

Traffic Light system: managing school information



What it is and how it works

School communication sometimes struggles to hit the mark because:

- Parents feel **overwhelmed** with too many emails, texts, and letters.
- Important messages get **buried in the noise**.
- Staff feel pressure from parents chasing information they've already sent.
- Misunderstandings lead to **missed deadlines**, low attendance at events, or **confused students**.

These issues affect **parent engagement**, **staff wellbeing**, and ultimately, **student outcomes**.

The **Traffic Light System** helps schools manage day-to-day communications by clearly **signposting the priority** of messages. It lets parents instantly know *how urgent* and *how relevant* the information is, making it easier for them to engage and take the right action.

How It Works

Each communication can be **tagged** as Red, Amber or Green - whether sent by text, app, email, or letter.

● Red – Must Read Now

Urgent and critical

Immediate action needed

Example: "School closed due to snow – collect your child by 1pm"

● Amber – Important but Not Urgent

Needs attention soon, but not right away

Example: "Book your slot for next week's parent evening"

● Green – Nice to Know

For awareness only

Example: "Year 5 won the spelling quiz – well done!"

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A standard template for each traffic light colour



Red:

- Urgent and important information
- Requires school leadership sign off
- Consider text, email, phone, parent portal
- Examples: closure of school; child safety issue

Urgent: [add subject]

Top points [up to maximum of 3]

For action by [date] or for information

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Further information:

Add additional places people can find further information.

Contact for questions:

Yellow:

- Important but not urgent information.
- Consider email, website, parent portal
- Examples: change to term dates or school trip that requires parent consent

Important: [add subject]

Top points

For action by [date] or for information

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Further information:

Add additional places people can find further information.

Contact for questions:

Green:

- 'Good to know' information
- Consider website, newsletter
- Examples: school family day, school trip report out or school uniform sale

For information: [add subject]

Top points

[Include what, why, how, where, when]

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Further information:

Add additional places people can find further information.

Contact for questions:

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Get Started with your school Traffic Light System

1. **Set the rules** - Define what Red, Amber, and Green mean for your school.
2. **Inform parents and staff** - Explain the system clearly via newsletter, email or short video.
3. **Be consistent** - Use the labels across all channels.
4. **Assign an owner** - Someone (e.g. a parent relationship lead) should oversee the system.
5. **Evaluate** - Check in with staff and parents: Is the system working? What can improve?

Example Scenario: Before vs After the Traffic Light System

Before:

A parent receives five emails in a week, can't tell which are important, misses one about a form due for a school trip. Their child can't go. The parent is upset and the teacher is frustrated.

After:

The same message is tagged  **Red – Must Read Now** and sent via app with a “read receipt” prompt. The parent sees it straight away and submits the form on time. Problem avoided.

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