

# Isabella Plains Early Childhood School

## Communication Guidelines

**GUIDELINE TITLE:** IPECS Communication Guidelines  
**YEAR OF PUBLICATION:** March 2017  
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The Isabella Plains Early Childhood School (IPECS) Communication Guidelines cover the full range of communication methods/avenues that the school employs to engage with the school and wider community. All school based staff operate under the ACT Public Service Code of Conduct. In addition to this, all teachers operate under the ACT Teacher’s Code of Professional Practice and the National Professional Standards for Teachers (Standard 7).

Our communication methods are selected to meet the diverse needs of our school community, and are reflective of the technological world in which we live. As a 5 star accredited sustainable school, we embrace digital communication methods to reduce our carbon footprint. Parents who do not use email or have a smartphone are provided with hard copies of all communication upon request.

### General Communication Guidelines (As outlined in the legislation)

Communication Goal	Protocol guidelines
Effective communication	Communication aims to be: Open and honest Polite, courteous and professional Respectful, treating colleagues and others with decency Empathetic and thoughtful, allowing others to explain action and thought processes.
Be Accountable	Staff will: Take responsibility for and consider the consequences of decisions and actions Use information appropriately and respect the different capacities in which they deal with individuals Promote an environment that is accepting of diversity, and is free from intimidation, threat, humiliation and harassment Use all electronic communication systems including social media in accordance with government and departmental policies.
Be Constructive and Professional	Staff will: Take steps to resolve problems.
Take our Job Seriously	Staff will: Act professionally and recognise the trust placed in us as public servants.
Give and receive information and advice without fear:	Staff will: Share information appropriately. Store information in accordance with government and departmental policies
Problems with	If staff members require support with communication, issues should be referred to the principal and/or the REDCO (Respect, Equity and Diversity Contact Officer)

communication

in the school.

## School and Community Communication Protocols

Communication type	Protocol guidelines	Timeframes
Records of Communication	Records of communication between staff and parents/carers are dated and transcribed and retained for the calendar year.	Ongoing
Face to face meetings	<p>Formal opportunities are provided throughout the year for parents/carers to meet with teachers (Appendix A).</p> <p>Staff members may contact parents at any time throughout the year if they wish to make an appointment for an interview. The school values informal communication and the benefits to establishing a positive relationship with families.</p> <p>Parents/carers may ring the school office for an appointment time or to catch the teacher (either personally or via letter or email) or engage in a doorstep discussion at any time throughout the year. An unplanned 'doorstop' interview at drop off or pick up will be short in nature as teachers have meetings after school.</p>	<p>Formal meetings as outlined in the Overview of Reporting/Information Schedule (refer below)</p> <p>As required</p> <p>Staff members will endeavour to set an appointment time within 3 days of receiving a request.</p>
Emails	<p>Emails to teachers are to be directed to a teacher's individual Education and Training Directorate email addresses. All email addresses take the format of <a href="mailto:firstname.surname@ed.act.edu.au">firstname.surname@ed.act.edu.au</a></p> <p>The IPECS administrative address is <a href="mailto:info@ipecs.act.edu.au">info@ipecs.act.edu.au</a></p>	The school administration and teachers will endeavour to respond to emails within 3-5 working days of receipt.
Phone calls	<p>All phone calls to the school are received by Reception. The office staff will notify the teacher in writing of the call. Teachers are not available to return calls during class time.</p> <p>Teachers may carry mobile phones to be used for phone calls in emergencies or to take photos to document learning. Photos taken using phones are downloaded and stored appropriately on school based systems.</p> <p>Teachers may not provide their personal phone number to parents/carers.</p>	Staff members will endeavour to return calls within 3 days of receiving a request.

Social Media	<p>IPECS uses social media to share real time documentation of children’s learning, school events and celebrations. Content published to Facebook is also published on the IPECS Twitter feed.</p> <p>IPECS staff do not engage in conversation over social media. All queries, comments or questions that parents would like a response to are requested to be sent through to the <a href="mailto:info@ipecs.act.edu.au">info@ipecs.act.edu.au</a> email address.</p>	IPECS endeavour to post each day. School events are also communicated through the facebook page and parents/carers can indicate their attendance through this avenue.
School notes	School notes are sent via school stream or direct email to parents. Parent/carers can make a request to the front office to receive notes in hardcopy if they do not have access to email or a smartphone.	We endeavour to send any note requiring financial contribution from parent/carers home with a minimum of a two week turn around.
Newsletter - IPECS Informer	The IPECS Informer is published three times a term and is distributed to families via email and schoolstream. It is also available on the school website. Parent/carers can make a request to the front office to receive the newsletter in hardcopy if they do not have access to email or a smartphone.	Published three times a term
Website	<p>The School Website holds much of the information families need to keep up to date with the school. We post notes and newsletters on the website as well as information about the school and special activities and events. The website is updated regularly with notes and events and fortnightly with the newsletter and associated community items.</p> <p><a href="http://www.ipecs.act.edu.au">www.ipecs.act.edu.au</a></p>	Ongoing
School sign	The School Sign is updated each week to promote school events. There are two notice boards at each entrance gate that will also be used for the promotion of upcoming events.	School Sign updated weekly Notice boards on entrance gates updated as needed
Reporting incidents and concerns	<p>Many concerns are resolved quickly and easily by discussing the matter directly with the school. Families are welcome to talk through concerns at any time with their child’s class teacher, the team leader or the school’s executive team. If you continue to be concerned please make an appointment to speak to the principal.</p> <p>Parents are always welcome to make an appointment to discuss any concerns with the school principal. Appointments can be made by contacting the school office on 61423777.</p> <p>Families may also contact a parent representative on the School Board to discuss matters concerning school governance.</p> <p>Further assistance is provided through the ACT Education Directorate, Liaison Unit on 62055429 or Email <a href="mailto:DET.CommunityLiaison@act.gov.au">DET.CommunityLiaison@act.gov.au</a></p>	<p>As required</p> <p>Appointments can be made to discuss concerns. In the first instance, please contact the classroom teacher. If you require further support you are encouraged to contact a member of the leadership team.</p>
Class connect network	Each class has a parent class connect volunteer. The primary role of the class connector is to facilitate a class network. The class connector will organise and	Ongoing

	invite families to events throughout the year to build the sense of community within the class and across the school.	
Schoolstream	Schoolstream is the school's primary form of communication with families. Teachers will use schoolstream to send reminders, communication letters and notes to families. School events and newsletters will also be sent out via schoolstream. Parents are able to update their contact details and submit absentee notes via the app.	Ongoing
Communication Book	For students who have identified communication issues, teachers will establish regular communication with families. This may be in the form of a communication book or email. This communication is adjusted to suit the age and needs of the student and is used to communicate messages as well as outline what has happened with learning experiences to allow a parent to talk with a child about their school experience.	As negotiated between staff and family
Celebrations	Class teachers select children who have been demonstrating success, achievement, persistence or effort in class to receive awards at the school gathering. Families are notified prior to the gathering and invited to attend.	Three times a term. Staff endeavour to provide families with up to 2 days warning when their child is receiving an award to enable them to attend the school gathering where possible.
GEMS (Genuine Engagement & Mutual Support) Parent and Citizens Group & Board Meetings	GEMS and the school board meet regularly to discuss school updates on the AAP and strategic plan as well as plan and run informal events and happenings around the school. GEMS may be requested to assist with school events throughout the year. All families are members of GEMS and nominated parents and teachers are members of the school board.	GEMS twice a term School Board 1 per term
Wednesday Community Breakfast	The Wednesday Breakfasts provide an informal opportunity for the exchange of information and to network with other parents. They are hosted by the IPECS staff and a member of the leadership team is regularly in attendance. Breakfast is held in the school hall every Wednesday beginning Week 3 Term 1. All parents, carers, grandparents, volunteers and young siblings (toys available) are most welcome. There are special celebration breakfasts held throughout the year for Mother's Day, Father's Day and Children's Week.	Breakfast is held in the school hall every Wednesday beginning Week 3 Term 1
Open letter about your child	At the beginning of the year parent/carers are invited to write a letter or complete an information overview to be provided to the classroom teacher. This letter provides information about children's individual personality, their family context character traits and anything that the parent would like the teacher to know about their child.	Term 1

## Communicating about learning protocols

Information Sessions	<p>At the start of each year, the school runs an out of school hours information session about the curriculum and learning programs of the school. This is a chance for families to meet their child's teacher/s, to look at the classrooms and meet members of the executive team.</p> <p>Parent workshops and information sessions are delivered throughout the year to support parents to assist their child's literacy and numeracy development at home.</p>	<p>Term 1</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
Parent Teacher formal interviews	<p>Parents are welcome to meet with teachers at anytime to discuss their child's progress. Twice a year formal interviews are offered to families to discuss academic progress and social and emotional development. Teachers will contact families at other times if they would like to discuss any concerns they have about children's progress.</p>	<p>Term 1 and 4</p>
School Gatherings	<p>School gatherings are held two to three times per term. Each year level (preschool to year 2) and specialist area take turns to host the gathering and decide the content. Gatherings are a celebration of learning that has occurred and a chance for the whole school to come together. Achievement awards are presented to children birth to 8.</p>	<p>2 - 3 times per term</p>
Seesaw	<p>Seesaw is a digital communication app that provides families with a real time window into their child's learning while at school. Children and staff document learning and share this with families through the seesaw app. Parent/carers are provided with a class code to gain access to their child's seesaw account.</p>	<p>K-2 staff endeavour to share 1 sample of whole class learning per week. K-2 staff endeavour to share 1 sample of learning for each child in their class each week. Preschool staff endeavour to share 1 sample of whole class learning per week and 1 sample of learning for each child per fortnight</p>
Learning Journals	<p>Learning journals are used to document each child's individual learning journey over the course of the school year. The learning stories included represent the individual child and their learning and growth in a range of curriculum areas including indoor and outdoor play.</p>	<p>The learning journal is on display in the classroom every day and is taken home at the end of the school year.</p> <p>In 2018 we will be phasing out the learning journal in place of a digital portfolio option offered through Seesaw.</p>

Semester Overviews	Each semester staff write an overview outlining the learning that will be occurring and any class specific information such as class routines, days for specialist programs and any special events coming up.	Semester 1 and Semester 2 (commencing Semester 2, 2017)
Open Classrooms	Open classrooms provide the opportunity for parents to see their child's learning in action. Children lead their families through their learning environment, share quality work and engage them in indoor and outdoor learning experiences.	After each School Gathering

## Appendix A - Reporting and Information Schedule

Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invitations sent home early in the term for parents to write to their class teacher/s about their child (an alternative proforma is available if required) parents bring this to the getting to know you interviews during week 3 NB: For Preschool this occurs at the end of the previous school year in conjunction with parent/teacher interviews</li> <li>• Welcome BBQ and Information session (week 2)</li> <li>• PIPS assessment Kindergarten (reports sent home to parents when they arrive –usually late in the term)</li> <li>• Individual Learning Plan (ILP) Meetings between parents and Teachers.</li> <li>• PLPs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students drafted</li> <li>• SCANs* for Kindergarten students with enrolled in the Integration Support program (ISP)</li> <li>• In class assessments including PM benchmark, SENA, writing scale, BEE spelling inventory</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ILPs reviewed. Progress report for semester 1 sent home</li> <li>• Written Report, A-E Report (1-2)</li> <li>• Learning Goals shared with families</li> <li>• Mid-year parent teacher interviews (wk 10)</li> <li>• In class assessments including PM benchmark, SENA, writing scale, BEE spelling inventory</li> <li>•Gowrie Writing Tool moderation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adjustments to ILPs as required</li> <li>• In class assessments including PM benchmark, SENA, writing scale, BEE spelling inventory</li> <li>• School Satisfaction Survey for parents and staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PIPS assessment Kinder</li> <li>• PIPS report sent home to Kinder parents (late term)</li> <li>• ILPs reviewed</li> <li>• Transition meetings as required</li> <li>• Written Report, A-E Report (1-2)</li> <li>• Optional parent teacher interviews (wk 10)</li> <li>• Preschool interviews for enrolling preschool students Conducted</li> <li>• In class assessments including PM benchmark, SENA, writing scale, BEE spelling inventory</li> </ul>

Alphabet Checklist for kinder			
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\*SCAN - Student Centred Appraisal of Need

\*PIPS - Performance Indicators in Primary School- at start and end of Kindergarten year

\*PLP- Personal Learning Plan