Austin Waldorf School

Communications Plan

2026-2027



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Introduction

At Austin Waldorf School, we are dedicated to building healthy relationships between the members of our learning community. The values of respect, kindness, honesty, appreciation and responsibility are the guiding principles for healthy communication at AWS. We are committed to fostering timely, clear, and consistent communication with students, families, and faculty to ensure that information is shared effectively and expectations are both clear and understood.

The Austin Waldorf School's Communication Plan is a working document and its purpose is to streamline our communications practices and to present a clear framework for communicating with our school community. Our goal is to build open, transparent, and timely two-way communication between administration, staff, families, and community members.

This current version of the Communication Plan focuses primarily on communication between the school and the parent community. It outlines what the school communicates, what falls outside the scope of school-wide communication, and how common communications are shared with families. It also provides a communications matrix and contact point chart to clarify who communicates what, through which channels, and where families should direct questions or concerns.

What We Do And Don't Communicate

AWS communicates information that helps students, families, faculty, and staff understand what is happening at school and what they need to know or do. This includes classroom and division updates; Head of School and Board of Trustees communications; schoolwide news, events, and highlights; academic and school calendars; class schedules; athletics news; policy updates and reminders; field trip information and permission requests; and information about emergencies or unexpected school closures. Teachers communicate with families about classroom learning, upcoming activities, and matters related to their child's experience at school. They also share relevant observations about a student's progress and well-being.

AWS also communicates important enrollment and financial aid deadlines, including sibling application, re-enrollment opt-out, and financial aid deadlines, as well as invitations and updates related to major community fundraising initiatives and events such as the Gala and Annual Fund.

Families can expect communication about significant staffing changes, including faculty and administrative departures and new hires during the school year, as well as annual staff departures and introductions to new Early Childhood, Grades, High School, and administrative team members. AWS also photographs and records school activities for use in school publications, promotional materials, the website, social media, and other school communications, as outlined in the enrollment agreement.

AWS respects the privacy of students, families, faculty, and staff and does not share confidential or sensitive information through general school communications. This includes confidential personnel matters, individual student or family matters, private health information, individual disciplinary or employment matters, confidential legal matters, and the details of ongoing investigations or disputes.

AWS also does not use schoolwide communications to share or address rumors, speculation, unverified information, or private correspondence. While

AWS is committed to communicating decisions and sharing information relevant to families, internal deliberations and confidential discussions are not generally shared.

The school is responsible for making decisions in the best interests of its students and community. These decisions draw on the professional knowledge and judgment of the people entrusted with those responsibilities. We value a relationship with families built on mutual trust and respect for the decisions made and those holding the authority for those decisions. Teachers do not speak on behalf of school administration or offer personal commentary on administrative decisions. They also avoid sharing unverified information or discussing matters that fall outside their role, directing families to the appropriate person when further clarification is needed.

Furthermore, information that could compromise the safety or security of students, employees, or the campus is likewise not shared publicly. When an individual matter requires communication, AWS will communicate directly with the people involved and share broader information with the community when appropriate and when privacy and other obligations allow. Families who have submitted a written photo or media opt-out request will have their wishes respected to the extent reasonably possible, in accordance with the enrollment agreement.

Communications Matrix

This table outlines who communicates what, to whom, when, and through which channel.

Content	Audience	Sender/ Owner	Chan- nel	Timing/ Frequency
Classroom updates	Class parents	Class Teacher	Email	Weekly
Early Childhood & Grades updates	EC* & Grades parents	EC*/Grades Director	Parent Planner	Monthly
High School updates	High School parents	High School Director	Email/ Parent Planner	Weekly on Thursday
Head of School updates	All parents	Head of School	Parent Planner	Monthly
Board of Trustees updates	All parents	Board of Trustees	Parent Planner or email	Within 10 days after each regular meeting
Schoolwide general news, updates & events	All parents	Communica- tions Coordinator	Parent Planner	Weekly on Thursday

**EC: Early Childhood*

Content	Audience	Sender/ Owner	Channel	Timing/ Frequency
Athletics news	All parents	Athletics Director	Parent Planner	Weekly on Thursday
Emergencies/ Unexpected school closure	All parents	Communica-tions Coordinator/ Assistant to the Head of School	SMS	Same day
Faculty member departure during school year	Section parents	Section Director	Email	Within a week
Faculty hire during school year	Section parents	Section Director	Email	Within a week
Admin member departure during school year	All parents	Head of School	Email	Within a week
Admin hire during school year	All parents	Head of School	Email	Within a week

Content	Audience	Sender/ Owner	Channel	Timing/ Frequency
Policy changes/ reminders	Section parents/ All parents	Owner of that policy	Email	Within a week
Introduction of admin team	All parents	Head of School	Email	Beginning of August
Introduction of EC/Grades faculty	Section parents	EC*/Grades Director	Email	Beginning of August
Introduction of High School faculty	Section parents	High School Director	Email	Beginning of August
Class schedule	Class parents	Teacher	Email	One week before school starts
Sibling application deadline	All parents	Enrollment Coordinator	Email; Parent Planner	Early November
Opt-out deadline	All parents	Enrollment Coordinator	Email; Parent Planner	Early November
Financial Aid deadline	All parents	Enrollment Coordinator	Email; Parent Planner	Early November

Content	Audience	Sender/ Owner	Channel	Timing/ Frequency
Annual Fund kick-off	All parents	Development Manager	Parent Planner	Early September
Gala invitation	All parents	Development Manager	Email	5 months before gala
Academic calendar	All parents	Communica-tions Coordinator	Email	April
Yearly staff departures	Section parents	Section Director	Email	End of May
School calendar	All parents	Communica-tions Coordinator	Parent Planner	June
School highlights	Wider community	Communica-tions Coordinator	Social Media	Up to twice weekly
Non-urgent school reminders	All parents	Communica-tions Coordinator	SMS	As needed; up to three times a month
Annual Report	Wider community	Development Manager	Email; Website	Annually

Contact Point Chart

This table outlines who parents contact at the school depending on what type of question or concern they have.

All phone extensions are dialed after dialing the general school number: 512-288-5942. Dialing the general number without an extension will connect you to the front desk.

We encourage families to begin by communicating directly with the person or department most closely connected to their question or concern, as outlined below. When a concern cannot be resolved through these channels, families may follow the school's formal grievance process outlined in the Community Handbook.

We are committed to responding to inquiries within 48 business hours.

Topic	Contact Person	Role	Email	Phone
• Individual student matters • Classroom matters		Class Teacher/ Advisor		
• General school matters • Health clinic • Aftercare	Dr. Rhonda Whitman	Front Office Manager	rwhitman@austinwaldorf.org	**512-288-5942**

Topic	Contact Person	Role	Email	Phone
• EC*/Grades policy • EC*/Grades pedagogy • EC*/Grades staffing • Escalation after contacting EC*/Grades teacher	Kathleen Mumaw	Early Childhood and Grades Director	kmumaw@austinwaldorf.org	ext. 102
• High School policy • High School pedagogy • High School staffing • Escalation after contacting High School teacher	Malcolm Ringo	High School Director	mringo@austinwaldorf.org	ext. 154
• Payments (tuition, aftercare, reimburse-ments...) • Financial Aid & TEFA • Campus facilities • Campus technology	Jeff Solomon	Chief Strategic Financial & Operations Officer	jsolomon@austinwaldorf.org	ext. 106

**EC: Early Childhood*

Topic	Contact Person	Role	Email	Phone
• Re-enrollment • Enrollment initiatives (Group Tours, Open House, etc.)	Ashleigh Tolliver	Enrollment Coordinator	enroll@austinwaldorf.org	ext. 103
• Parent Planner • Social Media • Website • School marketing	Morgane Vander Linden	Marketing & Communica-tions Coordinator	mvanderlinden@austinwaldorf.org	ext. 104
• Donations • Fundraising • Foundation grants • Alumni affairs	Ingrid Hallar	Advance-ment/ Development Manager	ihallar@austinwaldorf.org	ext. 108
• Student support • Student assessments	Elizabeth Sterling	Student Services Coordinator	esterling@austinwaldorf.org	ext. 115
• Schoolwide policy • School strategy and long-term direction • Escalation after contacting section director	Dr. Michelle Purghart	Head of School	mpurghart@austinwaldorf.org	ext. 105
• Setting up meeting with Head of School	Steffani Mitchell	Assistant to the Head of School	smitchell@austinwaldorf.org	ext. 121