



# The Winterton Federation Communications Policy



At The Winterton Federation we endeavour to nurture unique individuals in a happy, safe, respectful and inclusive environment, where everyone is inspired to be the best they can be throughout their journey of life.

“Let us run with perseverance, the race that is set before us” (Hebrews 12:1)

**We are all proud to be united in faith, vision and ambition.**

## Key Objectives

All communications at The Winterton Federation should:

- Keep staff, pupils, parents/carers and other stakeholders well informed;
- Be open, honest, ethical and professional;
- Use jargon-free English and be easily understood by all;
- Use the method of communication most effective and appropriate to the context and audience;
- Either be neutral or offer a balanced presentation of political views.

## Communication with parents/carers and other important stakeholders

Effective communications enable us to share our Federation aims and values as well as keeping parents/carers well informed about school life. This reinforces the vital role that parents/carers play in supporting the Federation and their child/ren.

Whilst staff always seek to establish open and friendly relationships with parents/carers, it is essential that relationships are professional and parents/carers are addressed in a formal manner in all written communication, and via appropriate methods of communication, as stated in this policy.

The Winterton Federation aims to make our written communication as accessible and inclusive as possible; we ensure that all of our parents/carers can access a form of communication, making alternative arrangements where necessary (e.g. EAL, SEN, IT access or literacy issues). We seek parental feedback on the school communication via our annual parent survey.

## Covid-19 Safety additions

Communication from either school is sent via the Piota app. Should parents/carers not have access then they should inform their relevant office.

Class information and work is sent via Purple Mash, and all families have been provided with individual log ins for their children.

Staff face to face contact is limited to protect from spread of infection. Microsoft Teams and phone calls are the primary communication base. Should this not be sufficient, an agreed appointment is made, and all national guidance on social distancing and restrictions are applied, alongside the Federation’s own risk assessment.

## Communication Procedures

The school offices can be contacted between 8.30am and 3.45pm on school weekdays.

Winterton Church of England Infant School		
Postal Address	Telephone	Email/Website:
West Street Winterton North Lincolnshire DN15 9QF	01724 732386	Email: <a href="mailto:admin.wintertoninfants@northlincs.gov.uk">admin.wintertoninfants@northlincs.gov.uk</a>  Website: <a href="http://thewintertonfederation.co.uk">thewintertonfederation.co.uk</a>



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Winterton Junior School		
Postal Address	Telephone	Email/Website:
West Street Winterton North Lincolnshire DN15 9QG	01724 732223	Email: <a href="mailto:admin.wintertonjuniors@northlincs.gov.uk">admin.wintertonjuniors@northlincs.gov.uk</a>  Website: <a href="http://thewintertonfederation.co.uk">thewintertonfederation.co.uk</a>

General Messages, Queries, Concerns	Method Of Communication
If your child is absent from school...	Please notify the school by completing the absence form on the relevant Piota app. Please note that this notification does not guarantee that absences will be authorised.
If you have a quick message for your child's teacher about collection, concerns, home learning...	Talk to your child's teacher on the playground after the class has been dismissed; teachers are outside every afternoon. Urgent messages may be left at the school office if you do not get a chance to speak to the teacher.
If you would like to talk about your child's learning progress...	Make an appointment to meet with your child's teacher via the school office. If, following your discussion you would like more information, make an appointment to meet with the relevant subject leader, or a member of the Senior Leadership Team.
If you are concerned about social behaviours or bullying...	Make an appointment to meet with your child's teacher, and/or a member of the Pastoral Team via the school office. If, following your discussion you would like more information, make an appointment to meet with a member of the Senior Leadership Team.
If you would like to discuss something related to your child's teacher...	Make an appointment to meet with a member of the Senior Leadership Team via the school office.
If you would like to discuss your child's special educational needs...	Make an appointment to meet with the SENDCO (Special Educational Needs & Disabilities Coordinator) via the school office or directly via the SENDCO email.
If you would like to find out about after school clubs or have a query...	Check the school website, email the office, or call the office using the relevant email address or phone number.
If you have a payment query	Enquiries can be made to the school's office staff.
If you have a school dinner enquiry...	Please contact the school office directly.
If you wanted to check if the school is open...	Please check the school website, the school Piota app or North Lincolnshire council website.

If, having followed the above steps, your question or concern is not resolved, please make an appointment with the school office to meet with a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

If you would like to contact the Governing Board, they may be contacted directly, in writing, via the school office. All correspondence must be sealed and addressed to the Chair of the Governing Board, Mrs Catherine Kemp.



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Communication may be via, but not limited to, the following forms:

### ***Formal letters (sent via the school office)***

Staff endeavour to reply to parents/carers' letters as quickly as possible. Letters are acknowledged within 3 working days from receipt and a reply sent within 10 working days. Letters must be approved by a member of the Senior Leadership Team before posting. Copies of correspondence with parents/carers are uploaded to CPOMS.

### ***E-Mail***

Email is a quick, effective way of communicating information. However, it does not replace face-to-face meetings where some discussion is required.

All e-mails should be treated as letters and should be checked carefully for technical errors and tone. Staff acknowledge e-mails within 3 working days and send a full reply within 10 working days, unless the sender has been given a legitimate reason for the delay, such as consultation or investigation. **Under no circumstances will staff contact pupils, parents/carers or conduct any school business using personal email addresses.**

### ***Telephone calls***

Staff take notes about the content of telephone calls, as they would with meetings with parents/carers. Notes from telephone calls, including main points of discussion and action required/taken should be logged and filed on CPOMS.

If a child is absent from school and we have no indication of the reason, administrative staff contact a parent on the same day, to find out the reason for the absence, following The Winterton Federation Attendance Policy.

### ***Piota app***

As we aim to reduce the amount of paper used, we encourage all parents/carers to download the school Piota app, which is a quick, economic and efficient method for the school to communicate with parents/carers. A record of those who do not have access to Piota is maintained, and they receive a paper copy of any correspondence.

Piota is used to send out a variety of information, either to a targeted group, or to all parents/carers. Newsletters, information about whole school events, and all letters relevant to the whole school are sent out to all parents/carers on Piota, and in addition, some specific communications regarding trips and events are sent out to the relevant groups of parents/carers. It is our aim to have 100% of parents/carers signed up to Piota to facilitate paperless communication.

### ***Meetings with parents/carers***

We encourage parents/carers to contact the school if issues arise regarding their child's progress or well-being. For everyday issues, parents/carers should contact their child's class teacher, or a member of the Pastoral Team.

For persistent or serious issues, parents/carers should contact a member of the Senior Leadership Team. Any parent wishing to have a formal meeting with a member of staff should contact the school office in advance and request a meeting with that member of staff. This will then be arranged at a time convenient to both parties. The subject for that meeting should be shared in advance to help staff to be fully prepared, to ensure the meeting is productive.

Parents/carers should not expect to talk to a member of staff without an appointment, unless it is a general conversation with their child's teacher on the playground, as detailed above. Staff members may be unavailable to meet should this happen.



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Parents/carers (like all visitors) should report to the reception prior to meeting with a member of staff. If the meeting is due to take place outside office hours, separate arrangements will be made.

If a meeting with a parent is taking place outside normal school hours, the member of staff should try, where possible, to ensure that another colleague is nearby. It is perfectly acceptable to call a meeting to a close in order to allow time for further investigation.

When a pupil is accompanying a parent for a meeting, it is perfectly acceptable to ask a pupil to remain out of the meeting for part of it, particularly if a parent is criticising a teacher or any aspect of the school. It is damaging to the relationship with the pupil for them to witness this, but parents/carers may need to air particular feelings and this is a useful mechanism for this. The teacher should not feel threatened at any time and is encouraged to stop a meeting should this be the case.

### ***Possible contentious meetings***

A member of staff will always arrange for another member of staff to accompany them when the meeting may be contentious in any way or if their input will add value to the meeting. When possible, a member of the Senior Leadership Team will attend such a meeting. The key discussion points, actions and decisions are recorded on CPOMS.

Staff will call a meeting to a close in the event of the parent/carer becoming angry or abusive. The member of staff will report such an incident to a member of the Senior Leadership Team and seek further advice. A member of the Senior Leadership Team will either accompany the member of staff to a further meeting with the parent/carer, or hold it without the original member of staff present.

### **Social Networking Sites/Blogs etc** (See also E-Safety Policy)

Staff do not communicate with parents/carers or pupils via social networking sites nor accept them as their "friends". The exception is networks or blogs set up specifically for the purpose of teaching and learning, and staff who have relationships with members of the community unrelated to their employment. Regardless, communications regarding their child, or information related to their employment at the Federation will not be shared with parents/carers on social networking sites.

### ***Written reports***

Once a year, a full written report is sent to parents/carers about their child's learning and school life. The report identifies strength and areas for further development.

In addition, parents/carers meet their child's teacher once a year, at parents/carers' evenings. Parents/carers are given the option of a face-to-face meeting, or a phone call, to ensure full equitability.

When pupils have special educational needs, or if they are making less than expected progress or experiencing behavioural or disciplinary difficulties, we may arrange to meet with parents/carers more regularly.

### ***The Federation Website***

The Federation website provides information about the Federation and an opportunity to promote each school to a wider audience and provide guidance on admissions for prospective parents/carers and pupils. It also has a regularly updated area for information for current parents/carers. In addition, it has up-to-date policies available for parents/carers to view.

### ***Public Access Documents***

Curriculum information, policies and compulsory documentation is available on the Federation website.



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## ***Communication with other schools and outside agencies***

Before starting at either of the Winterton Federation schools, pupils are encouraged to visit their new school. Following parental permission, we will contact the previous school to help gather key information to aid this process. We will receive the individual pupil file from the previous school once that child is on roll.

## **Visits from External Agencies**

As part of our curriculum and extra-curricular provision, we regularly invite guest speakers, experts and representatives from a range of organisations and institutions to the Federation to speak to and engage with

our pupils. Prior to these visits, we agree the terms and content of their input into the provision and ensure that it is in accordance with our policies. From time to time, for PSHE provision for instance, these individuals may represent partial groups or promote partial political or religious views. Where this is the case, this is clearly explained to pupils, along with the reasons for the partiality. We also ensure pupils have access to alternative views, in order to give them access to a balanced view.

## **Safeguarding including child protection (See also Safeguarding Policy)**

We recognise that children have a fundamental right to be protected from harm, that their protection is a shared responsibility, and that the Federation should provide a safe and secure environment. We are the people most in contact with our children, and we are therefore in a unique position to identify and help our pupils. Because of this, when any member of staff has concerns about a child, these are passed on to the Designated Safeguarding Leader, who may share this information with relevant external agencies.

We are supported by and regularly communicate with various agencies and groups of professionals who keep us informed on ways to meet pupils' needs, to ensure that all pupils can participate fully inschool life. Support comes from such services as Educational Inclusion, Educational Psychologists, Social Services etc.

## **Confidentiality**

We hold information on pupils in our school and from time to time we are required to pass some of this information to others for educational purposes. Details are sent to parents/carers about the types of data we hold, why we hold that data, and who we may pass it on to. This is a requirement under the Data Protection Act 2018. Parents/carers have a right to view the information we hold, and we have contact details of the agencies to which our information is passed.

## **Communication with colleagues at The Winterton Federation**

### **Meetings**

An annual programme of meetings is agreed and diarised for staff and the timetable facilitates informal meeting and planning/support time for teaching colleagues. All formal meetings are minuted and members invited to contribute to the agenda. It is important that these are focused on developmental, not administrative, matters, and time is set aside for structured opportunities for staff to engage in team working and to contribute to the Federation's reflection on priorities, activities and future plans.

Minutes of meetings are copied to relevant staff, and saved on the relevant location on SharePoint. All staff are expected to read the minutes to ensure they are aware of the content and can then request and receive further information should it be required.

## **E-mail (See also E-Safety Policy)**

The Federation gives all staff their own email account to use for all Federation business. Email can be an efficient way of communicating with colleagues and passing on information. However, it should not be used as a substitute for face-to-face contact and staff must consider whether it is the best way to communicate in each situation and understand that there is a permanent record of any communication. Teachers ensure that they:



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- Do not engage in private/personal correspondence with a pupil. This includes texting and social networking;
- Under no circumstances will they contact pupils or parents/carers, or conduct any school business, using personal email accounts, text messaging or social media;
- No chain letters are sent and no advertisements are embedded in any communication;
- Any political views are neutral or balanced.

### ***Staff Meetings***

Staff Meetings take place once a week, where it is relevant to do so. Any issues are raised and events for the next week are shared. The Pastoral Team give a safeguarding briefing, and this is done virtually if a staff meeting does not take place. There is a shared Federation calendar, and staff are expected to visit this regularly. There is also a weekly Senior Leadership meeting.

### ***Notice Boards***

Staff notice boards are located in the staff rooms. These are maintained and updated by office and leadership teams. Care is taken that any display with a political issue as its focus, presents a balanced view or an overview that communicates about the diversity of opinion on this matter or indicates where alternative perspectives may be found.

### ***Links with Other Policies***

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- E-Safety Policy and Acceptable Use Agreement for staff and pupils;
- Safeguarding and Child Protection;
- Safe Recruitment.

***Communications Policy written by: Mr Adam Downs Autumn 2021***

***Policy approved by Staff: Spring 2022***

***Policy approved by Governors: Spring 2022***

***Policy to be reviewed: Autumn 2024***