record are important tools for tracking their activity and progress on a weekly basis. In addition, you will be invited to come in and chat with each of your child's teachers at least once in the school year. We will alert you to these parent consultations via our website calendar and text message.

Targets

All pupils have a target which they should aim to achieve in each of the subjects that they study. We set targets to give pupils focus and to enable both teacher and pupil to monitor how they are progressing. In Years 7 & 8 your child will be given an end of year target. In Years 9, 10 & 11 your child will have a target number or GCSE grade. We will review these targets after every data collection and may adjust them if your child is doing particularly well.

We will give you three progress reports to show how your child is getting on and you will also be able to see these on E-Portal. Any information you receive about your child's progress will show a target for the school year and progress towards it for every term. Try to bear in mind that your child must achieve this target across a wide range of subjects and that they will do this at varying paces, depending on the subject. For example a child might hit their target in the Autumn in one subject but then need to repeat that level of attainment across seven more topics, whereas in another it may take three terms of work before they can secure the skills required to achieve their target.

If you have any concerns about your child's targets, or are confused by them, please contact their PGL in the first instance. If you are concerned about your child's progress in a particular subject then contact their teacher.

Setting

In Years 7 to 11 the Year Group is split in half (for ease of timetabling) and then each half is setted by ability for most subjects. More information about this can be found on our website in the Curriculum section where there is a Year by Year breakdown of the subjects taught and the setting patterns.

Reward system

We award Community Contribution (CC) points for positive outcomes, which are:

- stamps in Planners - rewarding something in a lesson, then and there
- positive E-Portal comments - recorded after a lesson on your child's page of E-Portal, perhaps as a result of a significant piece of work or exceptional behaviour
- participation in extra-curricular activities, again recorded on the E-Portal.

Negative events are also recorded and result in CC points being deducted.

All positive points are added up and pupils receive Bronze, Silver and Gold awards and the Governors' award when they pass cumulative points milestones. Subject teachers may also send home postcards to celebrate a good piece of work in lesson, or over a term.

Less formally, our Head's Blog (accessed from the Home page of our website) always features one or two particularly positive achievements by our pupils and is a way of celebrating these beyond a class or Tutor Group.

Attendance

We appreciate hugely the support you give your child in making sure they attend school every day, unless there is a very strong reason for them not to do so.

Anything that interrupts a pupil's learning is a risk to the effectiveness of that learning and you may be aware that a number of studies have been done that show prolonged or regular absence impacts on the progress pupils make (or do not make).

If your child is unable to come into school we ask that you phone the relevant Year Office (numbers above) by 8.00am at the latest and let them know. This may mean leaving a message, so make sure to state your child's name and Tutor Group and the reason for their absence.

On the rare occasions that your child is taken ill at school, be assured that we employ a full-time, fully qualified professional Nurse. She will assess your child and get in touch with you if that is necessary. You can collect your child at any time if they need to go home.

Homework

All teachers will set homework for all pupils on a regular basis. We expect homework to be:

- Set in line with the school's policy
- Recorded in the Planner by pupils
- Completed and presented on time
- Collected in and marked promptly

Whilst it is difficult to be precise about how long homework should take, the following is a broad guideline. However, please do bear in mind that every pupil is different and you will get to know how long your own child takes to do the different sorts of tasks that may be set for homework. The important thing is that your child feels in control of their homework and can see how doing it links to what they are doing in lesson.

On occasion - and increasingly - homework may be done online. Our Maths team make use of a website called MyMaths and find it extremely helpful for certain tasks. If your child doesn't have regular access to the internet then they can use the computers in school to do homework if needed by going along to the Homework Club.

Year Group/s	Amount of homework per subject per week
7 and 8	Up to 40 minutes
9	Up to 1 hour; and up to 2 hours per option subject
10 and 11	Up to 90 minutes
12 and 13	10-16 hours of study outside of lesson time

If you are concerned about anything to do with your child's homework then contact the relevant teacher in the first instance.

11 Behaviour

Our core values (see paragraph two above) sum up our expectation of all of our pupils when it comes to how to behave. Indeed this naturally applies to all adults in school too. We treat everyone with respect and in the way in which we would hope to be treated in turn.

Uniform

Being part of the school community means respecting the school uniform and complying with it. Information about the detail of the uniform is on our website and also in the introductory pages of your child's planner. If you are in any doubt about any aspect of uniform please check with your child's Year Office or Tutor.

If your child is not in the correct clothing we will withdraw them from circulation and contact you to let you know how to resolve the problem.

All of our uniform, including PE Kit, is available from APC Clothing. There is a shop in Tadcaster and you can buy online.

Sanctions for inappropriate behaviour

Our full behaviour policy is on our website (find it via the Parent tab at the top of the home page). Pupils who fail to keep to this policy are subject to a sliding scale of sanctions ranging from a reprimand to a day's isolation away from other pupils.

Bullying is clearly an inappropriate behaviour and we take any reports of it seriously, using the relevant sanction to rectify the situation. We hope you will not need to get in touch with us about this sort of thing, but if you have any concern at all about how your child is being treated by their peers then contact their Tutor immediately.

Mobile phones and electronic devices

Chances are that at some point in their time with us you will need to contact your child urgently during the school day. We therefore allow pupils to have their mobile phones in school, but for emergency use only. Our policy is that phones (and/or any other electronic device) are "Not seen, not heard". They should be switched off, in bags or pockets, during Tutor Time and all lessons.

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS – FEEDBACK FORM

We will review this booklet on an annual basis so please take a few minutes to jot down your thoughts and return the slip to Mrs.Craig via your child's tutor or Year Office. You can also send your feedback by email to info@bostonspa.leeds.sch.uk

Name (optional):

Parent of (optional):

Year group(s):

How would you rate the information given in this booklet? (please circle)

Excellent

Good

OK

Not very much use at all

Is there anything we haven't covered?

If you would like to get involved with the Parent Focus Group please give a name and preferred contact number below:

Thank you!



Information

For Parents

September 2016

