



Elston All Saints Anglican Methodist Primary School GDPR Communication Guidelines for staff

Communications including email use at Elston All Saints Primary School

Subject Access Requests, breaches and complaints often are connected to communication from or between staff. Applying these guidelines will help ensure that you do not fall foul of the Data Protection Act and UK GDPR.

Meetings

- The best form of communication is face-to-face meetings. They help to build relationships and allow discussion to ensure that messages are not misunderstood.
- ALWAYS ensure that confidential conversations are conducted in a private area so that they cannot be overheard.
- Avoid the use of any personal identifiers to avoid a possible data breach if the conversation is overheard.
- Is the conversation necessary and with people who are authorised to receive the information?
- Any formal record of a meeting, which can include emails or minutes, may form part of any Subject Access Request made.
- **Be aware that online meetings can be overheard – take care about how and where these meetings take place.**

Emails

- Keep the email brief
- Think about when you send an email. Sending emails outside the working day should be the exception
- Make clear that any email sent outside of standard working hours does not need an immediate response
- Include a clear subject line as a header
- Use clear simple language
- Do not use any emotion or personal comments. In the event of a Subject Access Request, emails may have to be disclosed and embarrassing comments are not exempt. Only put in email comments which you would be prepared to say to a person's face.
- Avoid using email for complaining or venting.
- 'Reply to All' should only be used if everyone on the thread really needs to see the reply.
- If you are writing about more than one subject, do so in separate emails. This should avoid messages being missed amongst other information.
- Consider using a new email rather than replying to long threads.
- Is it clear why you are emailing? Is it for information only or is action required?
- Do you need to send an email? Would waiting to speak with the person be a better option?
- Try not to use the 'All Staff' email unless it is absolutely necessary that all staff need to receive it. Use staff meetings or confidential noticeboards if appropriate.

- Rather than sending personal data as an attachment or as part of the email, save the information in a secure location (staff area on server) and email those who need to view it with information of where to find it. If you are sending personal data as an attachment, password protect it!
- Only use school email addresses when emailing for school purposes. **All** emails to parents are sent using the office@elstonallsaints.notts.sch.uk email address.
- If emailing pupils, only email to their school email address.
- Emails to parents should be as positive as possible. Use other methods of communication to convey bad news.
- All communication should be professional and formal – including between staff.
- Double check everything you write
- **Check who you are sending it to before doing so.**
- **If an email which contains personal or sensitive information has been sent to the wrong person, report it to your GDPR Lead immediately.**
- **If you need to keep the email, file it in the right place.**
- **If you don't need the email – DELETE IT!**

Walkie Talkies

- Radio communications enable school staff to communicate using devices such as walkie-talkies, giving instant communication in the event of an emergency, Lockdown procedures, Emergency Evacuation Procedures and management of pupils at break times. However, using the wrong equipment could potentially result in breaches of data protection and could cause safeguarding issues
- Schools should check when purchasing walkie-talkies that their handheld 'walkie-talkie' radios are secure as the channel used may not be private and the conversation may be heard by anyone monitoring the channel
- Staff should be trained how to use the walkie-talkie correctly, not only to comply with data protection requirements, but also to avoid any potential safeguarding issues
- No personal information should be communicated which could enable an individual to be identified. The use of initials instead of names is one way of ensuring this
- The language used on the walkie-talkie should be professional
- Schools could consider implementing a Code or standard phrases to ensure that the message is conveyed clearly

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