

Communications Guide

2023-2024



Flagler Schools

5th Edition

Flagler County Public Schools

Vision

As a courageous, innovative leader in education, Flagler County Public Schools will be the Nation's premier learning organization where ALL students graduate as socially responsible citizens with the skills necessary to reach their maximum potential.

Mission

Flagler County Public Schools ensures educational success through high expectations and innovative thinking in a safe learning environment to empower students to reach their full potential as responsible, ethical, and productive citizens in a diverse and changing world.

Guiding Principles

- *Children First*
- *Trust and Respect for All*
- *Empower Others*
- *Teamwork*
- *Excellence, Quality, and Consistency*
- *Commitment to Individual Needs*
- *Get to "YES"*

COMMUNICATIONS GUIDE

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Introduction

Flagler Schools plays a large part in what goes on in Flagler County. We are the largest employer in the county with nearly 2,500 employees and our 13,000 students allow us all to share new success stories every day. But how do we let everyone else know what we've known for years: that our students and employees are the best of what Flagler County has to offer? It's vital that we share with the world that we are moving **#FlaglerForward** and building the support for our mission is more important than ever before. Each of us is an ambassador of Flagler Schools and we each have the opportunity to strengthen community support of our schools when we effectively communicate with students, parents, and community members.

Use this communications guide, which has been prepared for you by our Communications Team, to help you and your team provide the best communications your parents, students, staff, and community members expect and deserve. This is just one resource for you, providing you a guide for best practices. We hope this is a useful resource for you, and we always welcome your input and suggestions for improving it.

Your Communication Team is here to serve you. We will be there whenever you need additional help.

HELPING YOU IN A CRISIS

The Coordinator of Communications will respond to your school campus and handle all media relations for the duration of the crisis. In a crisis, we will send messages on behalf of the school(s) until the last call announcing the event is over, which will be sent by the principal. We will help administrators craft that message.

HELPING PROMOTE YOUR SCHOOLS AND THE DISTRICT

We know what is considered news and what will get media attention. Please utilize the Coordinator of Communications' experience and ability to garner the attention your school deserves. While we are not near major media outlets, we can still work to get that attention for you.

HELPING YOU USE THE BEST PRACTICES IN COMMUNICATIONS

We are here to train you and your staff on the best communications techniques and the proper use of the tools available to you.

During business hours, you should always be able to easily reach our Coordinator of Communications. We strive to answer messages within a few minutes of receiving it. Feel free to call us or email!

COORDINATOR OF COMMUNICATIONS

706-936-0394 (cell); 386-437-7526, ext 1124
foleyd@flaglerschools.com

School Communications Plan

Targeted and timely communication allows parents ample time to plan to be a part of our school events. This 5-step plan will help Flagler Schools provide proper notice to our parents.

JULY - SEPTEMBER

- 1 SKYWARD PUSH**
Gather updated parent contact information and communication preferences
 - Promote benefits of updating contact information in order to receive information quickly during an emergency
 - Urge parents to follow school and district on social media, opt-in to receive emails
- 2 COMMUNICATION RESEARCH & ANALYSIS**
Set your school's communications goals and expectations
 - School Administrative Teams complete "School Communications Roadmap" to set communications goals and expectations

SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER

- 3 COMMUNICATIONS TRAINING & PLANNING**
Schools receive training on best practices for school communications and plan for implementation for School Communication Plan
 - Review 2023-24 Communications Guide
 - School Administrative Teams share School Communications Plan with staff

AUGUST - JUNE

- 4 IMPLEMENT SCHOOL COMMUNICATIONS PLANS**
Use the tools and resources provided to increase successful communications
 - Schools make master schedule of ALL school events
 - Schools enter ALL events into school website calendar and create Facebook events
 - Use School Event Checklist at ALL school-based events (**see appendix A**)
 - Use Sign In sheets to gather information regarding how participants hear about event (**see appendix B**)

SEPTEMBER, DECEMBER, & JUNE

- 5 EVALUATION & ANALYSIS**
Determine results of school communications efforts
 - Schools complete "School Communications Plan Evaluation" at benchmark times during the school year to evaluate success of communications efforts



THE GOOD NEWS!

Our schools have the tools and training needed to tell their own school success stories! You can use these tools to build your school culture with audiences on your campus and out in your community.

In addition, reach out to our Coordinator of Communications to cover or highlight the innovative teaching in our classrooms, exclusive learning opportunities for our scholars to show our community that we are moving **#FlaglerForward!** We can help pitch your stories to local media for coverage, however there is no guarantee of coverage.

If you want coverage for an activity/event at your school, please send the 5 W's to: foleyd@flaglerschools.com

- WHO?** Who is involved? Who does it affect? People (reporters, too) are always more interested in people rather than things. Reporters want to tell amazing stories about amazing people doing things!
- WHAT?** What happened or is going to happen? What opportunity is there to tell this story?
- WHERE?** Be specific - if something is happening at your school's media center, make sure you say that rather than just providing the school address.
- WHEN?** Need day/date/time. It is frustrating for a reporter to receive a news release about a unique event and not have the date and time listed.
- WHY?** This is the heart of the story. Why is it happening and what does it all mean? How is it being done? How did you arrive at the point you are now?

TIPS

- Advise who is the target audience. Do you want to grab the attention of a particular group?
- Include a school contact name, phone number, and email address.
- Share your news with local media outlets by tagging them!

@WESH @WFTV @Fox35News @clickorlando
@dbnewsjournal @PCObserver @FlaglerLive

Toolbox for Communications



Automated Phone Calls

When used correctly, automated phone calls can be a great way to communicate urgent messages. These calls should be reserved for the most important and urgent messages, though. This is the most intrusive form of communication - forcing parents to stop what they are doing and listen to a recorded message. Many parents do not listen and just call back to say, "I just received a call from this number." Some simply ignore or block these calls due to schools overusing this intrusive method of communication for less important topics.

School administrators should be monitoring the monthly call logs and eliminating the unnecessary, routine calls that annoy parents.

COMMUNICATIONS BLUEPRINT

When to use automated phone calls

- **One (1)** non-emergency call per week, maximum
- **In an emergency**

Exceptions: student specific items like attendance and discipline calls. Nutrition balance can be an email.

TIPS

For effective automated telephone calls

- Before the call, script what you want to say.
- Have someone review the script for clarity.
- Keep your message between 30-45 seconds.
- Use email, website, or Facebook for longer messages.
- Include who you are and the school you are representing.
- State the purpose of the message right away.
- Mention key information and repeat it so parents can absorb the key points.
- Include direction for parents to get additional information on the topic.
- Match the tone of your voice to the subject of the message.
- **Unless it is an emergency, DO NOT schedule calls during disruptive times (i.e. before 8am, between 5-7pm, or after 9pm).**
- Include a way for parents to contact you (either a phone number or email). Staff at the District Offices often receive calls from parents who say they missed some information in a message sent by a school.
- After the call, monitor the reports for failed calls.

Toolbox for Communications

Email Messages

Who doesn't have email these days? Most of your parents have at least one email account, but the challenge is getting them to actually open up and read your message. You can get a lot of information in an email message, but it's vital you properly title the message so that you'll get your parents to open it and read it. In cases of emergencies, this may not be ideal.

Should you use email during an emergency situation? It doesn't hurt, but it is not your most effective communication medium. It should supplement a phone call in emergencies. For everything else, other than crisis communication, email should be the primary method of contact.

COMMUNICATIONS BLUEPRINT

When to use email

- **Primary method of communication**
- **Subject line should indicate topic and entice viewer to open**

TIPS

For effective email messages

- When sending email messages, get to the point right away.
- Stick to the facts.
- Use the same clarity you would use in face-to-face conversation.
- Do not mix topics in one email - this may cause confusion.
- Let recipients know if you need a response and by when.
- Be clear with your call to action.

Additional Tools

For School Communications

❖ School Marquees

- Your school marquee is your most valuable marketing real estate. Use it to drive parents to your website and social media channels. You cannot possibly get enough calendar information on it to make sense.
- If visible on both side, make each side different. This increases your messages and gives drivers something different to see each time they come and go. Make sure you're using correct spelling and grammar.

❖ School Website

❖ Posters in high-traffic areas

❖ PTO/SAC Word of Mouth

❖ School Facebook and Twitter Pages

❖ Hold message

❖ S'more

❖ Flyers

❖ Car Lines

❖ Newsletters

Don't forget about these other tools!

- Teach parents to use social media
- Look beyond parents - reach out to the residents in your community who have no children in our schools
- Offer to have school groups perform at organizations in your area
- Establish service projects for students with community organizations
- Ask community members to judge student contests and work
- Outline what help you need from community members, in time and treasure
- Get community leaders on your email list and as social media followers
- Invite business partners to participate in career days
- Provide themed student artwork for display in area businesses
- Send businesses your newsletters and social accounts to follow what is happening at your school. Specifically target the sponsors tied to your campus programs. You do not want to "spam" our local businesses.

Working With

Outside Organizations



OUTSIDE AGENCY REQUESTS

When outside agencies contact schools with various requests, the following protocol should be followed.

1. Contact the Coordinator of Communications to request District approval. Depending on the request, it may need additional approval from the Superintendent's Office or Chief Human Resources Officer.
2. All students shown or interviewed should have a media request form signed and on file.

VIRTUAL FLYERS

If your school is approached by an outside organization looking to distribute flyers, please direct them to use PeachJar. Flagler Schools has moved to limit the amount of paperwork from outside organizations going to our families. We want to strongly encourage outside organizations to utilize our annual *Back to School Jam* and *Summer Camps and Activities Expo*. Additional information on digital flyers can be found [here](#).



First Impressions

COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY WITH THE PUBLIC



It's the first piece of the communications puzzle. No matter your position, your daily communication with students, staff, parents, and community members plays a vital role in creating an effective relationship with the public. When speaking or writing, remember that you are acting as a voice for your school and our District. Use the following best practices for the best possible first impression of our work!



TELEPHONE ETIQUETTE

- When the phone rings, answer promptly (before the third ring, if possible).
- Before picking up, discontinue any other conversation or activity that can be heard by the caller.
- Speak clearly and distinctly in a pleasant tone of voice. The caller doesn't care how stressful the day has been, they want your undivided attention for their concern or issue.
- When transferring a call, be sure to explain that you are transferring the call and why.
- It is also good practice to give the caller the numbered extension you are transferring them to in case they get disconnected.

You may be the first and only contact a caller has with your department or school. Make it a good one. That impression will stay with them long after that short call is completed.



VOICEMAIL ETIQUETTE

- If you are in charge of the voicemail box for your school, change the greeting regularly to include timely, relevant messages about upcoming events. Also, include a mention to visit the school website, and Follow and Like the school on Facebook and Twitter.
- Check voicemail regularly and respond quickly. Callers deserve the courtesy of a reply, even if it is just to ask for more time to research their concern.
- Be aware of the order in which you list your department options on your voicemail tree.



EMAIL ETIQUETTE

- Under Florida Public Records law, all email messages are public records. Refrain from saying anything you would be embarrassed to have read in a courtroom, in the newspaper, or on the news.
- Use proper punctuation and grammar, just as you would for any official communication.
- Attempts at humor and sarcasm in email are easily misinterpreted. Keep the content and tone of your message professional.
- The email system should not be used for voicing personal business.
- Forward judiciously and provide context for forwarded emails - just a forward could imply you support the content you forwarded.
- Be aware of personal information which could identify a student



GREETING THE PUBLIC

The front office staff is responsible for setting a positive tone for the rest of the building. Always keep your eyes and ears open for issues that could be of interest or concern to the public.

- Greet each visitor as they enter the front desk area.
- Does your lobby tell what makes your school unique and a great choice for a potential new family?
- Make sure your office staff knows the location of any scheduled conference or meeting as guests arrive
- Apologize for any inconvenience

OPEN THE WINDOW OF YOUR CLASSROOM

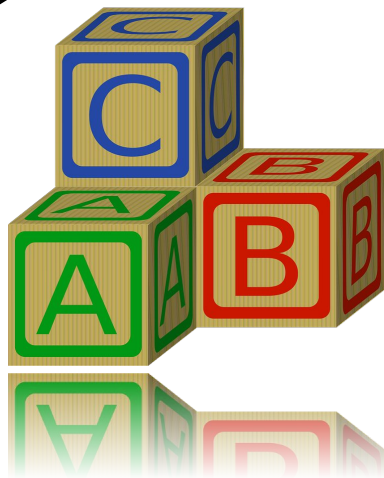
School-parent engagement has a positive impact on student academic success, keeps families apprised of school activities, emergency situations and other news from the district, and ultimately builds a strong school community.

Parents' use of social media tools in their personal lives is also driving new expectations for how they want to receive information from their teachers. The new emphasis is on timely, easily digestible, and quickly accessible information pushed to a smart device.

Parents want three things:

- Information about how their child is performing academically
- Key skills their child is supposed to learn
- How they can support their child's learning

SOCIAL MEDIA



SHOWCASE the
exclusive **LEARNING**
opportunities and
INNOVATIVE teaching
happening in your
CLASSROOMS
each and every day!

find your **Audience**
build your **Brand**
Celebrate kids

Social media is not going away! It is here, and it is here to stay!

Parent engagement is key to student success. Parents want to have quality conversations with their children about their school day, but typically when students are asked “What did you do in school today?” the response is “Nothing.” Social media provides parents with the opportunity to ask more targeted questions of their children.

Use social media to celebrate the great things happening in your school and in the District!

- Promote sports, arts, and cultural events
- Initiate “Throwback Thursday” - include photos from your archives to share on social media
- Share summer learning activities because the learning does not come to an end when school is out
- Post about school betterment projects

Get your rock star staff on board!

The success of social media in schools - for teaching, communication, and learning - happens when your best educators get in the game. It is now time to recruit your social media champions.

Part innovator, part encourager, school social media champions take your efforts to the next level. They are teacher leaders who are already using digital tools in their classrooms or activities. They are influencers among colleagues, often looked to for inspiration and reassurance.

These leaders...

- model use of social media, both basic and innovative
- encourage their colleagues to give it a try, and support them when they do
- lead professional development activities when invited
- come together as a group once or twice a year (and connect in-between) to share ideas, troubleshoot challenges and think outside the box
- help remind reluctant building or District leaders of the real value of social media in schools

BY THE NUMBERS



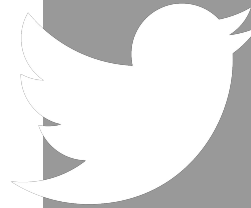
FACEBOOK is popular with individuals in all areas and across all income levels and backgrounds

Purpose: build relationships

336 million users in US

Ages **25-54**

55% female users



TWITTER users tend to live in more urban areas and tend to be young adults or business professionals

Purpose: news & conversation

450 million users

Ages **18-29**

GAINING SOCIAL MEDIA ADOPTION WITH PARENTS



Share **STUDENT SUCCESS** stories
#FlaglerForward



Share **INNOVATIVE** teaching &
exclusive **LEARNING** opportunities



Share school **NEWS** and promote
school **EVENTS**



Get **PARENT FEEDBACK**



TIPS FOR FACEBOOK

VIDEO! VIDEO! LIVE VIDEO!

It leads to huge reach and engagement numbers



Facebook is the preferred platform for your parents. This is your online newsletter!



The same rules apply to Facebook as Twitter regarding content: Great pictures, video, and live video are paramount!



This platform excels at long-form posts and letters from teachers and principals.



You want to post once or twice a day to start with good spacing between posts.



Upload videos directly to Facebook.

Build a Facebook audience:

Do not assume your community will know you are on Facebook. Develop a communication plan to share how and why people should follow you.



Put up posters in schools.

Give people a reason to connect with you.



Add your Facebook address to all publications.

Ask questions.



Use your social media for important announcements before sending the message other ways.

Respond, answer questions, show appreciation.



Once you've drawn people to your page, it is important to make sure you are posting timely, relevant content that keeps people engaged.

Welcome feedback and suggestions.

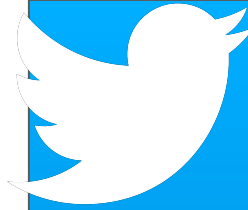


Listen first and never stop listening

Use real words, not jargon.



Disagreement is okay as long as it is respectful.



TIPS FOR TWITTER

What is appropriate to tweet?

It may sound harsh, but you get one shot at this. Do not create a viral tweet for the wrong reasons! Trust your gut. If it feels like it could be controversial, do not tweet or retweet it.

We want to demonstrate the innovative teaching and exclusive learning opportunities happening in our classrooms each and every day. We want to capture the spark of learning; that moment when a student is totally enthralled in a hands-on science lesson. We also want to demonstrate what we already know - our teachers and staff are masters of student engagement. Our classrooms are digital playgrounds where students are just a click away from meeting shark experts on research ships or talking to another class on the other side of the country or world! Our parents should get the opportunity to see them and extend that learning at home if by nothing more than a good discussion sparked by social media.

How to tweet



You want your writing to be clever and creative, but do not be over the top or snarky.



All tweets should tag @flaglerschools and include the #FlaglerForward hashtag



You always want a picture or video in your tweet - the more memorable image, the better!

How to use hashtags

Hashtags are used for two purposes:

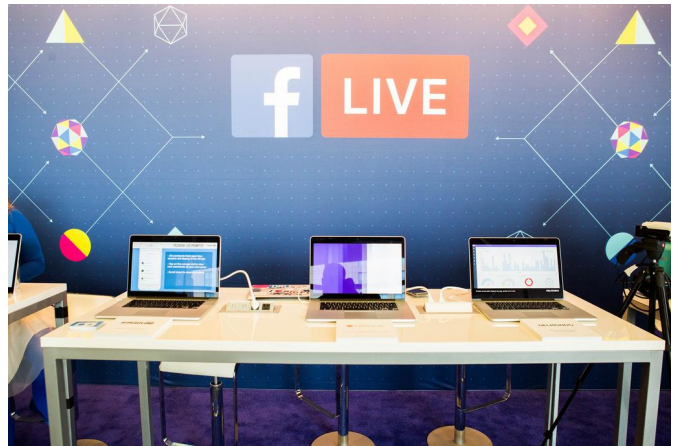
1. To search for a specific topic on Twitter
2. To make sarcastic or funny comments
(AVOID THIS)

TWEET EVERYONE WITH RESPECT!

What do I do?

Facebook Live Suggestions

- Pep Rally
- Graduation
- Sporting Events
- Athlete Signings
- Homework Help
- Virtual PTO/SAC Meetings
- SAT Prep Classes
- Community Donations to Schools
- Principal Q&A
- Bad Weather Announcements
- Honor Roll Announcements
- Cafeteria Menu Announcements
- Storytime - Teacher Reading Books
- Inside Tour of Classroom
- Virtual Field Trips to Schools
- Student Roundtables
- Homecoming Queen Reveals
- Honor Retirees
- Alumni Interviews
- Fundraising Drives
- Meet-the-Teacher Nights
- Behind-the-Scenes of Jobs in the District
- New School Year Kick-off
- 100th Day of School Celebration
- Science Fair Demonstrations
- Student Registration Q&A
- National Merit Reveals
- Halftime Shows



From Social Media Schoolhouse
socialmediaschoolhouse.blogspot.com

Emergency

Communications

Safety on our campuses, for students, teachers, staff, and administrators is of utmost concern. Without a safe learning environment, no one can succeed. For this reason, District safety personnel are always working with local law enforcement as threats to our campuses continue to evolve.

There are many potential threats, both real and unfounded we may face. That is why it is best to review emergency protocols on a regular basis.

All administrators, teachers, and staff are encouraged to remain vigilant and report anything suspicious. If you see something, say something. Classroom doors are to remain locked and all staff are empowered to call 911 should an emergency arise.

This year, we are using plain language warnings, through the use of the Standard Response Protocol, established by the ["I Love You Guys"](http://www.iloveyguys.org) Foundation.

IN AN EMERGENCY TAKE ACTION



HOLD! In your room or area. Clear the halls.

STUDENTS

Clear the hallways and remain in room or area until the "All Clear" is announced
Do business as usual

ADULTS

Close and lock the door
Account for students and adults
Do business as usual



SECURE! Get inside. Lock outside doors.

STUDENTS

Return to inside of building
Do business as usual

ADULTS

Bring everyone indoors
Lock outside doors
Increase situational awareness
Account for students and adults
Do business as usual



LOCKDOWN! Locks, lights, out of sight.

STUDENTS

Move away from sight
Maintain silence
Do not open the door

ADULTS

Recover students from hallway if possible
Lock the classroom door
Turn out the lights
Move away from sight
Maintain silence
Do not open the door
Prepare to evade or defend



EVACUATE! (A location may be specified)

STUDENTS

Leave stuff behind if required to
If possible, bring your phone
Follow instructions

ADULTS

Lead students to Evacuation location
Account for students and adults
Notify if missing, extra or injured students or adults



SHELTER! Hazard and safety strategy.

STUDENTS

Use appropriate safety strategy for the hazard

Hazard	Safety Strategy
Tornado	Evacuate to shelter area
Hazmat	Seal the room
Earthquake	Drop, cover and hold
Tsunami	Get to high ground

ADULTS

Lead safety strategy
Account for students and adults
Notify if missing, extra or injured students or adults

Flagler Schools Brand

Guidelines

Our Flagler Schools brand is what sets us apart from other organizations and groups within our community.

Our brand must be protected and preserved each time it is used. For that reason, by following the brand guidelines and using the logo correctly and consistently, YOU will help grow our brand's value, not only in our community but across our state.

The complete brand guidelines document can be found [here](#) and includes approved standards and specifications for the various visual elements of the Flagler County Public Schools brand identity system.

DISTRICT SIGNATURE

The district signature is the official logo for Flagler County Public Schools and is the main visual element in our identity system. The signature is available in both a horizontal and vertical configuration in order to accommodate multiple layout needs.



vertical signature



horizontal signature

DEPARTMENT SIGNATURE

Customized department signatures are created by inserting the department name under the district signature. Departments are **NOT** permitted to have customized logos not consistent with the Flagler Schools brand.

SCHOOL SIGNATURE

Customized school signatures using the FlaglerSchools brand are NOT REQUIRED to be used. Schools **MAY** use customized logos and brands. Just be consistent.

DISTRICT COLORS

FLAGLER
BLUE

Pantone: 647c
C 50 / M 16 / Y 0 / K 47
R 8 / G 93 / B 135
HEX: #085d87

FLAGLER
RED

Pantone: 7599c
C 0 / M 56 / Y 55 / K 30
R 179 / G 36 / B 39
HEX: #b32427

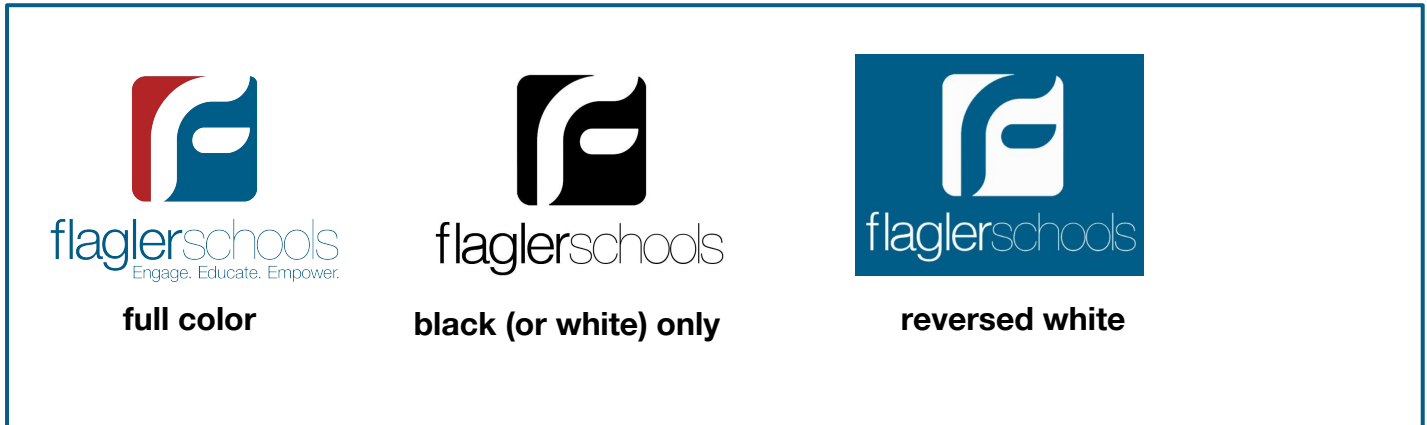
Flagler Schools Brand

Guidelines

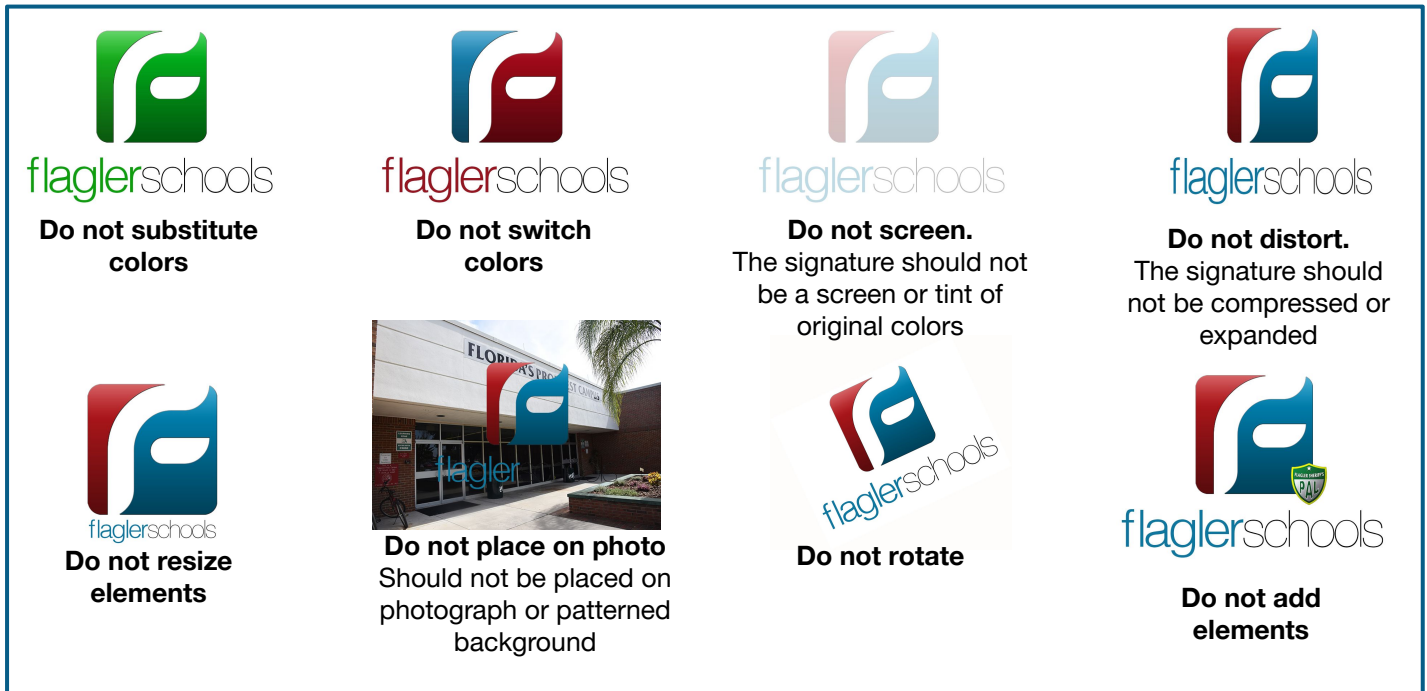
SOME THINGS TO REMEMBER...

- The school system is more accountable for spelling and grammatical errors than any other public agency. Have two people copy edit all important communication prior to sending.
- The name Flagler Schools should be used in communication unless specifically referencing the school board or the district's full legal name. If the former is necessary, use the official name for our district: The District School Board of Flagler County
- School Board Members and the Superintendent are listed on official district publications, space permitting.

ACCEPTABLE COLOR TREATMENTS



UNACCEPTABLE USES OF THE LOGO



Communications

Roadmap

Communicate Goals

Your communication goals are broad objectives you hope to achieve with your marketing plan. You'll outline the specific tools, actions, and strategies to help you achieve your goals.

Examples:

- Increase enrollment by 30 students
- Introduce three new programs in the upcoming school year
- Increase parent involvement by 10%

Unique Selling Points

Outline the best features of your school, or unique offerings of your school

Examples:

- Unique Flagship Program
- International Baccalaureate Programme, AICE
- STEM/STEAM programs

Key Messages

Messages crafted around your Unique Selling Points as well as any additional features

Example:

- Our partnerships with medical professionals offer unique learning opportunities with those who actually do the job.

Strategies

Highlight the strategies and tools you'll use to implement your plan.

Examples:

- School website
- Fact sheets
- Staff email
- Automated phone calls
- School newsletters
- Letters to parents
- Brochures
- Information packets
- Signs/posters
- School marquees

Communications

Roadmap

Target Audience

Here is where you will identify the key audiences you'd like to reach. Think internal and external

Examples:

- Current students
- Current parents
- Feeder school families
- Second language families
- Leadership team
- Principals
- Administrative assistants

Communication Activities Timeline

Include details about all the tasks and activities you will engage in to accomplish your goals. This should include the target date, target audience, person(s) responsible, and status of all your communication activities. If it looks like too much, split it up into phases.

Example:

Target Date	Target Audiences	Activity	Person/ Department Responsible	Status
Aug 15	Parents	Send home a welcome letter and brochure to all parents.	Secretary/ Principal	Complete
Sep 21	Staff	Send email update to all staff asking them to join our social network and add our Facebook and Twitter URLs to their email signatures.	Secretary/ Technology Teacher	In Progress
Jan 3	Prospective Parents	Create a video tour of our school's facilities for prospective parents and students.	Technology Teacher	Incomplete

EVENT CHECKLIST

SCHOOL: _____

EVENT: _____ EVENT DATE: _____

STAFF RESPONSIBLE: _____

3 WEEKS PRIOR TO EVENT

- Send flyer, letter, or email (multiple languages, if necessary)
- Post event information in news section of your school website
- Post event on Facebook, Twitter, and your school marquee
- Provide talking points to staff regarding event so they can talk it up with parents
- Ask your school's Tech Team and #tweetchers to share on Twitter and with their followers
- Change main hold message to include information about upcoming event.

2 WEEKS PRIOR TO EVENT

- Send email reminder (multiple languages, if necessary)
- Post social media reminders (consider including a video from the Principal inviting participation)
- Have event flyers available at front desk and have office staff talk up the event
- Hang event flyers/posters in high-traffic areas around school

1 WEEK PRIOR TO EVENT

- Send final email reminder (multiple languages, if necessary)
- Post social media reminders
- Send automated phone call to parents (multiple languages, if necessary)

DAY PRIOR TO EVENT

- Post final social media reminder
- Send final automated phone call to parents (multiple languages, if necessary)

DURING EVENT

- Provide social media coverage (Twitter and/or Facebook)

AFTER EVENT

- Send email with most important "takeaways" from the event - for those who missed it

EVALUATION

2022-2023 Event Participation Total: _____

2021-2022 Event Participation Total: _____

EVENT SIGN-IN

SCHOOL: _____ DATE: _____
EVENT: _____

Name	Parent/Staff/Student/ Community Member	Contact Email	How did you hear about this event/program?
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			
9.			
10.			
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flagler  forward
Engage. Educate. Empower.