



# Weald of Kent

## Grammar School

Year 7 Information Booklet

2023-2024

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## Contact information

### Campus addresses:

**Tonbridge Campus:** Tudeley Lane, Tonbridge, TN9 2JP

**Sevenoaks Campus:** 163 Sealhollow Road, Sevenoaks TN13 3SN

**General enquiries:** Our office team are the first point of contact for all enquiries on 01732 373500 or [school@wealdgs.org](mailto:school@wealdgs.org)

**Absence or attendance:** All absences from school should be reported to [attendance@wealdgs.org](mailto:attendance@wealdgs.org) . If you would like to submit a request for absence please also use this address.

**Admissions:** Should you have a question related to your child's admission to the school please contact [admissions@wealdgs.org](mailto:admissions@wealdgs.org) .

**Specific points of contact:** If you wish to contact specific departments of members of staff, please refer to the contact us page on our school website page here: <https://www.wealdgs.org/contact>

## Welcome from Year 7 Pastoral Team

We would like to offer a very warm welcome to all of our new Year 7 students for the forthcoming 2023-24 academic year as they start their journey at Weald of Kent Grammar School over the next seven years.

Our main goal in the coming year is to help your child make the transition into the routines and responsibilities of Secondary School as smoothly as possible. Instilling key skills such as being responsible, organised, supportive, respectful and able to express oneself, is central to this goal. We also want your child to be able to balance their workload with extra-curricular activities whether they be in or out of school.

We recognise that there will be times when things are challenging for our students and this booklet aims to set out some of the key contacts and information that you and your child will need. Information in this booklet may change throughout the year so we would urge you to read the regular weekly school bulletins and communications that will come to you by email in order to keep up-to-date.

Should you wish to contact us throughout the academic year please contact us by email in the first instance and we will then be able to arrange a phone call or face-to-face meeting as needed. Please be mindful that we will not be able to answer phone calls during the day unless pre-arranged as we are likely to be teaching but we will endeavour to respond to you as soon as possible.

We are looking forward to meeting you at various events throughout the school year and working with you to ensure that your child is successful and happy at Weald of Kent.

**Miss Sales and Mr Toolan**  
**Heads of Year 7 (Tonbridge and Sevenoaks)**

## Year 7 Pastoral Team Contacts

**Head of Year 7 (Tonbridge Campus):**

Miss A. Sales     [asales@wealdgs.org](mailto:asales@wealdgs.org)

**Head of Year 7 (Sevenoaks Campus):**

Mr. T. Toolan     [ttoolan@wealdgs.org](mailto:ttoolan@wealdgs.org)

**Assistant Headteachers with oversight for Year 7:**

Mr C. Love (Tonbridge Campus)     [clove@wealdgs.org](mailto:clove@wealdgs.org)

Mrs E. Hardman (Sevenoaks Campus)     [ehardman@wealdgs.org](mailto:ehardman@wealdgs.org)

## Key dates for your diary:

**Monday 26<sup>th</sup> June:** Parents Information Evening (Sevenoaks Campus)

**Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> June:** Parents Information Evening (Tonbridge Campus)

**Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> July:** New Year 7 Induction Day (for current Year 6 students) at both campuses

### Term and Holiday Dates for 2023-2024

#### **Term 1**

INSET day – no students onsite

Friday 1 Sep 2023

Induction day Year 7 and 12

Monday 4 Sep 2023

#### **All Students Return**

**Tuesday 5 Sep 2023**

INSET day – no students on site

Friday 13 October 2023

Term 1 ends

Friday 20 Oct 2023

#### **Term 2**

Term 2 commences

Monday 30 Oct 2023

Term 2 ends

Friday 15 Dec 2023 (half day)

#### **Term 3**

INSET day – no students onsite

Friday 5 Jan 2024

Term 3 commences

Monday 8 Jan 2024

Term 3 ends

Friday 9 Feb 2024

#### **Term 4**

INSET day – no students onsite

Wednesday 20 March 2024

Term 4 commences

Monday 19 Feb 2024

Term 4 ends

Thursday 28 March 2024 (half day)

#### **Term 5**

Term 5 commences

Monday 15 Apr 2024

Term 5 ends

Friday 24 May 2024

May Day Bank Holiday

Monday 6 May 2024

#### **Term 6**

Term 6 commences

Monday 3 Jun 2024

Term 6 ends

Friday 19 Jul 2024 (half day)

## Care, guidance and support

We recognise that it is extremely important for your child to be cared for.

**Form Tutor** – every student is in a form group with one, or in some cases two tutors, who will stay with them throughout the academic year. The Form Tutor is the first point of contact for parents and carers and there will be opportunities for you to meet your child's tutor throughout the year.

Form tutors will support students by:

- ❖ Being the daily source of support and guidance.
- ❖ Supporting their well-being and helping them to develop independence in dealing with issues as they arise.
- ❖ Supporting your child with day-to-day organisation.
- ❖ Providing mentoring as required.
- ❖ Supporting with relationships with other students, including mediation with other students if needed.
- ❖ Monitoring your child's academic performance.
- ❖ Checking and monitoring student planners.

**Heads of Year** oversee all the students within a Year Group to ensure that they are able to progress as well, if not better than expected. They oversee all aspects of care, guidance and support within their year group. Should you wish to speak to a Head of Year please contact them by email in the first instance.

### Student Services and Learning Support

On each campus we have a designated Student Services area which is staffed with an expert team including School Nurse, a Mental Health Support worker and Learning Support mentors. The SENCOs for each campus are based in/near to Student Services and support students with Special Educational Needs (SEN) in special areas in/near to Student Services.

**SENCO (Tonbridge):** Miss N. Williams-Jones

**SENCO (Sevenoaks):** Ms. S. Waight

## Safeguarding:

The school takes its statutory duty to safeguard and protect students extremely seriously. The safeguarding team is led by Deputy Headteacher, Mr MacSporran, across both campuses with Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads on each campus who are also our Family Liaison Managers.

**Designated Safeguarding Lead:** Mr. K. MacSporran

**Deputy DSL and Family Liaison Manager (Tonbridge):** Mrs K. Reed

**Deputy DSL and Family Liaison Manager (Sevenoaks): Mr. D. Hall**

In order to report a safeguarding concern or issue please e-mail the central email address below which will then be picked up and responded to by one of our safeguarding team.

[AASafeguarding@wealdgs.org](mailto:AASafeguarding@wealdgs.org)

## **Communications**

Our pastoral system is created to ensure every student is supported with any specific needs. The pastoral system begins with the form tutor; should your child require any additional support or if an issue has arisen which may affect your child, please inform your child's form tutor by email. Please do not attend school without an appointment.

Our aim is to ensure that we communicate with parents in a clear, timely and efficient way, through a range of our communication channels including a weekly parent newsletter, information posted on the school website, academic reports and specific email communications related to trips and other events.

## **Attendance and punctuality**

Research shows that a high number of absences from school is likely to affect your success in school and in life. How many are too many? Just 5% of the academic school year absent means students are missing 45 lessons. A lot of learning missed.

Being punctual and on time to lessons can be just as important as being present. Being just 5 minutes late to one lesson each day adds up to 25 minutes per week.

All parents and carers have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school.

The timings of the school day are below:

08.45 – 09.05	Tutor time (morning registration)
09.10– 10.10	Period 1
10.15 – 11.15	Period 2
11.15 – 11.35	Break
11.35 – 12.35	Period 3
12.35 – 13.25	Lunch (50 mins)
13.25 – 14.25	Period 4 (incl. registration)
14.30 – 15.30	Period 5

No students in Years 7-11 may leave the school site during lunch or break times.

We would ask all parents and carers to note:

- ❖ Absence during school term time cannot be authorised unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- ❖ Requests for authorised absence must be made in advance in writing to the Headteacher.
- ❖ In the case of illness or absence from school, parents / carers should follow these procedures:
  - Email the dedicated attendance email address [attendance@wealdgs.org](mailto:attendance@wealdgs.org) .
  - If your child has to leave school for a hospital, doctor or dental appointment, please send an email to the school giving at least 24 hours' notice. We are unable to let a student in Years 7 – 11 leave school without prior knowledge as this is a safeguarding issue.
  - Please advise in your email whether your child is being collected by a parent or carer. If you are not collecting your child, please give your permission for her to leave school on her own in the email.
- ❖ The school will send out absence alerts on the day of absence to parents and carers where no communication has been received informing the school of a reason for their absence.
- ❖ Where attendance falls below 96% the school may:
  - Send attendance letter reminders to parents and carers.
  - Invite parents into school for a meeting to discuss the reasons for absence and any further support required to improve attendance.
- ❖ Further information can be found on attendance procedures in the school's attendance policy which is updated annually and accessible on the school website.

## Positive Behaviour Culture

We are looking forward to the positive contribution that you will make to the school community, when you join us in September. The Positive Behaviour Culture underpins our approach, as we maintain high expectations and an emphasis on working with staff to fulfill your potential. We encourage good habits that support effective learning and have established routines for behaviour and rewards.

When you join the school in September we will run through the following with you in more detail:

- Our systems for praise and rewards I.e., what do we celebrate and why recognition in these areas is important
- The school rules and the rationale for this
- How your positive contribution to the school can have an impact

We ask all members of our school community to model the behaviours that they would like reciprocated. For example, interactions with students and staff must be polite and considerate and we ask that everybody acts with compassion.

The Head of Year and Form Tutor are essential in communicating the key aspects of the Positive Behaviour Culture to you and we look forward to sharing how we can ensure that everybody can thrive during Year 7.

## Uniform

Full up-to-date details about school uniform can be found on the school website here: <https://www.wealdgs.org/about/uniform> .

Uniform will be checked regularly by Form Tutors and Heads of Year.

Please pay particular attention to details regarding the wearing of jewellery, make-up and hair. Students will be given further information and reminders on the induction days. If students wear jewellery, or other items which do not conform to the uniform rules, items will be confiscated and stored securely at reception to be collected at the end of the school day by the students. Sanctions will also be applied as per the school's positive behaviour policy.

## PE Kit

Students should wear their PE kit to school on days they have PE lessons. Students should check their timetables carefully to ensure they know which days these are. Students should have their alternative PE clothes (indoor / outdoor) in their school bag on these days in the event of rain or any other issue requiring them to change. Please note, PE kit may only be worn on PE days. If students take part in other activities which require them to wear PE kit, such as Sports clubs, they should get changed in the PE changing rooms.

## Extra-Curricular Provision

Clubs, Societies, Trips and other extra-curricular events will form an integral part of your child's education at Weald of Kent Grammar School. The timetable for Clubs and Societies will be published early in each term via form tutors (a printed and electronic copy will be provided for tutors to present to students).

Club and Society timetables will also be published for parents and carers to access on the school website here: <https://www.wealdgs.org/about/clubs-and-societies>

Further information on trips and visits will be provided to parents and carers early in the academic year. All trips and visits are paid for using the school's Parent Pay system.



An extra-curricular newsletter is sent to parents and carers 3 times a year and is published on the school website here: <https://www.wealdgs.org/about/extracurricular> .

## IT Access and Support

All students will be given access to the school's IT systems when they join the school in Year 7. Students will have an IT induction lesson, either on their induction day or within the first 2 weeks of school in their first Computer Science lesson. Students will be taught how to log-in to the school's systems from home and at school. Student access includes:

- ❖ A Microsoft 365 account including personal school email address and access to the school's SharePoint system.
- ❖ An Edulink account – used to access their school timetable and homework set by subject teachers.

Students can access all of the school's IT systems from home via the school website 'Portals' area here: <https://www.wealdofkent.kent.sch.uk/about/portals/students>

In order to use the school's systems all students will be asked to agree to the student "Acceptable Use Policy". Filtering and Monitoring systems are in place on the school's systems.

Should students need support with any of the school's systems they can contact the IT Support Helpdesk on [helpdesk@wealdgs.org](mailto:helpdesk@wealdgs.org) or speak to a technician in person on either of the sites.

Please note that students are not permitted to bring their own devices into school to use unless this has been agreed by the school due to a specific reason.

## Parental Support

As ever, you will play an important role in the academic success and wellbeing of your child. Parental support is eight times more important in determining a child's academic success than social class, according to a new study. The good news is that you do not need to be an expert in any of the subjects your child chooses in order to make a difference. The secret to success is to be aware of what can go wrong at each stage and take action to pre-empt this.

### **STAGE 1: Learning the content the first time around**

What can go wrong:

- ❖ A lack of interest in the subject.
- ❖ Finding the work difficult and giving up.
- ❖ Deciding they are no good at the subject.
- ❖ Losing focus/messing around.
- ❖ Getting behind with homework.

- ❖ Not attending school or lessons.

### **Tips for parents to help motivate and encourage persistence:**

All students will fall behind, feel demotivated or overwhelmed, or struggle with the balance of social life, work and school demands at times. When your child feels like this, berating and threatening them will have a negative effect. Talk to them about the issues, acknowledge their feelings and adopt a sensible attitude in wanting to find a solution. Help them prioritise and if necessary, talk to their tutor/class teacher.

If your child becomes anxious or withdrawn, encourage them to talk to you or a trusted adult and let her know you are there for her, and proud of her. Talk about their successes and avoid damaging their self-esteem by always talking about **behaviour** rather than **them** (e.g. avoid “you’re lazy” and talk about “the way you always leave things to the last minute”).

If your child asks for more support, encourage them by helping them to see the difficulties in perspective. Children often take an all or nothing ‘catastrophic’ approach to difficulties.

### **STAGE 2: Revision**

What can go wrong:

- ❖ Not doing any!
- ❖ Leaving it all until the last minute.
- ❖ Not having a plan.
- ❖ Not being sure what to revise.
- ❖ Being unrealistic about what can be done.
- ❖ Revising the right things but in the wrong ways.
- ❖ Becoming overwhelmed – not knowing where to start.
- ❖ Not making the most of the revision lessons and teachers at school.

### **Tips for parents to support your child in setting themselves up for revision:**

Talk to your child about how you can support her and what she would find helpful. The simplest things can often get in the way of starting revision – weeks can be lost whilst students ‘are going to get some folders soon’. Get around these by simply providing the files, dividers, wall-charts, etc.

Encourage your child to empty their bag and file hand-outs and information from lessons at the end of each day. They won’t seem important until they need them, at which point they are likely to be on study leave.

Help your child to plan her revision timetable. It will be an investment of your time (probably several hours), but it is the single thing that will make the biggest difference to the effectiveness of the revision, and therefore the outcome.

Support your child in sticking to their revision plan and keeping to the start and finishing times they have agreed. Praise them when they do it, and if necessary, agree a reward structure. Don’t make treats dependent on certain results- it will only add to their feelings of disappointment and failure if they don’t do as well as expected.

Keep up with regular check-ins and do not nag in-between times. Show an interest in how the revision is going, talk through any difficulties and be prepared to help them reschedule their planning as necessary.

Keep things in perspective – your child may not be doing things the way that you would do them, or as often as you would like, but they are doing the best they can in the way that works for them at the stage they are at.

### **STAGE 3: The assessment or exam itself**

Things that can go wrong:

- ❖ Getting the wrong time or place for the exam
- ❖ Arriving late
- ❖ Being unfamiliar with the exam structure
- ❖ Not having the correct materials
- ❖ Panicking during the exam
- ❖ Answering the wrong section or questions
- ❖ Not reading the questions carefully
- ❖ Spending too long on one section and too little time on others

### **Tips for parents to ensure a calm and successful exam period:**

The exam period can be very stressful for students. Encourage your child to keep a positive perspective – soon she will be on the other side of the ‘exam mountain’.

Try not to add to stress levels in the house by rising to the bait when your child pushes the limits. None of us are at our best under stress and it is possible that her behaviour will be challenging during this time. Pick your battles carefully, shelving any issues that are not of immediate importance.

Ensure that your child is prepared for the exam and talk through where and when it is, what she needs to take, etc. On the day of the exam, make sure she has the correct materials, including a watch and a bottle of water.

Try to keep to routines and not to introduce any instability unless it is absolutely necessary. On exam days, try to ensure they have a good breakfast, or suggest they take a banana or cereal bar if she struggles to eat first thing in the morning.

After an exam, ask how it went, but don't insist on a long post-mortem. Be available but respect your child's wishes to deal with their feelings in their own way. Try to adopt an attitude of ‘tomorrow is another day’ if things have gone badly.

### **DEALING WITH STRESS**

A degree of stress is normal and actually necessary for successfully tackling exams. If you or your child feels that they are becoming too stressed, encourage them to talk about the underlying issues. Some of the symptoms of stress are listed below. However, you know your child best so any marked changes in behaviour are worth checking out:

- Difficulty getting to sleep or waking up
- Tiredness

- Poor appetite
- Loss of interest in things they used to enjoy
- Headaches and other unexplained aches and pains
- Irritability and frequent angry episodes

If your child is stressed, try to encourage them to talk some time out away from work, doing something she enjoys. Exercise promotes hormones that actively counter stress, so try to encourage this. Ensure your child eats well, and let them know that you are always there to listen. Try not to offer immediate solutions to worries or to give advice unless they ask for it – what stressed people most need is somebody to listen and empathise with the feelings they express.

Try asking your child ‘what’s the worst that can happen’ and then work backwards to rationalise their thoughts. Remind her that she has overcome difficulties in the past. Get her to focus on what she has achieved, despite this ‘blip’ and point out that little is achieved without hard work and mistakes being made – it’s part of life and learning and adults frequently make mistakes too.

Some other sources of advice for dealing with stress are:

[www.familylives.org.uk](http://www.familylives.org.uk)

[www.bbc.co.uk/radio1/advice](http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio1/advice) offers advice on a whole range of issues that might worry your child. In tutor time this year we will be focusing on ‘mindfulness’ as a tool to combat stress and take control of our own thoughts. You may like to support this by reading about mindfulness at [www.mindful.org](http://www.mindful.org) or downloading a mindfulness app. We particularly recommend the articles: <http://www.mindful.org/four-steps-to-freedom-from-negative-thinking/> <http://www.mindful.org/7-things-mindful-people-do-differently-and-how-to-get-started/>

## How you can give feedback

At specific times during the year we may ask you for feedback on new systems, changes or general whole school evaluation. Feedback can include:

- ❖ Internal school parent surveys.
- ❖ An independently evaluated survey by Kirkland Rowell – this helps the school reflect on its overall effectiveness.
- ❖ An Ofsted survey via [www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk) -You will need to register for this survey and can update your views throughout the year.