



WHINLESS DOWN
ACADEMY TRUST

Communication Protocol

Autumn 2025

Whinless Down Academy Trust Communication Protocol

1. Introduction and Aims

Clear communication between school and home is vital in supporting children's learning and wellbeing. Good communication:

- Gives parents and carers the information they need to support their child's learning and development.
- Helps the school improve by welcoming feedback and suggestions.
- Builds trust, helping staff understand and respond to children's individual needs.

This policy aims to:

- Explain how the school communicates with parents and carers.
- Set clear expectations for responding to communication from parents and carers.
- Help parents and carers reach the most appropriate member of staff quickly.

We ask that all members of our school community consider that the first priority for teachers is high-quality teaching and learning. Email access to teachers is provided to support communication, but it is a tool for important messages, not routine updates. Staff have many responsibilities, including planning and preparing lessons and resources, teaching, assessing children's work, supervising playtimes and other duties. To maintain focus on teaching, staff are not expected to monitor or respond to emails outside their normal working hours.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

School Commitments

- We will communicate respectfully, professionally, and honestly, whatever the method.
- We will aim to respond to communication in a timely manner.
- Staff emails will always come from school accounts.

Email and Communication Guidelines:

- Emails or phone calls that are aggressive or disrespectful will not receive a response and may be referred to senior leaders for further action.
- Emails will be acknowledged within **48 hours during term time**.
- Full responses will be provided **within five working days**, or staff will indicate when a complete response can be expected if it is not possible within the five working day time frame.
- Staff are not required to respond to emails outside their normal working hours, including weekends or school holidays.

Staff Responsibilities

All staff are responsible for:

- Responding to parent and carer communications in line with this policy.
- Working collaboratively to ensure parents receive timely information if they cannot respond themselves.
- Managing communication with parents as part of their workload during working hours.

Parent and Carer Responsibilities

Parents and carers are responsible for:

- Communicating respectfully at all times.
- Directing queries to the most appropriate staff member, where possible.
- Responding to school communications promptly.
- Understanding that staff are not expected to respond outside working hours.

Parents who are also staff should follow the same procedures as all other parents. Exceptions for informal arrangements can only be agreed mutually.

3. How We Communicate With Parents and Carers

Email and App Communication

We use email and the School Gateway app to keep parents informed about:

- School events and trips
- Surveys or consultations
- Class activities and teacher requests
- Short-notice changes to the school day
- Urgent notices
- Club bookings

This list is not exhaustive. Parents should check these communications regularly. We will also use email to circulate regular newsletters, and to share communications from third parties, e.g. NHS, external club providers etc.

Meetings

- Parent evenings are held twice per year for each year group.
- Additional meetings may be scheduled if there are concerns about a child's learning, behaviour, well-being, or special educational needs (SEND).

School Website

Key information is available on the website, including term dates, policies, contact information, and curriculum information. Parents should check the website before contacting the school for general information.

Social Media

Schools have an information only, closed Facebook group, where reminders may be posted. This is not an appropriate forum for individualised issues and communications.

4. How Parents and Carers Can Communicate With the School

Email

- Email the school or the relevant staff member for non-urgent queries.
- Emails will be acknowledged within **48 hours** and fully responded to within **five working days**.
- For urgent matters, please call the school office.

Phone Calls

- For non-urgent matters, parents can call to request a call back. Staff will schedule a convenient time to speak.
- Urgent matters include emergencies or safeguarding concerns. Somebody will return your call as soon as possible.

Meetings

- Meetings should be scheduled in advance via email or phone.
- Meetings are usually arranged within **five working days**, where possible.
- Staff are available on the gates/doors at drop-off and collection times, but appointments are preferred for discussions about learning, wellbeing, or home matters.

Important Notes

- Parents should not approach other children or parents directly about school concerns.
- Parents should not arrive unannounced expecting a meeting. Staff will schedule appointments to ensure time and attention can be given.

5. How Children Can Communicate With the School

- Children are encouraged to speak to their class teacher, teaching assistants, or key adults in school about any concerns or questions.
- Children can also use worry boxes, class discussion times, or designated pastoral staff if they need additional support.
- Staff will ensure children feel listened to and will escalate issues to senior staff when appropriate.

Date of Next Review: Autumn 2027