

## Communication Guidelines

GUIDELINE TITLE: IPECS Communication Guidelines  
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The Isabella Plains Early Childhood School (IPECS) Communication Guidelines aim to provide clear guidance on the range of different methods the school uses to engage with the school and the wider community. All school based staff operate under the *ACT Public Service Code of Conduct*, the *ACT Code of Conduct for Teachers, School Leaders and Principals* and the *ACT Code of Conduct for School Based Staff*. Further, *The Working Together with You School – A Code of Conduct to promote respectful interaction on ACT Education Premises* outlines the expectations and responsibilities of parents and carers. 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. At IPECS, we embrace digital communication methods to reduce our carbon footprint. Parents and carers can request hard copies of most communication via the school front office.

### General Communication Guidelines - Staff

Principle	Protocol guidelines
Works efficiently, effectively and constructively	<p>Staff will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- act in a manner which promotes confidence in the integrity of the public service and the profession</li><li>- engage in reflective practice and develop their professional knowledge and skills</li><li>- provide constructive feedback to colleagues that is considered and helpful</li><li>- work cooperatively and collaboratively with others to achieve school and system goals</li><li>- act professionally and honestly at all times</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- use all electronic communication systems in accordance with Government and Directorate policies.</li> </ul>
Responsive, collaborative and accountable	<p>Staff will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- value diversity and respecting cultural, ethnic and religious differences</li> <li>- value and acknowledge the contributions made by others in meeting school and Directorate goals</li> <li>- act as positive role models</li> <li>- be open and accepting of differing views and perspectives that may better achieve Directorate and school goals</li> <li>- engage in participatory decision making through genuine consultation</li> <li>- promote equity and diversity in the workplace</li> <li>- observe confidentiality in a manner consistent with legal requirements, the interests of students and the wider public interest</li> <li>- refrain from making unauthorised public comments where the comment may be perceived as official comment</li> </ul>
Makes fair and reasonable decisions	<p>Staff will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- treat students and colleagues with courtesy and sensitivity to their rights, duties and aspirations</li> <li>- observe confidentiality in a manner consistent with legal requirements, the interests of students and the wider public interest</li> <li>- refrain from making unauthorised public comments where the comment may be perceived as official comment</li> <li>- avoid conflicts between their private interests and professional responsibilities</li> <li>- act with impartiality</li> <li>- promote an environment that is accepting of and tolerant of diversity, and is free from intimidation, threat, humiliation and harassment</li> <li>- observe procedural fairness in their decision-making processes</li> </ul>

## General Communication Guidelines – Parents and Carers

Parents and carers and community members are expected to work positively in partnership with the school to:

- Communicate information that may have impact on children's learning and personal and social capabilities
- Contribute positively to the development of personalised support plans that relate to their child's learning and personal and social capabilities
- Support the well-being and conduct of their child
- Support staff in maintaining a safe, secure and respectful learning environment for all students
- Respect and comply with reasonable requests or directions of the principal or other members of staff
- Agree to abide by the requirements for access and acceptable use of information communication technology in relation to 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	Formal opportunities are provided throughout the year for parents/carers to meet with teachers (Appendix A).  The school values informal communication and the benefits to establishing a positive relationship with families. Staff members may	Formal meetings as outlined in the Overview of Reporting/Information Schedule (refer below)  As required

	<p>contact parents/carers at any time throughout the year if they wish to make an appointment for an interview.</p> <p>Parents/carers may ring the school office or email a staff member to request an appointment time at any time throughout the year.</p> <p>While unplanned, impromptu conversations at drop off or pick up are welcomed, these should be short in nature as to not disrupt teaching and learning time or interfere with school staff meeting schedules.</p>	<p>Staff members will endeavour to set an appointment time within three days of receiving a request.</p>
<p>Emails, phone calls and text messages</p>	<p>Emails, phone calls and text messages are all useful communication tools between home and school. IPECS staff will only contact families on working days (full time and part time staff included).</p> <p>Emails to staff members are to be directed to the staff members Education 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>. The IPECS administrative address is <a href="mailto:info@ipecs.act.edu.au">info@ipecs.act.edu.au</a>.</p> <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>Text messages and emails are frequently sent out to remind families of upcoming events or to share timely information. These messages will</p>	<p>School staff will endeavour to respond to emails within two days of receipt.</p> <p>Staff members will endeavour to return calls within one day of receiving a request</p> <p>As required</p>

	<p>always begin with “Dear IPECS Families...”. To reduce our environmental footprint, most notes (including permission notes for excursions, term overviews etc) will be sent by email as attachments. To protect privacy, all emails that are sent to groups of parents/carers will use the bcc functionality.</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 and deleted from personal devices.</p> <p>School staff may not provide their personal phone number to parents/carers.</p>	
Social Media	<p>IPECS uses social media to share and celebrate events and happenings across our school. School events are also communicated through the Facebook page and parents/carers can indicate their attendance through this avenue.</p> <p>We will respond to any direct messages sent via Facebook Messenger.</p>	<p>We endeavour to post updates frequently.</p> <p>We will respond to direct messages sent via Facebook messenger within 24 hours</p>
School notes	<p>Information notes that do not require a return response will be sent home electronically via email. Parent/carers can make a request to the front office to receive notes in hardcopy if you would prefer to have hard copies</p>	<p>We endeavour to send any note requiring financial contribution from parent/carers home with a minimum of a two week turn around.</p>

	Notes that require a response, such as a permission slip for an excursion, will be sent as a hardcopy.	
Absences	<p>Rolls are marked daily and submitted at 9.15am. There are several options available to notify the school of reasons for absences:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Reply to the SMS notification explaining the absence.</li> <li>2. Send an email to <a href="mailto:info@ipecs.act.edu.au">info@ipecs.act.edu.au</a></li> <li>3. Call the school front office on 6142 3777</li> </ol>	As soon as possible when a child is absent from school
Newsletter - IPECS Informer	The IPECS Informer is published three times a term and is distributed to families via email, text message and posted on our Facebook Page. The link to the newsletter is also available on our school website.	Published three times a term
Community Calendar	At the beginning of each term, a Community Calendar is distributed to all families by email. The calendar includes all planned key events that have been scheduled for the term. Additional events may be communicated by the school at any time.	Each term
Website <a href="http://www.ipecs.act.edu.au">www.ipecs.act.edu.au</a>	The school website contains useful information regarding our school, our community, our curriculum as well as a section with a range of resources to support parents and carers. Our School Plan, Annual School Board Report and Impact Reports are also available on our website. 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	Ongoing

	community items.	
Noticeboard	The noticeboard is updated regularly to promote school events. The noticeboard is located at the main entrance to the school.	As required
Complaints, feedback and enquiries	<p>We welcome any feedback about our school and services and encourage you to reach out to us at any time.</p> <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/carers 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 6205 5429 or <a href="https://www.accesscanberra.act.gov.au/s/feedback-and-complaints">https://www.accesscanberra.act.gov.au/s/feedback-and-complaints</a></p>	As required

Class Connector	Each class at Isabella Plains Early Childhood School has a Class Connector who is a family member liaising with families to form an informal parent network for that class. The Class Connector helps to build an inclusive community through contact with other families in the class by communicating events. Families that are part of the parent network will receive notices and invitations to events happening in their child's class community.	Ongoing
PRIDE Awards	PRIDE awards are given to children at our whole school gatherings. Children may receive an award related to the school values. 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' notice when their child is receiving an award to enable them to attend the school gathering where possible.
School Board and IPECS GEMS P&C	The School Board and GEMS P&C meet regularly to discuss school updates on the strategic priorities and plan and run informal events and happenings around the school. The School Board meetings focus on governance of the school. The 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 meet twice per term (minimum)  The School Board meets once per term (minimum)
Breakfast Club	Breakfast Club provides an informal opportunity for connecting with IPECS families over a healthy breakfast. Breakfast Club is hosted by IPECS and GEMS P&C and a member of the leadership team is regularly in attendance. All parents, carers, grandparents, volunteers and young	Breakfast is held in the Family Room every Tuesday and Thursday beginning week two of each term.



	siblings (toys available) are most welcome. There are special celebration breakfasts held throughout the year for Mother's Day, Father's Day, Children's Week and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Breakfasts.	
Class Placement Letter	Before the start of the school year, a letter will be sent to each child introducing them to their classroom teacher. This letter will be sent by post and be addressed to the child. The teacher will introduce themselves to the children and let them know what to expect on their first day of school. The letter will also include some important dates for the start of the school year	Before the beginning of the school year

### Communicating about learning protocols

Welcome BBQ	At the beginning of each school year, the staff host a Welcome BBQ, usually in the first week of the term. This is an informal opportunity to chat with staff and other families.	Term 1
Getting to Know You Yarns	Getting to Know You Yarns provide the opportunity for parents/carers to meet with educators to share any relevant information about children. Yarns will be held in week two and three of term one for all preschool to year two children.	Weeks 2-3, Term 1

Child Led Yarns	The purpose of Child Led Yarns is for children to share their learning with their families and set learning goals for Semester Two. Yarns are scheduled during weeks two and three of term three.	Weeks 2-3, Term 3
Whole School Gatherings	Whole 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. PRIDE awards are presented at Whole Gatherings	Three times per term
Seesaw	<p>Seesaw is a digital learning app that provides two way communication between school and families. Children and staff document learning and share this with families through the Seesaw app. This includes videos and photos of individual, small and whole group learning experiences, providing a real time window into children's learning at school.</p> <p>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 one sample of whole class learning per week.</p> <p>K-2 staff endeavour to share one sample of learning for each child in their class each week.</p> <p>Preschool staff endeavour to share one sample of whole class learning per week and one sample of learning for each child per fortnight</p>
Term Overviews	Each term teachers will 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.	Week 2 of each term

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.	Open classrooms dates and times will be advertised across the year
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## Appendix A - Reporting and Information Schedule

Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Welcome BBQ (Week 1)</li> <li>- Getting to Know You Yarns</li> <li>- Term Overview</li> <li>- Kindergarten BASE assessment</li> <li>- Individual Learning Plan (ILP) and Personalised Learning Plan (PLP) meetings</li> <li>- Transition to Year 2 Information Session</li> <li>- Preschool Information Session</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Semester One Report (Preschool to Year 2) including A-E report for Years 1 and 2</li> <li>- Term Overview</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Child Led Yarns</li> <li>- Individual Learning Plan (ILP) and Personalised Learning Plan (PLP) meetings</li> <li>- Term Overview</li> <li>- School Satisfaction Survey for parents/carers and staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Semester Two Report (Preschool to Year 2) including A-E report for Years 1 and 2</li> <li>- Term Overview</li> <li>- Kindergarten BASE assessment</li> <li>- Individual Learning Plan (ILP) and Personalised Learning Plan (PLP) meetings</li> <li>- Transition meetings as required.</li> <li>- Preschool interviews for enrolling preschool students</li> <li>- Preschool "Stay and Play" sessions</li> </ul>