

IST Communication Policy

Basic foundations

- Communication at IST is based on our [mission statement and beliefs](#), [school rules](#) and [values](#) including those attributes reflected in the IB Learner Profile.
- Before you say or act, please take into consideration the ethical fundamentals like:
“treat others the way you want to be treated” and
“what would the world be if everyone did that like me”.

Communication is a key component to the smooth running of an organisation whether it be a school or a company. The mindset driven by the principles as mentioned above will lead to the most rewarding results. It is essential that management, teachers, parents, staff, and students have a clear line of communication.

IST Code of Conduct

- Be warm-hearted, not egoistic, team player, notice other’s needs and find a balanced approach. Be oriented to teamwork and win-win situations.
- Any discussion on problems should be geared towards problem-solving and not to make the problem worse.
- Check before you react. Do not condemn, but rather, look at all the perspectives without giving evaluations. Miscommunication is usually the number one cause of conflict.
- Uphold the integrity of keeping organisational information sacred.
- Please do not discuss issues or people “in the public arena”. We are about building community, not destroying people and their reputations.
- If there is a problem, address the person who has the authority to solve the problem. Go to the staff member closest to the situation. Speak first to the most appropriate person, don’t go “over someone’s head” until you have spoken to them. Respect and identify the responsibility lines. Job descriptions are public and available. Everyone understands who does what. Do not intervene in other’ s competences. Avoid overstepping your boundary.
- A poorly worded or aggressive email can lead to a breakdown in communication, and neither parent nor the teacher wants this. Following email etiquette can enhance communication. The same goes for any other forms of communication.
- Be positive, courteous and diplomatic. Be calm and choose your words carefully. Don't write and send an email when you are angry. You can't take back an email message, and emails can be easily forwarded.
- Use only social media tools (either a public forum, an emailing list or a closed group) that are established and administered by the school for any online discussion on school matters.
- Use the communication tools as prescribed by the school (specified below in the annex).

Additionally to teachers:

- All parents need to receive positive information regarding their child on a regular basis.
- All correspondence with parents should be documented. Keep an electronic file on hand for each student in your homeroom.
- Do not discuss other students or teachers with parents. Be professionally mindful.
- Develop a positive relationship with parents. Try to gain their trust and let them know that you have their child's best interest in mind at all times.
- Always avoid the use of jargon. Use language that will make the parents feel comfortable and at ease. Keep it simple!

Additionally to parents:

- Don't wait for a parent-teacher interview. If you want to know how your child is doing, then make an appointment to see the teacher.
- Don't try to sort out a problem between your child and another at school by approaching a child or his/her parent – speak to your class teacher. No parent has the right to approach a child from another family about a school incident.
- Don't speak on behalf of others. Delegations and speaking for others often end up with the "others" not backing you up when the crunch comes. If you have a concern, please raise it with the most appropriate person. Supporting the school does not always mean agreeing with it, but using the communication channels and processes that respect all members of the community, will support us in community building and in what we are hoping to achieve. Gossip is usually wrong and never resolves issues.
- Open up your communication with the teacher with phrases such as "Can we talk about...?" or "I need to check ...". Avoid comments such as "You should have..." or "You must be mistaken." You may not have all the details you need to support those statements.
- Make polite requests, such as "Please could you send home the information about..." Avoid giving orders to the teacher by saying, "You have to..." or "You need to...". Be brief and stick to the point. Use kind words rather than fighting phrases. For example, "Please, could you..." and "Thank you for all you did," go a long way in building a good relationship.
- Don't forward someone else's email, including a teacher's, unless you have their permission.

Written communication

- Teachers send home a standard letter to each student's parents introducing themselves, highlighting your class, contact information, goals you have for the year, etc. The letter will be sent home the first day of school.
- All letters or notes to parents should be proofread before the note is sent home.
- Electronic communication (e-Kool, email correspondence) should be maintained/filed. A copy needs to be put in that student's electronic file.
- All written communication should be professional, courteous, and have contact information to get back in touch with the teacher.
- Make sure that all text/graphics are large enough to be seen or read.
- Be sure to run spell/grammar check on any electronic communications.
- When writing to more than one parent, make sure that you copy all the email addresses in Bcc to protect the email data of individual parents.
- Make sure that the subject of your email is very clear and consistent in all related follow-up emails: "Continuous late arrival of your child" If this is the subject chosen by the writer of the email, it should be followed through in all other electronic correspondence until the matter is resolved. Do not latch onto a new topic in the middle of the conversation.
- No member of staff or parent shall at any time forward any correspondence from the school to any person without the explicit written permission of the sender.
- You must log off your computer/mailbox every day before going home as part of Data Protection.
- The following disclaimer notice will be a part of all our correspondence via email - Disclaimer: This email and any attachments to it may be confidential and are intended solely for the use of the individual to whom it is addressed. If you are not the intended recipient of this email, you must neither take any action based upon its contents nor copy or show it to anyone. Please contact the sender if you believe you have received this email in error.

Phone

- Be polite and courteous. Be direct and mindful of the parent's time. If the parent is unable to talk to you at that time, politely ask when it would be a good time to call them again.
- Before you make the call, write down everything you need to communicate with that parent. Be organised with your thoughts.
- Keep a phone log of important calls. Record the date, time, and reason for calling that parent.

Parent-Teacher-Pupil Conference

- Dress professionally.
- Create a comfortable atmosphere. Don't place a desk between yourself and the parents. Use the same type of chair.
- Be prepared! Have your agenda ready. Have materials available that show the good and bad of the student.
- Always start the conference out with something positive.
- Be attentive and listen.
- Never talk about other students or teachers.
- End the conference with something positive.
- Let them know that you care about their child.
- If the situation becomes difficult, call the office for assistance immediately.
- Keep a conference journal. Record the date, time, reason, and key points discussed in the conference.

Treatment of pupils

- All students are to be treated fairly and with respect. If you expect them to respect you, then you have to respect them.
- You need to have an open-door policy with all of your students. Let them know that they can trust you. Allow them the opportunity to come in, talk to you, ask you questions, and voice their concerns and opinions.
- It is our job to provide students with optimal opportunities to learn. We need to create an atmosphere that fosters learning and enhances a student's ability to do such.
- All students regardless of race, colour, or gender should be given equal opportunities and fair treatment by their teachers, administrators, and peers.
- All students should be encouraged to ask questions, and all teachers need to provide as an accurate of a response as possible.
- All teachers should have every student's best interest in mind.

The Annex: **IST COMMUNICATION TOOLS**

General

	Homepage	Newsletters	E-mail list (Bcc)	FB Page	FB Group	Dojo (app)	Parent meetings / assemblies	School Board	PTA group (voluntary body)
	Available on time	Every unit: 6x in a year	When urgent	Whenever relevant	If relevant		In a year: meetings 2-3x, events 3-5x	3-4x in a year	Every trimester or unit
IB philosophy & values	Available	Webpage links	Informing				Explanation	Discussion	
School policies & rules	Available	Webpage links	Informing				Explanation	Discussion	
Strategic plans / decisions	Available	Webpage links	Informing				Explanation	Discussion	
Curriculum & study programs	Available	Webpage links	Informing				Explanation	Discussion	
Pedagogical issues (methods, assessment, etc.)	General		Informing on urgent issues				General discussion	Detailed discussion	
Administrative information	General	More detailed	Informing				Explanation	Discussion	
School budget			Broad overview				Broad overview	Discussion	
Tuition fees/scholarships	Available						Overview	Discussion	
Introducing staff	Available	(Webpage links)	Informing	Resumes			Presentation	Discussion	
School events/projects	News, gallery	Calendar	Calendar	Posts	Sharing	Sharing	Implementation		Organizing
Class events/projects	News, gallery			Posts	Sharing	Sharing, gallery	Exhibiting		Organizing
School news	Press releases	Webpage link to news	Informing	Website link					
Involving parents					Sharing	Informing	Discussion	Representatives	Events, trips, learning, support
Feedback/satisfaction survey		Informing	Survey, results				Results	Survey, results	
Relevant issues (other services, quality, money etc.)			Informing on urgent issues				General discussion/	Detailed discussion	

Individual

	(Diary)	e-Kool	Study reports (trimester, final)	E-mail (or call)	Dojo	Portfolio	Conferences*	Assemblies	Individual meeting
	(Every day)	Every day	Every trimester	When urgent			Every trimester		If necessary
Pupil's progress		Formative	Short description			Works	Reflection, goal setting		As appropriate
Pupil's achievements		Summative	Short description			Works	Reflection, goal setting	Exhibition	Discussion if needed
Absences/late arrivals		To/from parent	Summary	From parent			Discussion, agreements		As appropriate
Grading/evaluation	(Short)	Detailed	Final marks/ conclusions			Project	Discussion, feedback		Discussion (e.g. differentiation)
Behavior, personality	(Short)	Detailed	Transdisciplinary skills, attitudes	If urgent		Essays, reflection	Self-evaluation on the IB Learner Profile, feedback	Appraisals	If needed (problem-solving)
Lesson descriptions		Content, methods, activities, resources			Gallery				If questions
Homework	(Reminder, Feedback)	Reminder, feedback, assessment							Discussion if needed
School rules				Introduction, reminder				Informing	If urgent (problem-solving)
Administrative information				Urgent notice				Informing	Discussion if needed
Pedagogical issues				If appropriate					Discussion if needed
Class/school events Field trips	(First notice)			Urgent notice	Feedback, gallery			Performance, presentations	Participation
Money issues, fees				As appropriate					As appropriate
Sensitive, delicate or personal matters				As appropriate					As appropriate If needed

*Parent, teacher and pupil involved