



Parent Handbook

2023 – 2024

RESPECT RESPONSIBILITY RELATIONSHIPS

Everybody can achieve

Welcome

We would like to welcome you to Ridgeway Academy. We are looking forward to getting to know your child and helping them be the best they can be; academically and as an individual student. We are committed to providing an excellent education and look forward to working in partnership with you over the next seven years as we help your child progress academically, grow personally, achieve beyond expectation and prepare for a successful future life. We work hard at Ridgeway Academy and our expectation is that everyone makes their best endeavours in all that they do. The very highest standards of conduct, respect, effort and personal attainment are our goal for all members of our school.

Our school community is friendly and wholly supportive of all its members and many of our students refer to it as a family. We are a caring and well-disciplined school and our key aim is to ensure all students realise beyond their potential. We are a happy school, with an energetic and talented staff committed to presenting high standards. Everyone has a part to play at Ridgeway Academy and everyone is listened to. We promote positive attitudes and a 'can-do' culture. We aim to provide a secure, safe environment in which all our learners feel valued and where they can develop the skills, attributes and confidence which will serve them well throughout their life.

We need your support in this. We need you to back decisions that we make as experienced professionals with your child's best interests at heart. We need you to take daily interest in your child's learning, ensuring they are organised and well equipped, complete home-based learning and supporting our high behaviour expectations.

The transition to secondary school can be both very exciting and quite daunting for children and their parents. We recognise this and we work hard to ensure everyone is well supported through the transition. This handbook is designed to help you to get to know us better in advance of your child joining us - we hope you will find it useful and that you can spend some time discussing its contents with your child.

With the move to secondary school comes more independence but your child will still require support from you. The use of MCAS is essential in facilitating home school communication and Google Guardians will allow you to monitor the home-based learning they should be doing. In Year 7, this is approximately one hour of home based learning each day. Please take the time to check Google Guardians to ensure your child is up to date with their home-based learning.

Academic achievement forms just part of the story and we offer a wealth of educational experiences, clubs, activities and opportunities across the year which instil so many of the qualities and skills which our young people need for their future. As such, we look forward to welcoming you to our Year 7 Prize Giving ceremony to celebrate your child's achievements.



Sarah Mitcherson
Headteacher



Anne Garland
Chair of Governors

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page 1	General Information
Page 5	Pastoral Care
Page 7	Standards
Page 22	Curriculum
Page 30	Culture
Page 33	Further general information
Page 36	Frequently asked questions

GENERAL INFORMATION

Contact Details

The School Office hours are 8.00am to 4.00pm

Telephone: 01707 351350

Email: admin@ridgeway.herts.sch.uk

School Website: www.ridgeway.herts.sch.uk

Twitter: @Ridgeway_AC

Instagram: @RidgewayAcademy

The School Day

8.20 am	Students arrive at school
8.25 am	Morning Bell
8.30 am	Registration/Assembly
8.45 am – 9.45 am	Period 1
9.45 am – 9.50 am	Movement time
9.50 am – 10.50 am	Period 2
10.50 am – 11.10 am	Break
11.10 am – 12.10 pm	Period 3
12.10 pm – 12.15 pm	Movement time
12.15 pm – 1.15 pm	Period 4
1.15 pm – 1.50 pm	Lunch
1.55 pm – 2.55 pm	Period 5
2.55 pm – 3.00 pm	Movement time
3.00 pm – 3.10 pm	Registration
3.15 pm	Clubs & Activities / Detentions

Contact Information

It is vital we are able to contact you in an emergency. We require a minimum of 2 contacts for each child. If you or any of your nominated contacts change your contact information, ie, telephone number, address, place of work or doctor during the school year it is essential you inform us immediately.

Students must agree their travel arrangements in advance with parents and ensure they have all the necessary equipment for that day's lessons, especially if there are after school clubs and activities they wish to attend. Only in exceptional circumstances will a student be allowed to call home. The School Office will always endeavour to get emergency messages to students. Please do not try to contact your child on their mobile phone during the school day. Students are required to turn these off whilst on the school site.

Bromcom

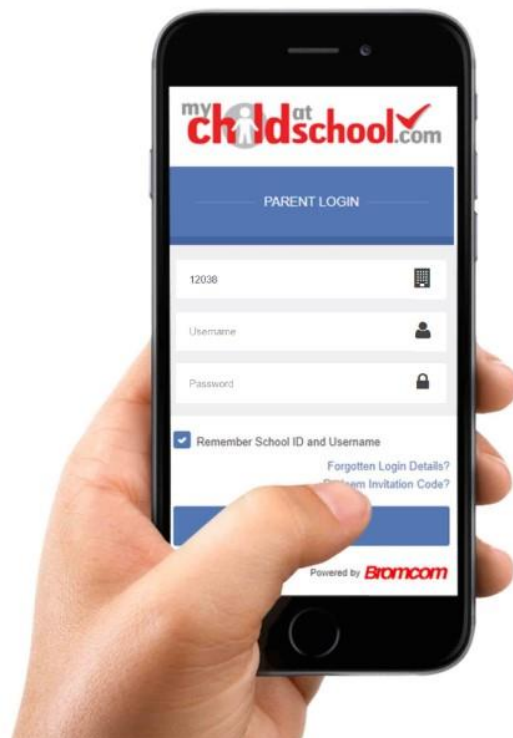
Bromcom is an electronic school communication system. This enables you to receive all information from school quickly and reliably. We can send letters by email to your inbox and short messages directly to your mobile phone as a text message. Messages must be replied to by telephone call as our system does not support text message replies. Parents are required to download the My Child at School Application. This will allow you to track your child's progress daily.

My Child At School

MyChildAtSchool (MCAS) is a portal enabling parents to view their child's academic performance in real-time via an app. This application is very beneficial in supporting your child.

MyChildAtSchool provides:

- Access to real-time attendance, assessment and behaviour data
- Instant access to published reports and letters (hard copies are no longer sent home, please ensure we have an up-to-date email address).



Getting in Touch with Us

Parents' Evenings are obviously not the only opportunity to talk to your child's teachers.

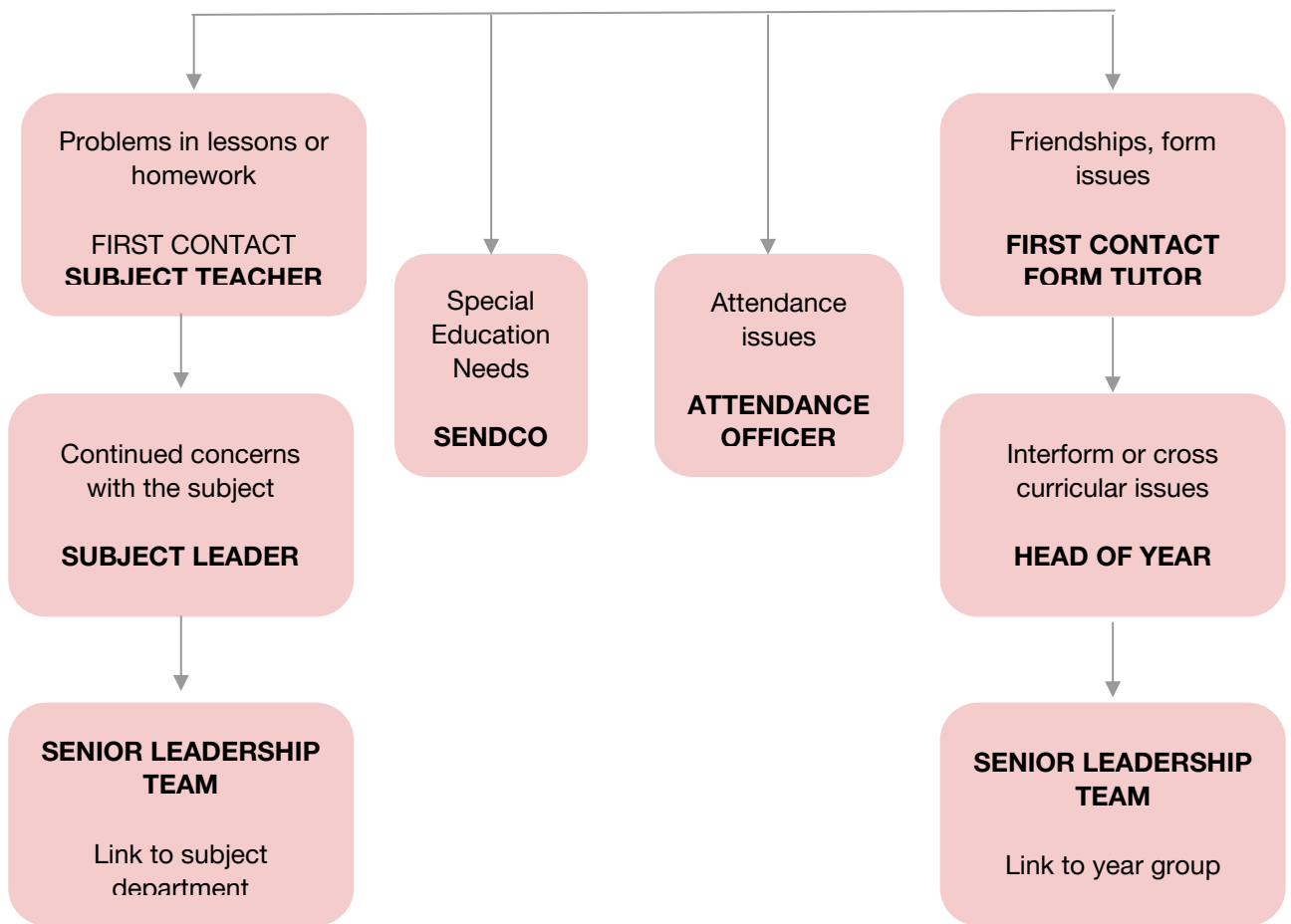
The Form Tutor is the first point of contact. He or she will know the students in his/her form group very well and after consultation with your child's Head of Year and subject teachers, will be able to deal with most problems and enquiries. The issue may be resolved by email or letter or by coming into school for an arranged meeting.

To ensure a teacher is available to meet with you, you will need to telephone or email the teacher to arrange a convenient time. Due to teaching commitments it is unlikely teachers can see you if you just come into school.

In routine matters, you should address notes to the Form Tutor. Absence letters should be addressed to the Attendance Officer. Messages about absence should be made via the absence reporting system (see page 4).

You can also send the school an email admin@ridgeway.herts.sch.uk

Contacts - Who do I ask?



How do I make appointments for parents' evenings?

To book an appointment, please go to <https://ridgewayacademy.schoolcloud.co.uk> where you can login.

To login all you need to enter is your Title: Mr/Mrs/Miss etc, your first name and your surname. You will need to enter your email address and confirm. Your password is your child's first name, surname and date of birth. Please be aware that these details are taken from the original information you gave on your child's registration form. This link is also available on the school website under the Portal tab.

A 'Parents Guide for Booking Appointments' can also be found on the school website. Please [click here](#) to access the page.

Every student in the school is provided with a planner at the start of each academic year together with their timetable. The timetable will be recorded in the planner. The students need to keep their planner up to date and in good condition.

Getting information home

The Newsletter 'Ridgeway News' is issued once a fortnight. These give you essential information on dates, parents evenings, visits, events as well as news on a variety of school activities, individual and team achievements.

The Newsletter is available on the Friday of that week on our website and emailed home.

The image displays three sample pages of the Ridgeway Academy newsletter. Each page features a red header with the school logo and the title 'Ridgeway News'. The content includes:

- Page 1 (Left):** 'Headteacher's Message' by Mrs C Maddocks, 'Year 10 Brilliant Club' news, and a photo of students.
- Page 2 (Middle):** 'Headteacher's Message' by Mrs C Maddocks, 'Year 10 Brilliant Club' news, and a photo of students.
- Page 3 (Right):** 'Headteacher's Message' by Mrs C Maddocks, 'Year 10 Brilliant Club' news, and a photo of students.

PASTORAL CARE

Form tutor system

Students are assigned a Form Tutor and Form Group when they arrive at school. Where possible students stay in the same Form Group as they progress through the school.

Year Organisation

Students from each year have a Form Tutor and a Head of Year together with a link member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) whose responsibilities include attendance, work, welfare, behaviour and maintaining close links with parents.

Student Services

There are a number of additional staff who are able to offer support and guidance to students. They are based in Student Services.

Entitlement and expectations of our students

Students at this school are entitled to:

- be safe
- be given the opportunity to achieve the best possible exam results
- be taught the National Curriculum
- have access to the best resources available in the school
- high quality teaching
- be given work which is at an appropriate, yet challenging level
- have work assessed regularly
- have regular and challenging home-based learning
- be praised and have good work acknowledged
- have school-based problems investigated and solved wherever possible
- have the opportunity to join in clubs, extra-curricular activities and outings
- be treated with respect
- be prepared for life in the 21st century
- be prepared for the world of work

Students at this school are expected to:

- treat others with respect
- allow others to learn
- produce their best quality work
- do all their home-based learning when it is set and hand it in on time
- ensure the safety of others in the school
- bring the right equipment to all lessons
- have a good attendance record
- be punctual
- wear the correct uniform

Students at this school are encouraged to:

- join clubs and lunchtime activities
- report matters which concern them or other students
- celebrate and share their achievements

Getting organised

Most students are ready to move up to Secondary School but, for some, remembering all the things that need to be packed in their school bag can cause some anxiety.

Having to cope with new subjects, lessons that change hourly, finding the way around a strange building and moving away from having one teacher for all lessons, can be exciting as well as daunting. It is essential for each student to arrive in school with their pencil case and other equipment so they are prepared for the day.

How to help:

- Have a large copy of their timetable somewhere prominent, perhaps with a list of everything they need for each lesson and, if need be, remind them what they need to pack.
- Encourage them to pack their bags themselves and have their uniform ready the night before so there is no frantic rush in the morning.
- Encourage them to put their school books, equipment, uniform and kit away in a particular place.
- Check their Planners daily to see if there is anything unusual needed for the next day e.g. a form to be returned. You will probably also find some information you need in the newsletter.
- Try to label everything. Some students lose their possessions almost daily but we can help to find them much more easily if they have names attached.

Ways of helping:

- Ensure students eat breakfast every day.
- Try to make sure they catch the bus or leave home in time to walk, preferably with a friend, a group of friends, or yourselves. There is safety and a sense of security in numbers. If the car breaks down or you all oversleep, please write a note for the Form Tutor so your child does not have to worry. Students who arrive after registration are required to sign in at Student Services.
- Good attendance is really important for many reasons, so do send them to school unless they are *really* unwell. We reward good attendance in several ways so students can be proud of completing whole weeks, terms and, in many cases years, in school.

STANDARDS

Absences

All students need to be accounted for on a daily basis. Any absence from school for whatever reason must be reported by the parent/carer on a daily basis. Please telephone the school number before 8.15 am and follow the options for absence or email attendance@ridgeway.herts.sch.uk. It is essential you contact us each day of your child's absence. Appointment cards/hospital letters are required for all medical appointments.

In order to support attendance an automated messaging service is used daily and is sent to parents/carers of students who have not been registered or when a reason for their absence has not been given and treated in the following way:

Telephone calls will be made to the first contact by Form Tutors and Head of Years to establish the reasons behind the absence and offer support. If we are still unable to make contact, or confirm the student's whereabouts, we could make a welfare check. This involves either a member of staff visiting the address we hold or, if there are serious concerns, a call could be made to 101 with a request for assistance.

Illness during the School Day

Students who feel unwell during a lesson should inform the teacher in charge. If it is break or lunchtime they should report to Student Services where they will be assessed and treated if required. Students **MUST NOT** contact their parent/carer themselves. Parents will be contacted by a member of staff to collect their child/seek assistance if it is felt absolutely necessary for the student to go home.

Medication

Students are not permitted to carry any medication in school, apart from an EpiPen or Inhaler. If your child needs essential prescribed medication during the day, please complete a Medication Consent Form so the school can supervise self-administration. This can be obtained from the school office. If your child needs daily medication, we will ask you to complete a Healthcare Plan to ensure we care for your child appropriately.

Attendance matters

We place very high value on attendance and expect all students to attend the full school day. There is a clear link between student attendance and attainment – if a student is not in school they will not be learning to reach their full potential.

When it is necessary to withdraw students from education a letter must be sent to the Attendance Officer. Please note permission for holidays will not be granted and as such, will be noted as unauthorised absence and a Fixed Penalty fine will be issued.

It is vital students attend school regularly and on time. The aim of every child should be to have no time away from school and achieve 100% attendance. Absence does have a detrimental effect on learning and attainment; furthermore, frequent absence can interfere with friendships and a sense of belonging to the school. Students should be on the school site each morning by 8.25am when the morning bell rings, to ensure they are sitting in their form room ready for morning registration which starts at 8.30am. Punctuality is an important part of self-discipline and is essential to good time-management.

The government classes any student with attendance below 90% as being persistently absent from school. If a student's attendance drops below this level the school's Attendance Improvement Officer will work with the family to provide support where required.

- Students whose attendance is above 96% will achieve an average of 8 or 9 GCSE qualifications at grades 4 to 9
- Students whose attendance drops below 90% will attain on average only two or three GCSE qualifications at grades 4 to 9 new grading system
- A student whose average attendance is 90% will have missed half a year of secondary school education by the end of Year 11

Attendance will be authorised for: -

- Illness (unless attendance is below 90% where medical evidence will be required)
- Family bereavement
- Approved off-site educational activity
- Religious Holiday
- Participation at an approved public performance

Your child must not be kept away from school for:

- Family holidays
- Looking after relatives
- Family Celebrations
- Birthdays

What can Parents do?

- Discuss with your child the importance of good attendance
- Do not take holidays during term time
- Insist your child attends school unless they are clearly too ill to do so.

When staff talk about attendance percentages with parents or students, it can be difficult for them to understand why there are concerns. A child with 89% attendance at the end of an academic year will have missed 21 days of school (over four school weeks of learning missed).

Whilst 89% is a positive achievement in an examination/test, 89% attendance would warrant a significant level of concern.

In order to address this issue, the following table has been put together to support schools to talk to parents/carers/students about the amount of 'learning hours lost' as a result of a student's absence. Parties need to be advised that where a child does not attend school they miss out on significant hours of learning opportunities (broadly calculated as 5 hours for every two sessions missed) which are unlikely to be covered again. This places a child at significant risk of falling behind their peers:

Description	Threshold attendance	Actual attendance	Whole days of absence	Learning hours lost
Excellent	100%	190 days	0	0
	99%	188 days	2	10
Good	98%	186 days	4	20
	97%	184 days	6	30
	96%	182.5 days	7.5	37.5
Cause for Concern	95%	180.5 days	9.5	47.5
	94%	179 days	11	55
	93%	177 days	13	65
	92%	175 days	15	75
	91%	173 days	17	85
Unsatisfactory	90%	171 days	19	95
	89%	169 days	21	105
	88%	167 days	23	115
	87%	165 days	25	125
Serious cause for concern	86%	163 days	27	135
Critical	85%	161.5 days	28.5	142.5
	84%	159.5 days	30.5	152.5
	83%	158 days	32	160
	82%	156 days	34	170
	81%	154 days	36	180
	80%	152 days	38	190

Code of Conduct

Our vision is that "Everybody can achieve" because we:

- believe in students, not only as they are but also what they might become;

- know unrecognised talent lies latent in all of us;
- want students to be able to achieve even more than they hoped to achieve;
- know that personal motivation is a critical factor in achieving success;
- should all be able to experience the excitement of learning and the euphoria of success.

The values of Ridgeway Academy are summed up by the 3Rs. The 3Rs underpin everything that we do and provide a sound basis for all that we strive to accomplish.

Our values are to:

Have **Respect** for:

- learning and achievement;
- each other, valuing different views, beliefs and cultures;
- our community, supporting activities and presenting a positive image of the school;
- the environment, keeping it clean and tidy and fit for learning;
- the school rules and regulations.

Take **Responsibility** for:

- making significant progress and being a successful learner;
- setting high standards of behaviour, conduct, appearance and attitude;
- being effective independent learners and leaders, taking initiative and supporting others;
- meeting the challenges of the future and being confident in all that we do;
- making a positive contribution to society.

Develop **Relationships** which:

- are strong between each other in and out of school;
- allow us to lead safe and healthy lives and look after the well-being of each other;
- help us think creatively and rationally and be enthusiastic about learning;
- help us know and value other people.

HOME SCHOOL AGREEMENT			
	As a student they will	As a parent I will	As a school we will
Learning and progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · learn to the best of their ability · try to improve, by seeking and taking advice from staff, reviewing their progress regularly and setting personal goals · attend parent-teacher evenings and other events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · support my child's learning · take an active interest in my child's life at school · attend parents consultation evenings and other events organised to help me learn about my child's progress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · provide a high-quality learning environment · provide access to a broad and balanced curriculum · offer the best available teaching and support staff · report regularly on progress and advise on how improvement can take place
Home-based Learning and Coursework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · make sure that they have understood the home-based learning and seek help when required · do their home learning to the best of their ability and on time · monitor and use Google classroom · meet their coursework deadlines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · provide a suitable environment at home to support my child's work · give encouragement and appropriate support · ensure they meet their deadlines for submission · monitor setting and deadlines using Google Guardians 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · provide opportunities for each child to achieve full academic potential by regular setting and marking of appropriate tasks · provide clear timelines and calendars for coursework and home learning schedules · support the Google Classroom site for home based learning
Attendance and punctuality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · arrive at school each day on time · not leave the premises without permission · aim for 100% attendance · understand that failure to meet the school's attendance target may result in missing out on rewards events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · ensure my child attends school regularly and punctually · inform the school of the reasons of any absence as soon as possible via the absence line · avoid taking my child out of school during term time · understand that my child's attendance will be challenged if it falls below 96% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · monitor and encourage outstanding attendance · follow up attendance issues with the student and parent as necessary

Responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · take responsibility for their own learning and behaviour · observe the school rules at all times · be hard-working in all aspects of school life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · encourage my child to behave responsibly and correctly and ensure they follow school rules at all times · encourage my child to develop self-discipline and diligence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · define clear expectations with regard to behaviour and discipline and educate students to meet them · uphold and promote values of self-discipline and diligence · consistently issue rewards and consequences
Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · not be involved in any bullying incidents and report any that I might witness · support other students · undertake to be a good citizen 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · encourage my child to develop good friendship groups · give early warning of any concerns in behaviour, learning or relationships · work with the school to manage any poor behaviour from my child 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · provide a safe and positive learning environment · provide guidance and support through the pastoral care system · build relationships based on mutual respect
Respect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · behave in a manner which shows respect for others in school · respect the school buildings, property and surroundings · respect the thought for the week · accept there is no place for the promotion in school to extremist views 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · encourage my child to uphold the values of integrity, compassion and tolerance · I will not promote the extremist views of any kind in school · be respectful in all communication with the school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · uphold and promote the values of integrity, compassion and tolerance · accept there is no place for the promotion in school to extremist views
Uniform and equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · come to school each day correctly dressed following the uniform and appearance guidelines and properly equipped · use the planner and other equipment correctly · wear uniform correctly in and out of school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · ensure that my child leaves home each day appropriately dressed, equipped and prepared for the school day · ensure that my child adheres to the appearance guidelines at all times both in and out of school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · monitor uniform, appearance and equipment on a regular basis and inform parents of problems · consult on any changes to regulations in advance
Extra-curricular activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · become actively involved in school, including extra-curricular activities wherever possible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · support my child in any extra-curricular activities undertaken · encourage my child to take pride in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · offer the chance to take part in a variety of extra-curricular activities

		representing the school	
Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · take home information promptly when asked to do so · return reply slips and absence letters promptly · ensure students always use their own electronic device in accordance with the Acceptable Use Agreement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · download the My Child at School app and monitor daily · understand there is a 48 hour acknowledgement time and a further 5 working days to action · to keep up to date with information and home learning that has been set · take note of and respond to all school communication promptly and effectively · draw matters of concern to the attention of the school at the earliest possible moment · support my child in appropriate use of an electronic learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · provide clear information to parents · support the e-portal, learning platform, Google Classroom and website to ensure these are useful modern forms of communications · contact parents at the earliest appropriate moment should concerns or problems arise · deal with parental concerns promptly and effectively · support students in the appropriate use of electronic device to further their learning

Recognising achievement

Recognising and rewarding achievement is central to our philosophy for success and supports our core values of respect, responsibility and relationships. We have a powerful system of rewards to encourage positive attitudes to work and learning. The system develops as students' progress through the school and we expect all students to be fully involved in receiving the various rewards for their endeavours.

The school actively encourages and celebrates good behaviour. A system of awarding students is in place, encompassing rewards for character, strong academic performance and for pastoral matters. Awards will be given for students working/going beyond expectations based on their individual ability and they should be awarded according to the rewards structure.

At the end of each term there is an assembly to celebrate our successes where students receive recognition for their achievements. There is also a formal awards evening which is held for students to receive their examination certificate and other prestigious awards.

Rewards will be logged on Bromcom so parents can access the information via My Child at School (MCAS).

Reward	Examples of good behaviour	Outcome
R1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Effort ● Improvement ● Attainment ● Attitude to learning ● Excellent uniform standard 	1 House point Positive message
R2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Effort ● Improvement ● Attainment ● Attitude to learning 	3 House points Positive message
R3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Effort ● Improvement ● Attainment ● Attitude to learning 	5 House points Positive message
R4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● HT commendation ● HOY nominated student of the week 	10 House points Postcard Hot chocolate Friday
R5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reward assemblies 	Prizes awarded for: Attendance Attitude to learning House points RWA Values
R6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Celebration assembly 	Prizes awarded for:

		Progress Achievement Effort RWA Values School representation HT awards Student of the year
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Behaviour and discipline

Our Behaviour for Learning Policy sets out, in detail, how general discipline is maintained in the school. This is achieved principally through the pastoral curriculum and is firmly based on positive reinforcement; our rewards system further enhances this. Ridgeway Academy does not tolerate inappropriate or unacceptable behaviour and students are constantly reminded about the standards of behaviour expected.

We believe high quality teaching promotes effective learning and good behaviour. Our emphasis is on recognising and celebrating effort and success so all students feel valued. We will teach students to take responsibility for their own actions and to accept the consequences of their choices.

Our purpose is to create a safe and happy community by:

- Creating a happy, secure and stimulating learning environment where everyone will be inspired to do their very best
- Promoting and developing self-discipline, social awareness and appropriate standards of behaviour
- Providing common, simple robust and effective procedures for promoting effort, achievement and positive behaviour

Consequences

For those students who fail to meet our behaviour standards our sanctions are detailed on the following pages. These are also displayed around the school. It is important for students to know the expectations and the consequences of not meeting them.

Reset Room

The Reset Room is where students may spend time working with support from the Behaviour Support Officer. Students will complete work provided by teachers and have supervised breaks at different times to other students so there is no opportunity to meet their friends. Students are also referred to the Reset Room for Intervention work.

Consequence	Examples of poor behaviour	Sanction
S1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorrect uniform • Poor bookwork standard • Inadequate work completed • Lack of equipment/ device 	30 minute lunch time detention
C1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disrupting the learning of others • Late to lessons < 5 minutes 	Verbal warning
C2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repetition of C1 behaviour 	Final verbal warning
C3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repetition of C 2 behaviour • Internal truancy • Inappropriate conduct towards another student • Rudeness to or arguing with a member of staff • Refusal to follow instructions • Use of device/ mobile phone • Inappropriate language- swearing in conversation • Provoking another student or situation • Lateness to lesson ≥5 minutes late • Late to school without a valid reason • Out of bounds area 	50 minute detention (until 4pm)
C4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repetition of any C3 behaviour • Failure to attend a C3 detention • Refusal to attend faculty exit • Bullying (first incident) • Truancy off site • Graffiti • Refusal to hand over mobile phone • Dishonesty/ lying to a member of staff 	SLT detention (until 5pm)

The following behaviour may result in internal isolation or Fixed term suspension depending on severity, frequency and contributing factors in line with our wider whole school behaviour policy.

- Repetition of C4 behaviour
- Poor behaviour during a C4 detention
- Cultural intolerance/ Discriminatory Language
- Gross disobedience
- Physical assault
- Persistent bullying
- Smoking/ vaping/ in possession of lighters and Vapes/ Alcohol.
- Threatening behaviour against staff or student
- Theft/ Vandalism

Online safety acceptable use agreement

We expect all students to be responsible for their behaviour when using ICT equipment and the Internet. Students will only use ICT systems in school, including the internet, email, digital video mobile technologies etc. for school purposes.

- Will only use school IT equipment for school purposes.
- Will not download or install software on school IT equipment.
- Will only log on to the school network, other school systems and resources using their own school username and password.
- Will not reveal passwords to anyone other than a parent/carer.
- Will not use personal email addresses or other personal accounts on school IT equipment.
- Will make sure that all electronic communications are responsible and sensible.
- Understanding my child's behaviour in the virtual classroom should mirror that in the physical classroom.
- Understand that everything my child searches for, access, post or receive online can be traced now and in the future. My child's activity can be monitored and logged and if necessary shared with teachers, parents/carers and the police if necessary. My child knows it is essential that they build a good online reputation.
- Will not browse, download, upload or forward material that could be considered offensive or illegal. If they accidentally come across any such material, will report it immediately to a member of staff if it is in school, or parent/carer if not in school.
- Will not give out their own or others' personal information, including: name, phone number, home address, interests, schools or clubs or any personal image. Will report immediately any request for personal information, to a member of staff if in school or parent/carer if not in school.
- Should never post photographs, videos or livestream without the permission of all parties involved.
- Will not upload any images, videos, sounds or words that could upset, now or in the future, any member of the school community, as this is cyberbullying.
- Will be respectful to everyone online; will treat everyone the way that they want to be treated. Will ensure that all online activity, both in and outside school, will not cause distress to anyone in the school community or bring the school into disrepute.
- Will not respond to hurtful behaviour online but will report it, has the right to block and will say no to any inappropriate or upsetting request.
- Will respect the privacy and ownership of others' work on-line and will adhere to copyright at all times.
- Will not attempt to bypass the internet filtering system in school.
- Will not assume that new technologies can be brought into school and will check with staff before bringing in any device.
- Will not lie about their age in order to sign up for age inappropriate games, apps or social networks.
- Understand that not everything seen or heard online is true, accurate or genuine. Also know that some people on the internet are not who they say they are and may have ulterior motives for assuming another identity that will put them at risk. Will gain permission from parents/carers before arranging to meet someone that is only known on the internet.
- Understand that these rules are designed to keep them safe now and in the future. If rules are broken, teachers will investigate and this may result in disciplinary action and parents/carers may be contacted. If the law is broken the police may be informed.

For all other information including GDPR, Privacy Notice and AAT polices please see our school website.

Uniform and equipment

Poorly dressed students reflect badly on the public image of the school and so place all its students at a disadvantage.

All students in Years 7 to 11 wear school uniform. This is to encourage a sense of pride in Ridgeway Academy, discourage competition over dress and prevent students from wearing unsuitable clothes to school. We are aware that a high standard of uniform has a positive impact on behaviour in school and on making a calm, purposeful working environment for all students. When students are dressed in the correct school uniform they are positive role models for their peers and present a positive and impressive image of the school in the local community.

We ask that ALL items are clearly labelled with the student's name. In deciding on the style of uniform the cost, availability and ease of regulation were very much in our minds.

General Appearance

- Students should look smart, clean and tidy at all times.
- Shirts must be tucked in at all times with the top button done up and ties correctly tied with the school logo showing.
- Tie and Blazer must be worn on site
- Skirts must reach the top of the knees (not rolled up)
- Hair must be a natural colour and no extreme hair styles are acceptable.
- Make-up, false/gel nails and nail varnish are not to be worn by any student in school. Students will be required to remove make-up, false/gel nails and nail varnish.
- On the grounds of health & safety, students must not wear any other jewellery, except for a watch. However, students who have pierced ears may wear one small stud (no sleepers) in each ear, but these must be removed for all PE lessons. NO other form of body piercings are allowed in school and will have to be removed. Should students wear jewellery this will be confiscated and placed in the school safe until the end of term.

Boys

- Black School shoes
- Plain black ankle socks
- Black trousers
- White shirt (long or short sleeved)
- Ridgeway Academy V-Neck Black pullover with badge (optional)
- Ridgeway Academy Boys Blazer Black
- Ridgeway Academy Tie Red



Girls

- Black School shoes
- Plain black ankle socks
- 40 or 70 Denier Tights Black
- Stitch pleat knee length black skirt with an embroidered R just below the top where the pleats start or Straight Leg Black trousers (NO jeggings/leggings)
- White blouse (long or short sleeved)
- Ridgeway Academy V-Neck Black pullover with badge (optional)
- Ridgeway Academy Girls Blazer Black



■ Ridgeway Academy Tie Red

Please note: *Students will be sent home to change if they are inappropriately dressed or asked to wear spare uniform from student services and placed in the Reset Room if this is a persistent problem.* HOODIES / SPORTS JACKETS, TRAINERS, PLIMSOLLS AND BOOTS WILL NOT BE TOLERATED AND WILL BE CONFISCATED IF WORN

Items are all available from Stevensons in St Albans www.stevensons.co.uk

Tel No. 01727 853262 or Smarty Schoolwear, in Hatfield www.smartyschoolwear.co.uk Tel No. 01707 263909

Games/Pe kit

- Ridgeway Academy unisex polo shirt red/black
- Ridgeway Academy fitted polo shirt red/black (girls)
- Ridgeway Academy PE shorts black
- Ridgeway Academy track pants black (optional)
- Ridgeway Academy sports socks
- Ridgeway Academy midlayer black/red (optional)
- Ridgeway Academy skort black (optional)
- Ridgeway Academy leggings black (optional)

General (both boys and girls)

- Indoor non-marking trainers - NO PLIMSOLLS
- Football boots
- Shin pads
- Gum shield/mouth guards (recommended)

Equipment

The school provides textbooks, exercise books, file paper, resources and a personal student area on Google Classroom for work that can be accessed from school or from home. There are other items of equipment, however, which parents are expected to provide.

All students will need essential items of equipment which will be checked regularly by the Form Tutor:-

- Two Black Pens (Biro/Ink pens)
- One Green Pen (Biro/Ink pen)
- Two pencils
- Pencil sharpener
- Eraser
- Ruler – 30cm (marked in mms and cms on at least one edge)
- Protractor
- Pair of compasses
- Set of coloured pencils (felt tip pens are *not* recommended)
- A good English dictionary (e.g. Collins Compact Dictionary)
- Casio Classwiz Scientific calculator
- Glue stick

Students can buy all the equipment they need at very reasonable prices from WisePay which can be collected from Student Services.

- Pencils
- Biro
- Rubbers
- Pencil Sharpeners
- Protractors
- Compasses
- Ink Cartridges
- School Ties
- Exam Packs
- Rulers
- Casio Classwiz Scientific calculator

It is essential all students should have a bag strong enough to protect their books and belongings from damage and the weather. Students must use a bag that is suitable for carrying a Chromebook and meets the needs of insurers.

Mobile phones

If your son/daughter has to have a mobile phone at school it must be turned off before entering the school and put it away in their locker for the duration of the day. Any student's mobile phone that is seen during the day will be confiscated and placed at reception for them to collect at the end of the day. Any student caught using their mobile phone and refusing to hand it over will be sanctioned appropriately and parents will have to attend a follow up meeting.

Similarly, students should not wear headphones or 'air pods'; they will be confiscated if they are seen. Headphones are only permitted to be used within lessons with Chromebooks when instructed to do so by staff.

CURRICULUM

We offer a personalised and flexible curriculum so all our students can achieve their full potential. This is constantly reviewed and updated so it is relevant to the needs of our students. Our curriculum is fully compliant with the National Curriculum and exam board syllabus.

Key Stage 3 (Year 7-9)

We offer a balanced and broad curriculum in line with the National Curriculum. We place significant emphasis on the development of students as rounded individuals and all students follow a programme of study including Philosophy and Ethics and Personal Development.

In Key Stage 3 students' study:

Computer Science	Music
Dance	PE
Drama	Philosophy & Ethics
English	Science
French/Spanish	Technology
Geography	Mathematics
History	Visual Arts

In Year 7 some students will have additional literacy and numeracy teaching or interventions to support their rapid progress in these important curriculum areas. Some students may also study as part of a nurture group to support development of social skills, confidence and leadership qualities.

Key Stage 4 (Year 10-11)

At Key Stage 4 students continue to receive a broad and balanced curriculum leading to GCSE. Students have the opportunity to select from a wide range of optional courses as well as completing statutory subjects.

Compulsory subjects:

English Language
English Literature
Mathematics
PE (Core)
Science

Additional Key Stage 4 subjects:

Art	Music
Business	Philosophy & Ethics
Computer Science	Sociology
Design & Technology	Enterprise BTEC
Drama	Health & Social Care
French	BTEC Sport
Media	Spanish
Geography	History

Key Stage 5 (12-13)

Ridgeway Academy is part of the thriving Welwyn and Hatfield Sixth Form Consortium and this enables us to offer a wide range of Level 3 courses.

Extended learning days

Throughout the year, students at Ridgeway have opportunities to work together as year groups outside of normal lessons. A core part of this provision is the Extended Learning Days [ELDs] spread throughout the school year. Activities that take place on these days are planned to allow students to extend their learning beyond the classroom delivered by our subject teams, as well as develop their wider skills as part of our focus on Personal Development. Whilst the exact focus of each ELD is subject to revision, students can expect to experience a range of themes such as 'International Day', 'Sustainability Day' and 'Musical in a Day'. We also use ELDs to invite external speakers to run workshops on topics such as consent and careers.

Home Based Learning

All students are expected to complete home-based learning to support their studies. Parents should check Google Classroom regularly and make sure that they are signed up through Google Guardians .

1. Ridgeway Academy regards home based learning as an important part of every student's programme of study. Home-based learning helps to develop an understanding of work covered in lessons and allows the student to work independently to reinforce knowledge and extend skills.
2. Home based learning will be predominantly set as preparation 'prep' for a students' lesson or in response to their learning 'React'
3. Home-based learning tasks will take a variety of forms, some online platforms will be utilised in addition to Google Classroom. Students should check Google Classroom daily to organise themselves, assignments with clear deadlines will be uploaded. Students are expected to meet this.
4. Parents can assist by:
 - Appreciating the need for independent study and providing a suitable quiet place where distractions are limited
 - Supporting in removing phones or devices until homework is completed
 - Supporting the student by showing interest and encouragement, but please do not do it for them
 - Seeking an explanation of the set task which can develop the students' understanding and reasoning skills
 - Helping the student to plan his/her time to meet the requirements
 - Checking Google Guardians weekly – this enables you to see what is expected

- Using email to communicate with us
- Encourage students to attend homework club that runs every day after school.
- Ensuring all students are able to access their homework on Google Classroom.

Students wishing to use computers for homework should use the Homework Club in K2 next to the Library. Homework Club is open Monday to Friday after school from 3.10 to 4.00 pm. Homework Club is supervised by two members of staff who can give support and guidance with homework, projects and coursework.

The guidelines for students in Year 7, 8 and 9 is to have between 1 – 1 ½ hours per night depending on year group and subject.

For years 10 and 11:

- 3 hours homework per night
- Homework will be set over a longer period of time
- Coursework for each subject may be set as homework
- Revision for modular tests may form part of homework

Library

The Library is a bright open space available to all students and staff and supported by the Librarian between 9:30am and 3.00pm Monday to Friday.

The Library offers students the opportunity to read and study quietly and exchange books during break and lunch times. In addition, the Library hosts a Chess Club on a Wednesday lunchtime.

The Library holds an extensive range of non-fiction resources to support learning and research. This is in addition to a wide-ranging fiction collection for KS3, KS4 and KS5. Students search the library catalogue and reserve books using the Click & Collect service via the Accessit Library page available on the school intranet. Students are also encouraged to follow our social media instagram @rwareads where reading recommendations and reviews are shared from fellow students and staff.

The Librarian plays a central role in encouraging students to read for pleasure. We offer opportunities to shadow book awards such the Children's Book Award and YOTO Carnegie Book Awards, arrange author visits to inspire students and engage them with reading and provide opportunities for students to suggest books they may wish to see within the library.

Students are invited to join the Library Team, an enthusiastic group of volunteers who assist the Librarian with processing and issuing books, preparing displays and helping with library events including Opening Evening and discussion groups. Students participating in the Duke of Edinburgh scheme are welcome to undertake part of their volunteering in the Library under the supervision of the Librarian.

In Key Stage Three, students participate in fortnightly Library lessons. These lessons allow students to experience a range of texts, both fiction and non-fiction through whole class reading and opportunities to independently explore the library.

To monitor reading progress, Star Reading tests are completed in the autumn term and summer term and students are encouraged to read a wide range of literature appropriate for their reading age. Test results are used to identify students who may need more targeted reading support and to support staff across the school in developing an appropriate curriculum for all students.

Reading practice

Reading is such an important skill and everything your child does in the classroom relies on the ability to read well. When students join Ridgeway Academy, we complete a reading test to identify students' reading levels. Where a student is identified as needing reading support, it becomes our priority to ensure the appropriate intervention is in place. However, every child benefit from parents' encouragement with reading, such as:

- Let them see you reading as much as possible. Read articles or extracts to them and talk about the books, magazines and newspapers you read.
- Encourage your child to read aloud to you, if only for 10 minutes each day, and read to them if they still enjoy you doing so.
- If they can't read a word, try to avoid immediately helping them, leave it 10 seconds before you help, this is to allow the child an opportunity to work it out for themselves.
- Read through our recommended reading lists with your child and help them select their next book.
- Every fortnight students have a Library lesson in school where they can choose a new book as part of their English homework. Half an hour of reading is required every week. Most students will read much more than this, but if your child is reluctant, encourage them to do this homework just like all the other homework set, even if it is for only 10 minutes a day.
- Encourage them to talk about the books they are reading, telling you the story in the correct sequence of events, talking about the characters, saying what they like and dislike about the story.
- Visit the local library and book shops whenever you can

- Experts say it is acceptable to read comics too! But you might like to check out some of the teenage magazines on the market at the moment for suitability.

Basic skills in literacy and numeracy

By making sure your child has learned some basic skills, you will make their life much easier in secondary school. You need to check they know:

- The alphabet
- How to correctly write their name, address (including postcode), telephone number and date of birth
- The difference between left and right (setting the table is a good way of teaching this)
- The days of the week in the correct sequence and correctly spelt
- The months of the year in the correct order, correctly spelt, and how many days in each month
- How to tell the time using both analogue as well as digital clocks
- Multiplication tables up to times twelve
- How to use a basic calculator
- How to tie their school tie and shoe laces so they don't come undone

Many parents would like to help their students spell better but are not sure how to do it. The easiest way is to write it down for them, then encourage them to:

- *LOOK* at the word
- *SAY* the word correctly aloud
- *COVER* it up
- *WRITE* it down
- *CHECK* if it is right

We hope you find these suggestions helpful in helping your child make a success of his or her time at Ridgeway Academy.

Academic support

We are totally committed to working with parents in partnership so that all our students make maximum progress in their learning.

A key part of this partnership is providing parents with accurate and regular feedback about their child's progress which is achieved by:

- Progress Reports
- Parents' Evenings

One of the strategies used to achieve the best outcomes for students is effective data tracking and intervention. This requires targets for students to be set in each subject. We set all students new targets each year which will challenge them to attain above national expectations.

Students should be aware of their targets for each subject and progress towards them will be shown on the termly reports that are sent home. The reports will be available on My Child At School app and will enable you to track the progress of your child towards reaching their targets

In order to accurately assess your child's individual skills and abilities we use tests from a range of standardised assessments we have in school. The information gained from these assessments is stored in a safe manner according to the current data protection protocol. Consent for this testing can be found in the registration form.

Blended Learning for students

In September 2022 the Alban Academies Trust launched a common programme across all secondary schools for students joining in year 7. The programme required all students to have their own Chromebook. Further information can be found on our website [here](#).

Below are the expectations we have for students when using devices in school.

- I will bring my device to school with me each day. I am aware that I will receive consequences in line with the consequence system should I not have the correct equipment for school.
- Temporary loan devices can be borrowed for a day should I not have a device with me. If I borrow a device and do not return it at the end of the school day, then I will be sanctioned.
- If I bring a mobile phone to school, I know that this must be switched off and cannot be used whilst I am on campus throughout the school day. I will not be able to use my phone as a device for learning within my lessons.
- If I am loaning a device from school, I understand that all tablets or laptops remain the property of Ridgeway Academy and are on loan to me while I am on roll at school. I understand that loan devices must be returned on request.
- My own portable device will only be used for learning purposes during school time. Sanctions will apply for inappropriate use of my device during lessons.
- My teacher has full discretion to ask me to put my device away in any lesson or at any time.
- When I bring my own device to school, I am fully responsible for keeping it safe. My device will be fully charged before coming to school. I will store my device safely when it is not being used (e.g. in my locker.)
- I will ensure that my device has a passcode or other locking system to ensure that my personal information remains safe. I will not use another person's device without their permission.
- With my own device, I will only connect to the school WiFi network to use the Internet. I will not enable 3G/4G during school time for my own protection and to protect the privacy of staff and students.
- I will not take or post photographs, videos or livestream without the permission of all parties involved. I will not post any images to social media taken during school time without permission. I will delete any image or video if I am asked to do so by a member of staff. I understand that teachers have the right under law to search my device for material that may be harmful.
- Whilst I am allowed to install my own software and media on my own device, I understand that space must be given to learning applications and I may be asked to delete other content to make space for learning tools.
- My own device must not contain illegal software, must not be 'Jailbroken' and must have regular official updates applied from the manufacturer in order to keep it secure.
- If available, I will ensure my device has adequate antivirus and spyware protection and that it is kept up to date to prevent damage to other devices on the school network.
- I understand that these rules are designed to keep me safe now and in the future.

- I understand that my network and Internet access may be taken away if I fail to abide by these rules. In accordance with school policy, devices may be confiscated for a limited time period.
- I understand that I am subject to sanctions laid down in the rewards and consequences policy and other applicable school policies. If I break the law the police may be informed.

By accepting your place at Ridgeway Academy, you agree and consent to abide by all the instructions and requirements detailed in this acceptable use agreement.

For all other information including GDPR, Privacy Notice and AAT policies please see our school website.

CULTURE

Mental health and wellbeing

We take the subject of Mental Health and Wellbeing very seriously and have a team of dedicated staff who deliver interventions and counselling to those students who need support. We have staff trained in Mental Health first aid and Applied Suicide Intervention Skills and safe talk.

Mental Health is as important as Physical Health and we encourage our young people to speak openly about it without stigma and in a way, which promotes a Positive View of Mental Health and Wellbeing.

We encourage parents/carers to contact us if they are concerned about their child's Mental Health or Well-being. We can refer students for support within school or to outside agencies if appropriate and have links to CAMHS (Children and adolescent mental health service) and other agencies to support Mental Health and Wellbeing.

Links to self-help advice sites such as KOOOTH.com, a safeguard website, which allows our students to chat online to a trained counsellor and Health for Teens run by our school nurse team plus many more can be found in our weekly school newsletter.

Young carers

There is support in place for students who have been identified as Young Carers. Designated Young Carer Support Workers in school are available to support the student and their family and if necessary, refer to the appropriate agencies. Once identified all staff are made aware of the child's circumstances leading to a better understanding of the child's needs and barriers to learning.

Students who have been identified as a Young Carer have the opportunity to use the Young Carers Room for some quiet reflective time, giving them the opportunity to relax and have some fun. This is available Friday lunchtimes in the Inclusion Office. A member of staff is always available to support them both emotionally and academically.

The school has a confidential email available to all students, parents and carers who feel the need to talk about something that is bothering them but are not yet confident enough to speak to someone about it face to face: timetotalk@ridgeway.herts.sch.uk
All information received is treated with the utmost confidentiality and respect.

The Young Carer team works closely with the Mental Health Lead in school who is able to offer further support if required. We also recommend services such as Young Carers from Welwyn and Hatfield Youth Council and sites such as Kooth, Babble and Health for Teens.

Anti-bullying

Ridgeway Academy does not tolerate bullying. Students are encouraged and expected to report all incidents and parents can be assured that the school will deal with such incidents swiftly and effectively. Students can report incidents of Community, Health, Bullying, Weapons, Hate Crime or something else. A report can be made on the Sharps Link on the School Intranet. The school's Anti Bullying Policy is available on the school's website.

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our school. Our priority is to keep your child safe at school. Everyone shares a responsibility to ensure bullying is dealt with; anyone who knows bullying is happening is expected to tell staff.

Definition of Bullying

Bullying can be described as the repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. Bullying can be physical, verbal or psychological. It can happen face-to-face or online'. The following are examples of bullying behaviour, although the list is not exhaustive; name-calling, violence, threatened violence, extortion, intimidation, ignoring or indirect action such as spreading unpleasant stories about someone.

Derogatory comments and other prejudicial behaviour referring to disability, religion, race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity or sexuality will also be considered as bullying. Whilst the school works hard to ensure all students know the difference between bullying and simply 'hurtful behaviour', it should be remembered that if the victim feels they are being bullied then the school has a responsibility to record, investigate and to resolve the issues. We take all concerns seriously.

What can you do to keep your child safe?

- Drive the message home: 'The key to stopping bullying is to tell an adult about it'. Dispel the myth that talking about it makes it worse.
- Go through the anti-bullying pages in the student planner with your child and make sure they understand it.
- Advise your child to avoid the person, situation or location.
- Contact your child's Form Tutor or Director of Learning immediately if your child has witnessed or is suffering from bullying or feels unsafe for any reason.
- Encourage your child to report any issues to the Sharps System which can be accessed through the school system.

Cyber bullying

As your child grows up and becomes more independent they will take this independence online. Our aim is to ensure that we provide the opportunities for our students and parents/carers to learn how to do this in a safe way.

What are the risks:

- Cyberbullying
- Grooming
- Use of inappropriate websites
- Overuse
- Viruses, hacking and security



Advice on Students Using Social Networking Websites

Tips for young people:-

1. Keep your personal information private – do not put any personal information on your profile.
2. If you do decide to put anything personal on the site, check with your parent or guardian.
3. Remember that anything posted on Social Media is public – anyone could see it.
4. Check Privacy Settings – learn how to make your profile private so that you are in control.
5. Be aware of your digital footprint. Anything put online is likely to stay there forever.
6. Never say something online that you wouldn't say in the real world.
7. Not everyone is who they claim to be – don't be a friend with someone online if you have never met them offline.
8. Never agree to meet someone that you don't know in person without your parent or another responsible adult going with you.
9. Block anyone who you don't wish to be friends with.
10. Tell a trusted adult about anything that makes you feel uncomfortable or upset.

Extra tips for parents:-

1. Be aware of the age rules of Social Networking sites. No one under the age of 13 should have a Facebook page.
2. Stay involved and take an interest in what your child does online – get your child to show you how social networking works.
3. If possible, ask your child to sign you up as a friend so you can be aware of who is contacting them and what they're saying.
4. Help your child set up their profile to make sure they do not put too much personal information online.
5. Make sure your child has their Privacy Settings set appropriately.
6. Do not let your child have unmonitored use of a webcam.
7. Talk to your child about what they like about social networking and what some of the dangers are.
8. Remember – social networking can be useful and fun if the risks are managed.
9. Keep the lines of communication open with your children.

If you are aware of any incidents to do with online safety, you should inform the police immediately on 101.

Facebook Users: Visit www.facebook.com/clickceop to add the 'ClickCEOP' app to your profile and ask your child to do the same. The app is free and easy to use and gives you immediate access to internet safety advice as well as being able to report anything suspicious. If you become a 'friend' then you will be invited to a free online safety surgery. For more information about the issues covered we recommend you view the Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) website www.ceop.police.uk .

FURTHER GENERAL INFORMATION

Lost Property

Lost property is kept in Student Services. If an item is lost it should be reported immediately to the Form Tutor and we shall make every effort to recover it. The student should go to Student Services, at break or lunchtime, to see whether it has been handed in. Many items of lost property, some of them of considerable value, are never reclaimed.

Unclaimed lost property is taken to local charity shops for disposal at the end of every half term. In order to reduce the quantity of possessions that are lost or stolen, we would be grateful if you, as parents, could reinforce the following advice which we give to all students.

- Leave expensive articles, such as mobile phones, or jewellery at home
- Label all clothing clearly
- *DO NOT bring large amounts of money into school*
- *NEVER leave money or valuables in your coat pocket if it is unattended*
- *When you change for PE or Drama, hand in all your money and valuables to the teacher*
- *Take all your possessions and PE kit home at the end of each day*

The school does not accept any legal responsibility for personal property and equipment brought to school.

You are strongly advised to insure yourself against damage or loss of your child's property. (Such cover can usually be included in household insurance). The County Council also offers, through a reputable insurance company, a comprehensive property and injury cover.

Bicycles

If you would like your child to ride a bike to school parents are asked to ensure that:

- a) The bike is well maintained and in a safe and roadworthy condition
- b) The students place their bike securely locked into the school bike shed during the school day
- c) Students are encouraged to wear a cycle helmet

For safety reasons, students must walk their bicycles on footpaths in the school grounds. Failure to comply with this rule will result in permission to bring a bicycle to school being withdrawn.

Bikes must be locked in the bike sheds and are brought to school at the owners own risk.

Cars and motorcycles

Students in Year 11 and 6th Form are permitted to drive or ride to school. An application form must be completed and returned to the school together with proof of licence and insurance. A permit will then be issued. These are parked at school at the owner's risk.

Trips and visits

Your child will have the opportunity to take part in a number of trips and visits. Please note the cost of these normally contain a deposit which cannot be refunded if you cancel your child's place unless another student can fill that place.

Parents are encouraged to pay online through their 'WisePay Account'. Please contact the Finance Department by emailing finance@ridgeway.herts.sch.uk who will arrange for a username and password.

Parents who experience financial difficulty with educational visits should contact the Head of Year, as in some circumstances financial assistance may be available.



Extra-curricular life

We recognise the importance of extra-curricular enrichment activities in supporting the growth of skills, qualities and attributes in our students. The main programme of activities includes:

- An extensive programme of educational visits, offered through our curriculum and by our Head of Years, support our students in learning outside of the classroom. These range from culture-based museum and heritage site visits, to theatre performance and opportunities to see elite performers in action. Modern Foreign Languages offer a cultural visit to France, where students can practise their speaking and listening skills and embed themselves in the culture.
- A strong extra-curricular sports programme provides sporting opportunities for everyone and includes a Sports Tour to a European destination, during which students learn aspects of different cultures, languages and compete against

international school teams. School teams have reached many district and county finals.

- Out of school activities such as Young Enterprise, The Duke of Edinburgh's Awards at Bronze, Silver and Gold level and Camps International (Cambodia 2018, Costa Rica 2022, Tanzania 2023) develop teamwork, communication and leadership skills.
- The Performing Arts annual stage production provides opportunities for our students to develop and showcase their talents in drama, dance and music.
- A comprehensive House programme includes a number of events each year.
- A number of subjects offer Student Leadership programmes, which provide opportunities for our students to lead activities to their peers and to children in our Primary feeder schools. Our Student Literacy Leaders support our Accelerated Reader Programme as well as facilitating other literacy initiatives. Competitions are entered in Maths, which pitch our students against their peers across the country. We invite guest speakers to inspire our students with their achievements and how they have overcome barriers to achieve success. As part of Student Voice a visit was made to the Houses of Parliament.

It is important for us that these opportunities are inclusive for our students and we operate systems which support access to this enrichment. We use SOCS to track, register and monitor our Extra-Curricular Provision. Students are able to sign-up to activities through SOCS using their school Google credentials. Parents/Carers will also be able to set up an account to view and promote student involvement.

<https://www.socscms.com/login/4393/>

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Question	Answer
I am aware my child should not have a phone in school and if they do it should be switched off during the school day. So how do I get a message to my child?	The school office will always endeavour to get urgent messages to students.
My child has lost their PE kit/coat/bag/shoes etc. What should they do?	Lost items are handed into the Student Services; this is why it is very important to have all items clearly named so we can return them to the student. Students should retrace their steps, speak to the PE department or ask at Student Services.
My child has forgotten their PE kit/equipment. What should they do?	You may bring items into school and we will endeavour to deliver them to the student. This will not be possible during break or lunchtimes. The PE department has spare kits to borrow but we do not phone home for forgotten items/equipment.
Will the school make telephone calls on behalf of students?	The school office is unable to make telephone calls on behalf of students unless it is an exceptional circumstance.
Will my child have to carry their musical instrument around all day or is there somewhere they can leave it?	We have a designated locked room and arrangements can be made with the Music teacher to leave instruments there.
My contact details have changed	Please email new details to the school on: admin@ridgeway.herts.sch.uk or contact the school office by telephone/letter.
Why is attendance so important?	Students who are not in school are not learning and fail to achieve their full potential.
What do I need to do if I want to take my child out of school for a holiday?	DON'T. The school will not authorise absences due to holidays in school time because absence from school is damaging to students' education.
How do I find out about uniform rules and where to buy it from?	The information on uniform and where to purchase it is in this handbook and on the school website.
How can I find out which clubs are available for my child to attend?	The school website and social media accounts are regularly updated with details.

<p>My child has forgotten their packed lunch / lunch money. What can I do?</p>	<p>If you can get the lunch to school as soon as possible we will try to get it to the student or money can be added to their WisePay account until 12.00 pm to ensure it can be used at lunch time. Students are expected to take responsibility and ask at the Reception or Student Services as soon as they realise they have left anything at home.</p>
<p>I need to pay for something, can I still pay with cash?</p>	<p>We discourage as much as possible the need for students to carry cash to school, but if you do need to pay with cash, please make sure you have the right money. We take so little cash that we often do not have change.</p>
<p>My child is ill. What do I need to do?</p>	<p>Please ring the school every day your child is absent on 01707 351350 and go through to the absence line, stating your child's name, form and reason for absence.</p>
<p>How do I find out about term dates?</p>	<p>Term dates are published on the school's website and in our newsletter which is emailed home.</p>
<p>My child has to leave school for a doctor's/dental/hospital appointment or is coming in late following an appointment. What do I need to do?</p>	<p>Wherever possible appointments should be made out of school time. Where this is not possible parents must provide a note or contact the school by phone or email attendance@ridgeway.herts.sch.uk giving the appointment details. Students must sign out at the Students Services and sign in if they return/are late to school.</p>
<p>How do I make an appointment to see my child's Form Tutor/Subject Teacher?</p>	<p>Please contact the school office. Admin staff will pass on your details to the relevant staff member who will contact you to make an appointment.</p>
<p>Can my child wear headphones?</p>	<p>No, if headphones are seen they will be confiscated.</p>

<p>My child needs to take regular medication during the school day. Are arrangements in place for this?</p>	<p>Any medication must be in the original packaging and include the information leaflet. Students are not allowed to carry any medication with them; this should be handed in to Student Services. Parents are asked to complete a Parental Agreement Form which provides clear instructions as to dosage and frequency. School staff are not allowed to administer medication and students are responsible for coming to Student Services and take the correct dosage at the right time.</p>
<p>What happens if my child is ill during the school day?</p>	<p>Students should attend Student Services during break and lunch (during lesson time only in the event of an emergency), where they will be assessed and treated, if necessary, by one of the school's qualified first aiders. If it is felt the student needs to go home they will be asked to see their HoY who will give them permission and then staff will telephone a parent/carer to collect them. Students are NOT permitted to make calls themselves.</p>
<p>My child will be absent from school due to family commitments.</p>	<p>Please send a letter addressed to the Headteacher, detailing the reason for absence. You will receive a written response confirming whether or not the absence will be authorised.</p>
<p>My child is entitled to free school meals. How do I apply?</p>	<p>Please apply online at: www.hertsdirect.org/freeschoolmeals If your child qualifies, the FSM team at County will advise us and the school's system will be updated allowing your child to receive free school meals.</p>
<p>Where can I find out information regarding Exams/Results etc</p>	<p>All Year 10 and 11s have access to a 'Student and Parent Guide to Exams' booklet. All the information can also be found on our website.</p>