Air Traffic Control: planned parent communication for better outcomes

What it is and how it works

School communication doesn't just need clear messages - it also **needs good coordination.** Without it:

- Staff send multiple messages on the same topic.
- Parents get duplicate emails or conflicting info.
- Important updates clash or arrive too late.
- Teachers feel overwhelmed by too many comms tasks.

This can lead to **frustration**, **confusion**, and **missed opportunities** - for everyone.

The Air Traffic Control system helps schools manage the **timing, frequency, and source** of communication.

It ensures key messages land smoothly, at the right time, and from the right voice.

Air Traffic Control in practice

Component	What it means	Examples/ actions
Flight Path	The planned communication route - what's going out and when	Weekly comms calendar/ digital schedule
Tower Control	One person/team responsible for managing all outgoing communication	Parent relationship lead/ comms coordinator
Clearance	Leadership sign-off for important or sensitive messages	New policy changes/ crisis messages approved before sending
Runway Slots	Pre-agreed windows for when different types of messages can go out	e.g. Red alerts at 8am, Green updates Fridays only
Clash Checks	Avoid overlapping messages that confuse or duplicate	Check calendar before scheduling any new message
Landing Gear	Post-send follow-up to check delivery and response	Ask: Was it received? Did it reach the right people?

Air Traffic Control for school/ parent communication

Example parent comms calendar

Date	Audience	Message	Channel	Owner
13/02/2024	All school team	Parents evening update	Email	Headteacher
16/02/2024	Year 5 parents	Ensuring Internet: safety talk	Email with link to parent portal	Head of IT
18/02/2024	All parents	New data protection rules	Email with link to parent	Head of IT
22/02/2024	Local media	Open day event	Media release and phone calls	Marketing manager
24/02/2024	All school team	New rules for visitors	Leaflet/poster in staff rooms	School Office manager
26/02/2024	Covernors	Pre reading for next Governor's meeting	Email and links to Google Drive	Headteacher

Air Traffic Control for school/ parent communication

Get started in your school

Implement a school-wide communication flow

1. **Map your flight paths**
Create a weekly or termly communication calendar – it can be in Excel or any shared planning tool.

2. **Nominate your tower controller**
One point of contact to manage and approve comms (e.g. office lead).

3. **Set 'runway rules'**
Allocate times/days for different types of messages (urgent vs general).

4. **Build a checklist for clearance**
Who approves what? What's the process for high-priority items?

5. **Debrief regularly**
Check in: Did comms land well? Were there clashes? What can improve?

Air Traffic Control + Traffic Lights = Stronger Parent Communication and relationships

- Use Air Traffic Control to schedule and coordinate.

- Use the Fit2Communicate Traffic Light System to prioritise and label.

Together, they ensure your messages land safely, clearly, and with impact.

If you would like more parent communication and engagement hints and tips, email us at hello@fit2communicate.com and visit www.fit2communicate.com