



# **APPOMATTOX COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS COMMUNICATION PLAN**

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**The goal of the Appomattox County Public Schools Communication Plan is to ensure clear, consistent, and timely communication with all internal and external stakeholders. Through the use of designated communication platforms, the division will share essential information aligned with its mission and strategic priorities, fostering transparency, trust, student success, and community engagement.**

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# **Appomattox County Public Schools' Organizational Structure**

## **School Board**

Board Chair: **Mr. Jason Wells**  
Board Vice Chair: **Mr. Roger Stough**  
Board Member: **Mrs. Miranda Almond**  
Board Member: **Mr. Daniel Richardson**  
Board Member: **Mr. Wyatt Torrence**

## **School Board Office**

Superintendent: **Dr. Jason Tibbs**  
Director of Instruction, Curriculum, & CTE: **Dr. Cheryl Servis**  
Director of Operations: **Mr. Luke Cunningham**  
Director of Student Services: **Ms. Mary Sherry**

## **Building and Support Administration**

### **High School**

Kevin Walker, Principal  
Jason Bowyer, Asst. Principal  
Annie Terry, Asst. Principal  
Tim Peterson, Student Activities  
Director

### **Middle School**

William Pettus, Principal  
Brendan Conroy, Asst. Principal

### **Elementary School**

Kimberly Douglas, Principal  
Brittany Maddox, Asst. Principal

### **Primary School**

Allison Maxwell, Principal  
Kristen Stafford, Asst. Principal

### **Technology**

Phillip Amos, Supervisor

### **Maintenance**

Timmy Garrett, Supervisor

### **Transportation**

Deanna Davis, Coordinator  
Ashley Nash, Asst. Coordinator

### **Food Service**

Penny Garrett, SFS Specialist/  
Café Manager

## **Introduction**

Clear, consistent communication is critical to the success of any public school district. To effectively engage stakeholders—students, parents, staff, and the broader community—a communication plan aligned with the district’s mission, vision, and strategic goals is essential.

This plan outlines a strategic approach to sharing timely and relevant information across the district. It defines communication objectives, identifies target audiences, and specifies the appropriate channels and timing for message delivery. By standardizing these elements, the plan promotes transparency, builds trust, and ensures that all stakeholders are well-informed about key initiatives, updates, and events.

The plan incorporates both in-person and digital communication methods that are accessible, reliable, and regularly maintained. It also establishes clear pathways for stakeholder feedback and engagement.

To reduce confusion and streamline efforts, the district will designate a limited number of communication platforms. This consistency enhances clarity, minimizes duplication of effort, and ensures that all stakeholders receive accurate and timely information through known and trusted sources.

## **Mission Statement**

The mission of Appomattox County Public Schools, a student centered, community driven school system grounded in a unifying historical legacy, is to inspire, empower, and prepare every student to reach their full potential and achieve lifelong success. Through meaningful learning experiences and strong partnerships with families, educators, and the community, we cultivate strong character, resilience, compassion, and honor in a safe and supportive environment. By tailoring resources and opportunities to the diverse interests, needs, and goals of our students, we promote academic excellence, social-emotional growth, communication, collaboration, and responsible citizenship, preparing them to thrive in an evolving world.

## **Vision Statement**

Appomattox County Public Schools students will be empowered through meaningful learning, supported by strong community partnerships, and prepared to lead lives of purpose, achievement, and positive impact in a diverse and evolving world.

## **Board Policy**

The Appomattox County School Board has approved several division policies that directly relate to communication. This Communication Plan serves as an extension of those policies and provides guidance for implementing effective communication practices throughout the division.

## Strategic Plan

A strategic plan serves as a long-term roadmap that defines a school division's mission, vision, goals, and priorities. It provides a clear direction for improving student outcomes, guiding decision-making, and aligning resources and efforts across the organization. By establishing specific academic and operational objectives, the plan ensures that administrators, staff, students, families, and community members are working toward a shared vision of success.

The strategic plan also promotes accountability and transparency by engaging stakeholders and establishing measurable goals to monitor progress. It enables the division to evaluate programs, allocate resources effectively, and make data-informed decisions that support continuous improvement. Ultimately, the plan helps the division respond proactively to the evolving needs of its students and community.

In June 2026, the Appomattox County Public Schools Superintendent and School Board adopted a five-year Strategic Plan. Developed through a data-driven process that incorporated input from stakeholders across the division and community, the plan focuses on the priorities that will position ACPS for long-term success.

The ACPS Strategic Plan is organized around five Strategic Goal Focus Areas:

1. Instruction, Academics, and Meeting the Diverse Needs of Students
2. Physical, Mental, and Emotional Health; Student Well-Being; Learning Environment; and Social-Emotional Support
3. Recruiting, Retaining, and Developing High-Quality Staff
4. Technology
5. Community Engagement and Partnerships

## Communication Commitment

Appomattox County Public Schools is committed to maintaining clear and effective communication to ensure all stakeholders—students, families, staff, and community members—are informed about the division's goals, initiatives, and events. To achieve this, the division will utilize a variety of communication methods, including both in-person opportunities and online tools.

Key efforts include hosting school-based events and meetings, maintaining an up-to-date and accessible website, and using designated platforms such as Email, ClassDojo, Facebook, and the official school website to share timely and relevant information.

Recognizing the fast pace of technological change, the division will not attempt to use every available communication platform. Instead, we will focus on using a select number of consistent, reliable channels. Our goal is to ensure every stakeholder knows where to find information, how to ask questions, and where to provide feedback.

Appomattox County Public Schools values open dialogue and will continue to create safe, welcoming avenues for feedback. By fostering a transparent and inclusive communication environment, we aim to strengthen trust, encourage meaningful engagement, and support collaborative decision-making across our school community.

The ACPS Communication Preferred Method Chart is intended to provide a quick reference to what method of communication the district will utilize based on the type of communication. The information being sent will determine who will receive the information using these methods of communication. All emergency alerts and school closings will be sent to the Emergency Contacts listed for each student in the district's Student Management System (PowerSchool).



## ACPS Communication PREFERRED METHOD CHART

| TYPE OF COMMUNICATION | WEBSITE | PHONE ALERT | EMAIL | SOCIAL MEDIA | TV or RADIO |
|-----------------------|---------|-------------|-------|--------------|-------------|
| Emergency Alert       | ✓       | ✓           | ✓     | ✓            | ✓           |
| School Closings       | ✓       | ✓           | ✓     | ✓            | ✓           |
| Event Promotion       | ✓       |             | ✓     | ✓            |             |
| Announcements         | ✓       |             | ✓     | ✓            |             |
| General Information   | ✓       |             | ✓     | ✓            |             |
| Campaigns             | ✓       |             | ✓     |              |             |

## Encouraging Effective Communication

At Appomattox County Public Schools, we encourage all stakeholders to reach out with questions, concerns, or requests for information. If the information you are seeking is not

available through our primary communication platforms, as outlined in the ACPS Preferred Communication Methods Chart, the next step is to contact the appropriate individual within the division.

To ensure concerns are addressed efficiently and effectively, communication should begin with the person most directly involved or knowledgeable about the matter. This approach allows issues to be resolved at the lowest appropriate level and promotes timely, accurate responses.

The **ACPS Point of Contact Progression Chart** on the following page outlines the recommended communication pathway for addressing questions and concerns. Stakeholders are encouraged to follow this progression before escalating an issue to the next level. To support this process, staff members may ask clarifying questions and redirect inquiries to the appropriate contact when necessary.

By following the established communication channels, we can work together to foster productive relationships, resolve concerns efficiently, and maintain a positive and supportive learning environment for all students, families, staff, and community members.

## Strategies for Effective Communication

| Point of Contact Progression Chart                    |                                  |  |                                            | PLEASE CONTACT US<br>(434) 352-8251        |                               |
|-------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
|                                                       | 1 <sup>st</sup> CONTACT          | 2 <sup>nd</sup> CONTACT                                                           | 3 <sup>rd</sup> CONTACT                    | 4 <sup>th</sup> CONTACT                    | 5 <sup>th</sup> CONTACT       |
| <b>Classroom/Instruction</b>                          | Teacher                          | Principal                                                                         | Director of Curriculum, Instruction, & CTE | Superintendent                             | School Board                  |
| <b>Academics</b>                                      | Teacher                          | Counselor                                                                         | Principal                                  | Director of Curriculum, Instruction, & CTE | Superintendent / School Board |
| <b>Curriculum</b>                                     | Teacher                          | Principal                                                                         | Director of Curriculum, Instruction, & CTE | Superintendent                             | School Board                  |
| <b>Behavior/Discipline</b>                            | Teacher                          | Principal                                                                         | Discipline Hearing Officer                 | Superintendent                             | School Board                  |
| <b>Special Education</b>                              | Teacher/Case Manager             | Principal                                                                         | Director of Student Services               | Superintendent / School Board              |                               |
| <b>Athletic</b>                                       | Coach                            | Student Activities Director                                                       | Principal                                  | Director of Operations                     | Superintendent                |
| <b>Extracurricular</b>                                | Advisor/Sponsor                  | Principal                                                                         | Director of Operations                     | Superintendent                             | School Board                  |
| <b>Technology</b>                                     | Teacher                          | Principal                                                                         | Technology Supervisor                      | Director of Operations                     | Superintendent / School Board |
| <b>School - Other</b>                                 | Principal                        | Director of Operations                                                            | Superintendent                             | School Board                               |                               |
| <b>Transportation</b>                                 | Principal                        | Transportation Coordinator                                                        | Superintendent                             | School Board                               |                               |
| <b>Food Services</b>                                  | School Based Café Manager        | Food Service Specialist                                                           | Director of Operations                     | Superintendent                             | School Board                  |
| <b>Buildings &amp; Grounds</b>                        | Principal                        | Maintenance Supervisor                                                            | Director of Operations                     | Superintendent                             | School Board                  |
| <b>District Protocols/Policies</b>                    | Superintendent                   | School Board                                                                      |                                            |                                            |                               |
| School Board Office<br>(434) 352-8251                 | Transportation<br>(434) 352-7441 | APS<br>(434) 352-5766                                                             | AES<br>(434) 352-7463                      | AMS<br>(434) 352-8257                      | ACHS<br>(434) 352-7146        |
| <b>Student Mental Health</b>                          |                                  | <b>Counselor</b>                                                                  | <b>Principal</b>                           | <b>Suicide and Crisis Hotline 988</b>      |                               |
| <b>School Safety<br/>(immediate concern call 911)</b> |                                  | <b>Principal</b>                                                                  | <b>Superintendent</b>                      | <b>Sheriff's Office</b>                    |                               |

Effective communication is essential to building trust, promoting transparency, and supporting student success. Appomattox County Public Schools is committed to the following communication strategies:



### **1. Use the Appropriate Communication Channel**

- Select the communication method best suited to the message and audience.
- Use face-to-face communication when addressing sensitive or complex issues.
- Ensure all communications comply with division policies and approved practices.

### **2. Communicate Clearly and Accurately**

- Use simple, professional, and easy-to-understand language.
- Keep messages concise and focused.
- Review communications for accuracy, grammar, spelling, and formatting.

### **3. Focus on the Audience**

- Consider the needs of the intended audience.
- Communicate with professionalism, respect, and a customer-service mindset.
- Be open to questions and feedback.

### **4. Communicate Proactively**

- Share information in a timely manner.
- Use multiple approved platforms when appropriate.
- Ensure important messages reach the intended audience.

### **5. Maintain Consistent Messaging**

- Communicate information that is clear, accurate, and consistent.
- Align messaging with the division's mission, goals, and priorities.
- Consider factors that may affect how messages are received and understood.

### **6. Follow the Chain of Communication**

- Use established communication channels and procedures.
- Follow approval processes and communication protocols as required.
- Ensure information is shared efficiently and appropriately.

### **7. Encourage Feedback**

- Provide opportunities for stakeholders to ask questions and share feedback.
- Welcome constructive input and respond professionally.
- Use feedback to improve communication practices.

## **District Website and Mobile App**

An up-to-date, user-friendly website and mobile app are among the most effective tools in Appomattox County Public Schools' communication strategy. Together, they serve as central sources of information, providing students, families, staff, and community members with convenient access to important announcements, resources, calendars, and district updates. These platforms promote transparency, strengthen engagement, and help keep stakeholders connected to the school community.

To maximize the effectiveness of the district website and mobile app, Appomattox County Public Schools will:

- **Prioritize Ease of Navigation** – Ensure users can quickly locate important information through clear menus, intuitive design, and search functionality.
- **Keep Content Current** – Regularly update news, announcements, resources, and other key information.
- **Align Content with Division Goals** – Ensure content reflects the division's mission, vision, and strategic priorities.
- **Maintain an Accurate Calendar** – Keep events and activities updated as information becomes available.
- **Highlight Programs and Achievements** – Showcase student accomplishments, school events, and division initiatives.
- **Provide Resources for Families** – Offer easy access to enrollment information, policies, academic resources, and parent tools.
- **Utilize Multimedia** – Incorporate photos, videos, and other visual content to enhance engagement.
- **Leverage Mobile Notifications** – Use app notifications to communicate timely reminders, important announcements, school closures, and emergency information.
- **Ensure Accessibility** – Maintain platforms that are accessible to all users and compatible with a variety of devices.

The ACPS mobile app provides families and staff with a convenient way to stay informed by accessing district and school news, calendars, notifications, and resources directly from their mobile devices. Together, the website and app play a critical role in keeping the school community informed, engaged, and connected.

## Social Media

Social media is a valuable tool for sharing information, celebrating successes, and engaging with students, families, staff, and the community. However, it should be viewed as a **supplemental communication channel** rather than the primary source of district information.

Because social media platforms use algorithms and fast-moving news feeds, important messages may not be seen by all stakeholders. For this reason, the **district website, mobile app, email, phone calls, and text alerts serve as the official communication channels for Appomattox County Public Schools.**

Social media should be used to support and amplify key messages, direct stakeholders to official information sources, and highlight the accomplishments, events, and activities that make ACPS a great place to learn and work.



## **Social Media Use and Guidelines**

To maintain consistency and align with Appomattox County Public Schools' communication goals, only approved social media platforms will be used for official district communication. Limiting the number of platforms helps ensure consistent messaging, reduce confusion, and improve efficiency in monitoring and content management, while also supporting compliance with district and platform policies.

All district-sponsored social media accounts must be approved and must comply with established communication standards.

### **Approval Process**

Requests to create new social media accounts must:

- Be submitted through the employee's direct supervisor (e.g., principal, director, or assistant superintendent).
- Be reviewed and approved by the division's administrative team prior to activation.

### **Standards for Official District Social Media Accounts**

All official accounts must:

- Receive district approval before launch.
- Serve a clear purpose aligned with division goals and priorities.
- Use consistent branding and a professional account name.
- Include a complete profile with contact information and a link to the district website.
- Use appropriate security settings to protect account integrity.
- Limit, disable, or actively moderate public comments in accordance with division guidelines.
- Follow all internal communication and posting guidelines.

### **Effective Use of Social Media**

Staff managing official accounts should:

- Ensure all content reflects the division's mission, vision, and priorities.

- Share only information that has been or will be communicated through official channels.
- Use social media to reinforce key messages and timely updates.
- Highlight student, staff, and school achievements.
- Promote events, programs, and district initiatives.
- Avoid posting confidential, sensitive, or unrelated content.

## Summary

Social media serves as a supporting communication tool rather than a primary source of information. When used intentionally and responsibly, it enhances the division's ability to share achievements, engage the community, and reinforce trust, while maintaining official messaging through centralized communication channels.

## Using Email Effectively

### Email Communication

Email is a valuable communication tool when used appropriately; however, it should not replace in-person meetings or face-to-face conversations when those methods are more effective for meaningful dialogue or decision-making.

Before using email as the primary method of communication, consider its limitations:

### Potential Limitations of Email Communication

- **Misinterpretation of Tone:** Written messages may lack emotional context, leading to confusion or misunderstanding.
- **Delayed Responses:** Email is not always immediate, which can slow decision-making or resolution of issues.
- **Information Overload:** High volumes of messages may result in important information being overlooked.
- **Risk of Errors:** Typos, incomplete information, or missing context can create confusion.
- **Security Risks:** Email systems may be vulnerable to phishing and other security concerns.

### Best Practices for Email Communication

To ensure email remains an effective and professional communication tool, staff should:

- **Respond Promptly:** Respond within the same business day when possible, and no later than 48 hours. If a full response is not yet available, send a brief acknowledgement or update.
- **Verify Recipients:**
  - Include only necessary recipients.
  - Double-check all addresses before sending group emails.
  - Avoid adding new recipients mid-thread without acknowledgment.
  - Use "Reply All" only when necessary.
  - Ensure internal messages are not inadvertently sent to external recipients.
- **Use Clear Subject Lines:** Clearly summarize the purpose of the email in the subject line.

- **Maintain a Professional Tone:** Use respectful, professional language and avoid slang or overly informal communication.
- **Be Concise:** Keep messages focused and relevant, avoiding unnecessary length.
- **Format for Clarity:** Use spacing, bullet points, and formatting tools to improve readability without overcomplicating the message.
- **Proofread Carefully:** Review all emails for grammar, spelling, accuracy, and clarity before sending.
- **Use Attachments Appropriately:** Include only relevant attachments and ensure they are accessible and in commonly used file formats.
- **Protect Confidentiality:** Do not forward emails or attachments without permission from the original sender and avoid sharing internal communications with external recipients.

## Internal Communication

Effective internal communication is essential to the success of our school division. Each day, a significant volume of information is shared across departments, schools, and teams. To ensure that this information is communicated clearly, consistently, and in a timely manner, a comprehensive internal communication plan is necessary.

### Goals of Internal Communication

Our internal communication efforts are guided by the following goals:

1. **Promote Open and Transparent Communication**  
Encourage honesty, accessibility, and trust through clear and open channels of communication.
2. **Establish Clear Expectations**  
Define when, how, and through which channels information should be shared.
3. **Foster Collaboration**  
Enhance teamwork and collective problem-solving through consistent communication.
4. **Ensure Timely Information Sharing**  
Support effective decision-making by providing timely and relevant information.
5. **Incorporate Feedback Loops**  
Create structured opportunities for staff to provide input and receive responses.

### Strategies for Effective Internal Communication

To support these goals, the following strategies will be employed:

- Prioritize **face-to-face communication** whenever possible to build trust and understanding.
- **Hold regular staff and committee meetings** to ensure ongoing dialogue and alignment.
- Utilize **email** for distributing updates, documentation, and reminders.
- **Schedule key dates in advance** and maintain shared calendars for easy access across the division.
- **Solicit and respond to feedback** regularly to reinforce engagement and continuous improvement.

By adhering to these principles and practices, we will create a culture of effective communication that supports the success of all students and staff in our division.

## Progression of Support

Clear and effective internal communication is essential to the success of our school division. To support this, it is important for all staff to understand the structured support system available throughout the district.

The *Progression of Support* outlines a tiered approach provided by various employee teams. The accompanying chart illustrates the recommended communication pathway that should be followed when an individual employee, committee, or program requires assistance.

By adhering to this progression, we ensure that concerns and needs are addressed efficiently, consistently, and by the appropriate level of support.

## Board–Staff Communication Chain of Command

Effective internal communication is essential to the successful operation of any school division. To support clear and consistent messaging, it is critical that all communication follows an established chain of command. Adhering to this structure ensures that important information flows appropriately throughout the organization, promoting sound decision-making and operational efficiency. Skipping or bypassing this chain can lead to communication breakdowns and hinder effective governance.

### Key Guidelines:

| <b>ACPS Progression of Support Chart</b> |                                |                                |                                            |                                            |                                |
|------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
|                                          | <b>1<sup>st</sup> RESOURCE</b> | <b>2<sup>nd</sup> RESOURCE</b> | <b>3<sup>rd</sup> RESOURCE</b>             | <b>4<sup>th</sup> RESOURCE</b>             | <b>5<sup>th</sup> RESOURCE</b> |
| <b>Classroom/Instruction</b>             | Teacher                        | Principal                      | Director of Curriculum, Instruction, & CTE | Superintendent                             | School Board                   |
| <b>Academics</b>                         | Teacher                        | Counselor                      | Principal                                  | Director of Curriculum, Instruction, & CTE | Superintendent / School Board  |
| <b>Curriculum</b>                        | Teacher                        | Principal                      | Director of Curriculum, Instruction, & CTE | Superintendent                             | School Board                   |
| <b>Behavior/Discipline</b>               | Teacher                        | Principal                      | Discipline Hearing Officer                 | Superintendent                             | School Board                   |
| <b>Special Education</b>                 | Teacher/Case Manager           | Principal                      | Director of Student Services               | Superintendent / School Board              |                                |
| <b>Athletic</b>                          | Coach                          | Student Activities Director    | Principal                                  | Director of Operations                     | Superintendent                 |
| <b>Extracurricular</b>                   | Advisor/Sponsor                | Principal                      | Director of Operations                     | Superintendent                             | School Board                   |
| <b>Technology</b>                        | Teacher                        | Principal                      | Technology Supervisor                      | Director of Operations                     | Superintendent / School Board  |
| <b>School - Other</b>                    | Principal                      | Director of Operations         | Superintendent                             | School Board                               |                                |
| <b>Transportation</b>                    | Principal                      | Transportation Coordinator     | Superintendent                             | School Board                               |                                |
| <b>Food Services</b>                     | School Based Café Manager      | Food Service Specialist        | Director of Operations                     | Superintendent                             | School Board                   |
| <b>Buildings &amp; Grounds</b>           | Principal                      | Maintenance Supervisor         | Director of Operations                     | Superintendent                             | School Board                   |
| <b>District Protocols/Policies</b>       | Superintendent                 | School Board                   |                                            |                                            |                                |

- **Staff Communication to the Board**

All formal communications from staff to the Board or any of its committees must be submitted

through the Superintendent. This process does not restrict employees from exercising their right to appeal to the Board on significant matters through proper channels and procedures.

- **Board Communication to Staff**

All official communications, policies, and directives from the Board that affect or interest staff will be communicated by the Superintendent. The Superintendent is also responsible for ensuring staff are well-informed about the Board's actions, concerns, and areas of focus.

- **Social Interaction**

Board members and staff often share a mutual commitment to education and may engage in informal conversations at social or community events. While such dialogue about educational topics is natural and encouraged, it is important to remember that individual Board members hold no decision-making authority outside of formal Board meetings or specific Board-authorized roles. Therefore, discussing individual personnel matters or grievances in informal settings is considered inappropriate and unprofessional.

By respecting these communication protocols, we foster a culture of mutual respect, collaboration, and purposeful dialogue.

## Branding and Use of District Logos

Consistent branding is essential to maintaining a unified identity for Appomattox County Public Schools. Clear, cohesive communication helps strengthen recognition, build trust with our stakeholders, and reflect the professionalism of our district.

Appomattox County Public Schools has proudly used a set of trademarked logos and design elements that represent the district's identity across all platforms. These include official logos, letterhead, color palettes, and other visual assets.

These logos and design elements are the legal property of Appomattox County Public Schools. To preserve the integrity of the brand, **any use of official district logos must receive prior written approval from the Superintendent.** To request permission or inquire about usage, please contact the School Board Office at (434) 352-8251.





## Communication Plan Overview

Effective communication is essential to a successful school division. A well-designed communication plan ensures that families, students, staff, and community members are informed, engaged, and aligned with the district's goals, initiatives, and updates.

This plan provides a strategic framework for how information is shared across the division. It identifies appropriate communication channels for different audiences, outlines expectations for when and how messages are delivered, and emphasizes the importance of consistency, clarity, and transparency. A strong communication strategy builds trust and supports a positive, collaborative school environment.

To maintain the effectiveness of this plan, all district staff are expected to follow established communication guidelines and protocols. This includes using appropriate tools and platforms for each audience, delivering clear and consistent messaging aligned with division values, and maintaining a unified professional identity. The plan will be reviewed and updated as needed to ensure it remains responsive to the evolving needs of the school community.

By following these practices, the division can strengthen communication efforts that support student success and reflect a commitment to timely, transparent, and inclusive engagement with all stakeholders.

*Adapted from Colonial Beach Public Schools Communication Plan*