



The Athelstan Trust

Communications Policy

Date of Review	Approved by	Date of Approval	Next Review Date	Website
May 2018 May 2021 May 2024	Board	23/5/24	May 2027	Yes

This Policy applies to all staff employed by the Athelstan Trust.

- 1 **The media:** You must not make contact with or communicate with any member of the press or media or anyone so connected, on behalf of the Trust or any of its Academies unless you have obtained the prior permission of the Headteacher.
- 2 **Authorised:** The employees authorised to give press releases will be the Headteachers and the Chief Executive Officer.
- 3 **Statement:** If you are approached by any member of the press or media to make a statement on behalf of the Trust or one of its Academies you should decline to make any statement whatsoever and refer the matter immediately to the Headteacher.
- 4 **Teachers' right to anonymity:** Teachers have the legal right to anonymity when facing allegations of criminal wrongdoing involving a registered pupil of the Trust until such time as they are formally charged with an offence. The right to anonymity has been introduced by law to protect teachers against malicious allegations.
- 5 **Criminal offence:** It is a criminal offence for any person to publish information that could lead the public to identify the teacher concerned. Publication of information includes any speech, writing, relevant programme or other communication in whatever form, which is addressed to the public at large or any section of the public. Therefore any statement made by you to a member of the public which leads to a teacher's loss of anonymity could potentially result in your criminal prosecution. In particular, messages posted on social media regarding the allegation and those involved, even if not named directly, could contravene the law.
- 6 **Criminal sanction:** If you are found to have breached the teacher's right to anonymity you may be personally liable to criminal prosecution and a maximum fine of £5,000 as well as disciplinary action in accordance with the Trust's procedures.
- 7 **The public:** In addition to the prohibition on making statements to the media you must not at any time make any statement or publish any information in any form to any person, group, company or organisation, whether on your own behalf or on behalf of the Trust or one of its Academies which includes in staff meetings, parent meetings or any conversation regarding any incident or allegation:
 - 7.1 involving any current or former member of staff or pupil of the Trust; and
 - 7.2 which is under investigation by the Trust and / or the relevant authorities or is likely to be the subject of such an investigation.
- 8 In particular you must under no circumstances divulge the name or any other information which could reveal the identity of a member of staff accused of a criminal offence involving a pupil or any information that could identify the pupil making the allegation save for in accordance with the whistleblowing policy, if appropriate.



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- 9 **Gross misconduct:** Any action taken in contravention of this policy may constitute gross misconduct.
- 10 **Reporting your concerns:** Nothing in this policy shall prevent you from disclosing any safeguarding concern in accordance with the Trust's child protection safeguarding policies and procedures and whistleblowing policies. Reporting your concerns in accordance with these procedures is actively encouraged by the Trust.
- 11 **Statements to proper authorities:** Nothing in this policy shall prevent you from giving a statement to the Police or such other proper authority in co-operation with any safeguarding or criminal investigation.