COMMUNICATION POLICY

BASIC FOUNDATION

- 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 GENERAL CODE OF CONDUCT

- Be a warm-hearted, not egoistic, team player, notice others' needs, and find a balanced approach. Be oriented toward teamwork and win-win situations.
- Any discussion of problems should be geared towards problem-solving rather than making 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 reputation.
- 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 others's competences. Avoid overstepping your boundaries.
- 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 (specified below in the appendix).

IST TEACHER CODE OF CONDUCT

- All parents need to receive positive information regarding their child on a regular basis.
- All correspondence with parents should be preserved.
- 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!

IST PARENT CODE OF CONDUCT

- Don't wait for a parent-teacher conference. If you want to know how your child is doing, then contact the teacher directly.
- 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. This supports community building and in what we are hoping to achieve. Gossip is usually incorrect, and never resolves issues.
- Use positive communication:
  - 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.

TEACHER-PARENT COMMUNICATION

- All official communications between teachers and parents are to be carried out via one of the approved communication channels (email or Learning Management System such as Toddle). Communication via other channels (WhatsApp, social media outlets, etc.) are strongly discouraged.
- Absent notice: Parents should write a note in Toddle along with the reason for their child being absent.

WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

- Teachers send home a standard letter to each student's parents introducing themselves, providing contact information, naming goals for the year, etc. The letter will be sent home the first day of school or during Meet the Teacher Night.
- All letters, notes, or electronic communication should be proofread for spelling and grammar accuracy before the information is sent.
- Electronic communication (Toddle, email correspondence) should be preserved.
- All written communication should be professional, and courteous.
- Make sure that all text/graphics are large enough to be seen or read.
- When writing to more than one parent, make sure that all the email addresses are in Bcc to protect the email data of individual parents.
- Make sure that the subject of emails 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.
- No member of staff or parent should at any time forward any correspondence from the school to any person without the explicit written permission of the sender.
- 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.

PARENT-TEACHER-STUDENT CONFERENCE

- Conferences will be held 3 times per year as outlined on the school calendar. Scheduling information will be provided by teachers with adequate notice.
- Keep a conference journal. Record the date, time, reason, and key points discussed in the conference.

GENERAL EMAIL/MESSAGING ETIQUETTE FOR IST STAFF

- Include a subject line, with the topic of the message
- Use an IST approved signature including disclaimer
- Use spell check to write emails.
- Group messages are to be sent without recipient addresses being visible/accessible, send it as BCC
- In sensitive situations consider an alternative method of communication (phone calls, personal meeting) etc.
- Proofread your message before sending to check for appropriate tone. Electronic messages lack the verbal or facial cues of other communication tools.
- If a message needs to be replied to, then reply within three days.

Golden rule: be polite and authentic!

The Appendix: **IST COMMUNICATION TOOLS**

General Communication

TOOLS/PLATFORMS	Homepage	Newsletters	E-mail list (Bcc)	Parent meetings	School Board	PTA group
FREQUENCY	Available on time	Every unit: 6x in a year	When urgent	Meetings 2-3x	3-4x in a year	Every quarter 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	Presentation	Discussion	
School events/projects	News, gallery	Calendar	Calendar	Implementation		Organizing
Class events/projects	News, gallery			Exhibiting		Organizing
School news	Press releases	Webpage link	Informing			
Involving parents				Discussion	Representatives	Events, trips, learning support
Feedback/satisfaction survey		Informing	Survey, results	Results	Survey, results	
Relevant issues services, quality, money etc.)			Informing on urgent issues	General discussion/	Detailed discussion	

Individual communication

TOOLS/PLATFORM	(Diary)	LMS (Toddle)	Study reports (midterm, semester)	E-mail	Conferences	Assemblies	Individual meeting
FREQUENCY	(Every day)	Every day	Every semester	When urgent	3x per year		If necessary
Pupil´s progress		Formative	Description		Reflection, goal setting		As appropriate
Pupil´s achievements		Summative	Short description		Reflection, goal setting	Exhibition	Discussion if needed
Absences/late arrivals		To/from parent	Summary	From parent	Discussion, agreements		As appropriate
Grading/evaluation		Detailed	Final marks/ conclusions		Discussion, feedback		Discussion (e.g. differentiation)
Behavior, personality		Detailed	Transdisciplinary skills, attitudes	If needed	Self-evaluation on the IB Learner Profile, feedback	Appraisals	If needed (problem-solving)
Lesson descriptions		Content, methods, activities, resources					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		Performance, presentations	Participation
Money issues, fees				As appropriate			As appropriate
Sensitive, delicate or personal matters				As appropriate			As appropriate If needed