

Staff Communication Policy

Policy Code:	HR39
Policy Start Date:	December 2025
Policy Review Date:	December 2028

Please read this policy in conjunction with the policies listed below:

- HR5 Acceptable Use Policy (ICT)
- HR6 Data Protection Policy
- HR12 Staff Disciplinary Policy
- HR22 Social Media (Staff) Policy
- HR29 Code of Conduct
- HR33 Records Management Policy
- HR36 Complaints Policy
- HR37 Zero Tolerance Policy
- SW9 Parental Communication and Complaints Policy

1 Policy Statement

- 1.1 The policy outlines The Priory Federation of Academies Trust's (The Trust's) expectations with regards to all types of staff communication, both internal and external. Good communication is much more than the exchange of information. It is through effective and interactive communication that information is transmitted, understanding is developed and shared, trust is built, confidentiality respected and action coordinated. Communication includes not only the message but also how that message is communicated. Good communication promotes partnership.
- 1.2 References to the Trust or Academy within this policy specifically include all primary, secondary and special academies within the Trust, as well as the Early Years setting at the Priory Witham Academy, Priory Apprenticeships and Lincolnshire ITT.
- 1.3 This policy does not form part of any member of staff's contract of employment and it may be amended at any time.

2 Roles, Responsibilities and Implementation

- 2.1 The Pay, Performance and HR Committee has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy and for ensuring compliance with the relevant statutory framework. This committee delegates day-to-day responsibility for operating the policy and ensuring its maintenance and review to the Head of HR.
- 2.2 Leaders and Managers have a specific responsibility to ensure the fair application of this policy and all employees are responsible for supporting colleagues and ensuring its success.
- 2.3 All communications must comply with the Equality Act 2010 and the Data Protection Act 2018.

3 Aims

- 3.1 To ensure efficient and effective communication between all stakeholders.
- 3.2 To ensure communication:
 - Keeps all stakeholders well informed.
 - Is open, honest, ethical and professional.
 - Is actioned within a reasonable time, taking into account directed time/working hours.

- Utilises the most effective and appropriate methods of communication for the context, message and audience.
- Takes account of relevant Trust policies.
- Is compatible with the Trust's values and ethos.

3.3 To ensure work and home boundaries are respected.

3.4 To promote a culture of open two-way communication and to listen to feedback and comments from all staff.

4 Internal Communication

4.1 The Trust will ensure information is made available to staff in a timely manner and via appropriate channels.

4.2 Staff have a responsibility to communicate regularly with each other, to ensure information is available and understood within the context of their working environment and classroom.

4.3 Internal communications may take various forms, such as, but not limited to:

- briefings;
- meetings, online or face to face;
- emails;
- intranet communications; and/or
- letters.

4.4 Formal meetings should be structured, with notes taken and, where applicable, members invited to contribute to the agenda.

4.5 Each Academy/setting will set its own protocol for how information is communicated to staff, ensuring it is purposeful and relevant to those receiving it.

4.6 In line with the Trust's 'Pupil Support' process staff should not use email (work or personal) to deliver pupil support. It may be used to arrange a time to meet, for example, but not to delivery any form of support.

4.7 Staff are not asked/expected to, and should not, deliver support to pupils out-of-hours (working time).

5 External Communication

- 5.1 Staff should communicate, wherever possible, with parents/carers in person or by phone regarding specific matters related to their child. Where emails are used, it is important to ensure the content is clear to avoid any misinterpretation; it is advised that another member of staff reviews such messages before sending. Records should be kept of all pastoral communication, in line with the relevant academy system/process.
- 5.2 As stated in SW9 Parental Communications and Complaints Policy, a setting will aim to acknowledge emails sent to the general enquiries inbox within 3 working days. However, it is made clear that emails sent directly to a member of staff's direct email will not receive a response within the same timeframe. Where further information needs to be collated or a more detailed response prepared parents/carers are informed that staff will aim to provide an indication, within the acknowledgement, of when this will be available.
- 5.3 The Trust may use the following methods to communicate with external stakeholders:
 - Letters
 - Telephone calls
 - Email or text through the Academy communication system
 - Parents' Evenings
 - Module Grades (Progress Checks)
 - Written Reports
 - Meetings (both formal and informal)
 - Meetings between parents/carers and a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT)
 - Trust/Academy website
 - Social media sites/blogs
 - Newsletters

6 Trust Expectations of Staff

- 6.1 The Trust does not expect staff to check their work emails during their personal time; any such action in this regard is wholly a matter of personal choice. Any emails received outside of directed time/working hours are not expected to be read until the next working day and should not be responded to outside of the working day. A response timeline (if applicable) will be put in place at the point of reply.
- 6.2 All communication should be in line with each Academy/setting's procedures and Trust policies.

- 6.3 All communication should be professional and individuals should always be addressed in line with the Trust's values.
- 6.4 To maintain and protect the reputation of the Trust, staff must direct all media enquiries to the Trust Communications and Marketing Manager.

7 Zero Tolerance

- 7.1 The Trust will operate or practise zero tolerance towards any communication sent to/from members of staff which is deemed to be threatening, malicious, offensive, intimidatory, sexist or discriminatory. Please refer to HR37 Zero Tolerance Policy for further information.

8 Accessibility

- 8.1 The Trust will ensure that communications use plain language and are structured for ease of understanding. If alternative formats of communication are required to support with a disability or form part of a reasonable adjustment, staff should speak to their Line Manager or Academy HR Business Partner who will respond promptly and provide communication support as required.

9 Emergency Notifications

- 9.1 Any emergency notifications, e.g. Academy closure, will be communicated to staff as soon as is possible and will be updated on individual Academy websites.

10 Policy Change

- 10.1 This policy may only be amended or withdrawn by the Priory Federation of Academies Trust.

The Priory Federation of Academies Trust

Staff Communication Policy

This Policy has been approved by the Pay, Performance and HR Committee:

Signed..... Name..... Date:

Trustee

Signed..... Name..... Date:

Chief Executive Officer

Signed..... Name..... Date:

Designated Member of Staff

Please note that a signed copy of this agreement is available via Human Resources.