STAFF COMMUNICATION POLICY

Responsible: Governing Body, Headteacher

Agreed: September 2025

To be reviewed: Every 2 years (or earlier in event of significant issue / legislation changes)

Reviewed:

Purpose

This policy is designed to ensure respectful, effective, and manageable communication within the staff team, and with parents and external agencies. It supports staff wellbeing, encourages healthy boundaries around working hours, and helps maintain our high standards of professionalism and care, in line with our school vision of *"Striving for excellence together in a caring Christian community"* and our values of *compassion, courage, and respect*.

Professional Responsibility

Staff are expected to follow this policy as part of our wider commitment to respectful and professional working practices. Not adhering to the principles outlined here may be considered a breach of the Staff Code of Conduct. All communication should reflect the school's Christian ethos and values.

Core Principles

- **Respect for working hours:** Our nominal working hours for communication are designated as 8:00am–5:30pm, Monday to Friday, term time only.
- Staff must not send messages via text or messaging platforms to colleagues outside of these hours, unless it relates to:
    - Safeguarding concerns as defined in the Safeguarding Policy
    - Urgent staffing cover
    - Matters regarding site safety, functionality, and security
- Staff must also not contact colleagues via text or messaging platforms on days when they are not contracted to work, unless the matter is urgent and exceptional (e.g., safeguarding or urgent staffing arrangements).
- During school holidays, staff must avoid routine or non-urgent communication. However, admin staff, site staff, and senior leaders may contact staff where necessary for essential updates, planning, or changes that cannot reasonably wait until term time. Sensitivity, professionalism, and our values should guide all such communication.
- If emails are written outside of working hours, they must be scheduled to send during the next working period.
- Staff are encouraged to batch communications to reduce inbox overload. For example, the headteacher may choose to send several emails at a single time rather than a constant stream throughout the day.

- Staff may choose whether or not to read emails outside of working hours; this is a personal choice and not an expectation. Staff should manage device email notifications to suit personal preference.

Accessing Email Accounts

- All teaching staff, learning support staff, office staff, and the site manager are expected to access their school email account daily on working days.
- Midday supervisors must access their email accounts at least once a week.
- It is each staff member's responsibility to stay informed of relevant updates, information, and actions shared via school email. The sending of email is accepted as confirmation that any information has been shared with staff and that, if appropriate, action is expected.

External Communication

- Emails to parents or external agencies must only be sent within nominal working hours (8:00am–5:30pm, term time only). Admin staff and senior leaders may, on occasion, have cause to communicate with these parties during periods of school closure, but only in exceptional circumstances that are time-sensitive.
- This ensures professional boundaries are maintained and sets a consistent standard for all communication leaving the school, reflecting our values of respect and care.

General Expectations

- All communication should reflect the school's values of respect, professionalism, and care.
- Where a matter is sensitive, complex, or potentially open to misunderstanding, a direct conversation (in person or via telephone) is often more appropriate than email.
- Under no circumstances must staff use informal channels (e.g., messaging apps or personal social media) for communicating with parents for school-related matters. All external communication is to be through school's recognised channels.
- All relevant Data Protection and Acceptable Use policies apply to all school communications.

Links With Other Policies & Procedures

- Procedures for reporting staff absence are not affected by this communication policy. All staff must continue to follow the school's agreed and published absence reporting procedure, which aligns with Lincolnshire County Council guidance. This includes contacting the appropriate member of the leadership team/designated line manager as early as possible.
- School closure communication is not affected by this communication policy.
- Communication with contractors is not affected by this communication policy.

Monitoring
The implementation of the staff communication policy will be regularly monitored to ensure clarity, consistency, and effectiveness. This will include:

- **Response Monitoring:** Line managers will review response times to internal communications, including emails and messaging platforms, to ensure staff are engaging with messages in a timely manner.
- **Line Manager Observations:** Leaders and line managers will observe communication practices during day-to-day work, providing feedback to support adherence to policy expectations.
- **Incident and Issue Tracking:** Any breakdowns in communication that result in misunderstandings, delays, or errors will be recorded and reviewed to identify areas for improvement and ensure lessons are applied.
- **Policy Compliance Audits:** Periodic audits of communication channels, including emails, intranet postings, and messaging apps, will be conducted to verify that staff are following the protocols and standards outlined in the policy.

The findings from these monitoring activities will inform updates to the policy and associated procedures, ensuring continuous improvement in school-wide communication, in line with our vision of *Striving for excellence together in a caring Christian community* and embedding our values of *compassion, courage, and respect* in all interactions.