



International School of Kenya

Empowering students to create solutions for tomorrow's challenges.



Communications Plan

2014-2017

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ISK Communications Plan 2014-2017

Overview

The International School of Kenya (ISK) is committed to clear, meaningful and timely communications. ISK values the relationships between its stakeholders and believes that these relationships are stronger when built on a solid foundation of effective communication.

The ISK Communications Plan reinforces the school's mission and vision. It is a working document designed to guide the school's internal and external communications in support of ISK's strategic goals and is reviewed periodically to help ensure its relevancy and effectiveness. This plan was developed in part by information gained from an ISK Communications Audit Survey conducted in November 2013 and the collaborative efforts of the ISK Communications Working Group that consisted of parents, administrators, faculty and members of the Board of Directors.

Statement of Purpose

This Communications Plan will help ISK achieve its strategic goals by ensuring that school communications support our strategic goals and build stronger relationships between all constituencies.

Communication

Goals

The following goals of the ISK Communications Plan will guide our efforts to strengthen ISK's relations with all constituencies and build on our brand identity.

1. Utilize a variety of media to reach and communicate with diverse audiences both within Kenya and internationally to support ISK's mission and vision and ensure public awareness of ISK's accomplishments locally and internationally
2. Celebrate ISK's events, activities and accomplishments with parents, students, faculty, staff, board members and alumni through stories, photographs and videos published in *The Link*
3. Build positive relationships among parents, teachers, administrators, Board of Directors/ Governors, students, staff and external clients
4. Ensure that the information on the ISK website is accurate, up-to-date, user friendly and that it clearly communicates and supports ISK's mission and vision
5. Ensure that emergency communication with the ISK community is timely, accurate and reasoned
6. Utilize Social Media to create and build relationships with the ISK community with an emphasis on ISK Alumni
7. Reinforce the importance of email diligence, accuracy, and etiquette among all constituencies
8. Ensure that the admissions process, procedures and communication with prospective families is proactive, timely and informative

Periodic evaluation of the ISK Communications Plan will help us measure its effectiveness and allow for making necessary changes in a timely manner. The measurement tools used are:

- Surveys: New and current parents, staff, and alumni
- Website: Hits and analytic reports on all sections
- Press coverage reports
- Person-to-person via scheduled meetings: PTO, Faculty & Staff, Students, Board of Directors

Audiences & Results

ISK communications, whether internal and external, should be clear and communicate the intended thoughts, ideas or facts and which support the school's mission and vision. Once received, the communication should elicit the following behaviors and attitudes.

Internal

- Pride in ISK
- Desire to further the school's mission and vision
- Clarity of the information or issues

External

- Desire to know more about ISK
- Clarity of ISK's mission and vision
- Positive impression of ISK

Internal Audiences

- Faculty
- Staff
- Administrators
- Board of Governors
- Board of Directors
- Parents
- Students

External Audiences

- Students (Prospective)
- Parents (Prospective)
- Faculty (Prospective)
- Alumni
- Government Officials
- Foreign & Local Companies
- NGO & Development Organizations
- Other International Schools
- Embassies
- United Nations
- Press/Media
- Suppliers
- US Department of State (OOS)
- US Embassy
- Canadian External Affairs Department
- Canadian High Commission

Channels of Communications

There is a wide variety of communication channels utilized by ISK to reach and communicate with its internal and external constituencies. While these communication vehicles may change over time, e.g. with the advent of new technology, ISK currently communicates using the following:

Print

- Annual Report
- Parent Calendar
- Staff Calendar
- Parent Directory
- Admissions Application
- Faculty Handbooks
- Student/Parent Handbooks
- School Profile
- Kwaherini Book
- Homework Planners
- IB Brochure
- ISK Brochure
- Recruitment Brochure

Media

- The International Educator
- Newslinks
- Magazines
- Newspapers
- Radio
- TV

Electronic

- Email
- The Link
- Website
- Facebook
- Twitter
- LinkedIn
- Student/Parent Handbooks
- Faculty Handbooks
- Annual Report
- Admissions Application
- Admin. Bulletins to Staff
- Alumni Newsletter

Face-To-Face

- PTO Meetings
- Parent/Teacher Conferences
- Principals' Parent Teas
- Director's Parent Advisory
- Faculty, Staff & Dept. Meetings
- Faculty Council
- Board of Directors' Meetings
- Round Table
- Annual General Meeting
- Annual Financial Forum

Strategic Focus

ISK's Strategic Plan guides the goals and strategies of this Communications Plan.

KRA 5: ISK's Development programs will deliver sustainable engagement programs that grow our relationships with key communities and stakeholder groups.

COMMUNICATIONS GOAL

Utilize a variety of media to reach and communicate with a wide audience both within Kenya and internationally to support ISK's mission, vision and aims to ensure public awareness of ISK's accomplishments locally and internationally.

STRATEGIES:

- Invite members of the press to ISK for selected events to build press relations and communicate the school's mission and vision
- Create fact sheets and send press releases to media that announce student achievements and activities and ensure consistent messaging of ISK's mission & vision
- Create awareness of ISK among Kenyan families by selected advertising in local media
- Create awareness of ISK among expatriate families and potential faculty & staff with selected advertising in international print and online publications
- Ensure that the information on the ISK website is accurate, up-to-date and user friendly and that it clearly communicates and supports ISK's mission and vision

COMMUNICATIONS GOAL

Celebrate ISK's events, activities and accomplishments with parents, students, faculty, staff, board members and alumni through stories, photographs and videos published in **The Link**.

STRATEGIES:

- Maximize the communication potential of The Link by focusing on content that celebrates student achievements and activities for the month, providing a calendar of events for the coming month, and improving the delivery mechanism
- Ensure that Alumni have access to The Link through the password protected area of the website and communicate this via email, Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn, etc.

COMMUNICATIONS
GOAL

Build positive relationships and communications among parents, teachers, administrators, Board of Directors/Governors, students and staff.

STRATEGIES:

- Participation by administrators, Board members, staff and faculty, where possible and appropriate, at PTO meetings, new parent coffees, Principal teas, Director advisory sessions, All Family Welcome Back Picnic, athletic events, concerts, and service projects
- Parent attendance as observers at Board of Directors' meetings
- Attendance by parents at all Parent/Teacher conferences
- Educate stakeholders about ISK's communication protocol that emphasizes direct, open communication

COMMUNICATIONS
GOAL

Ensure that the information on the ISK website is accurate, up-to-date and user friendly and that it clearly communicates and supports ISK's mission and vision.

STRATEGIES:

- Establish and monitor a schedule for periodic review of the ISK website that identifies the individuals responsible for updating each page/section and ensures that information in all sections support the mission and vision
- Communicate "best practice" guidelines for website content to all individuals who have responsibility for updating sections of the site

COMMUNICATIONS
GOAL

Ensure that emergency communication with the ISK community is timely, accurate and reasoned.

STRATEGIES:

- Use a variety of tools to communicate emergency situations with all constituencies, primarily SMS alerts, website notices, telephone and email
- Ensure that all communication is accurate
- Ensure that the tools used are in constant working condition and readily available when and if needed

COMMUNICATIONS
GOAL

Utilize Social Media to create and build relationships with the ISK community with an emphasis on ISK Alumni.

STRATEGIES:

- Establish and monitor a schedule for periodic review and posting to the ISK Facebook page, Twitter and LinkedIn page.
- Communicate “best practice” guidelines to those individuals responsible for ISK’s social media presence
- Monitor all social media channels to ensure adherence to protocol

COMMUNICATIONS
GOAL

Reinforce the importance of email timeliness, accuracy, and etiquette among all constituencies.

STRATEGIES:

- Communicate ISK’s “best practice” guidelines for email etiquette and content to all constituencies
- Communicate the impact of using links in emails that take the reader to either the ISK website, publications, surveys or posters
- Utilize the potential of the new Student Information System (SIS) database to eliminate/ reduce duplicate emails

COMMUNICATIONS
GOAL

Ensure that the admissions process, procedures & communication with prospective families is proactive, timely and informative.

STRATEGIES:

- Establish online “admissions application” for all new families/students to improve admissions process, procedures & communication with parents/ students who apply to ISK
- Ensure timeliness of processing applications and communicating with families

APPENDIX

- Communications Rubric
- ISK Mission, Vision & Educational Aims
- Social Media Guidelines
- Summary of 2013 Communication Survey

Communications

Rubric

The ISK community communicates in a wide variety of ways. Communication can be pushed (emailed) to a targeted constituency or pulled (searched on the website). It can be in response to a communication received or it can be initiated in hopes of eliciting an action. It can also be used simply to convey information.

It is important, therefore to ensure that our communications further ISK’s Mission, Vision and Aims. When you communicate, first consider the following questions.

WHY & WHAT IS THE APPROPRIATE MESSAGE?

- Is it in response to communication received?
- Why does the stakeholder need the information?
- Does qualitative or quantitative data provides direction for message?
- What fact(s) is the message based on?
- What action do you anticipate?
- What change in behavior do you anticipate?

WHO NEEDS TO KNOW?

- Students
- Parents
- Faculty
- Staff
- Principals
- Administrators
- Alumni
- BoD
- BoG
- Media
- PTO
- Embassies
- Corporations
- Gov’t Offices
- NGOs
- Canadian HC
- US State Dept. (OOS)
- United Nations
- Other International Schools

HOW EFFECTIVE WAS THE COMMUNICATION?

Formal and informal evaluation of communication can be seen in the following:

- Enrollment
- Meeting attendance
- Events attendance
- Personal feedback
- Written feedback
- Surveys
- Behavior change
- Recruitment

WHAT COMMUNICATION CHANNEL(S) WILL YOU USE?

Electronic

- Email
- The Link
- Website
- Facebook
- Twitter
- LinkedIn
- Student
- Handbooks
- Annual Report
- Alumni newsletter

Print

- Annual Report
- Parent Calendar
- Staff Calendar
- Parent Directory
- Admission Materials
- Faculty Handbooks
- School Profile
- Kwaherini Book
- Homework Planners
- IB Brochure
- ISK Brochure
- Recruitment Brochure

Face-To-Face

- PTO Meetings
- Parent/Teacher Meetings
- Principal Teas
- Director Advisory Teas
- BoD Meetings
- Round Table
- Annual General Meeting
- Annual Financial Forum

Media

- The International Educator
- NewsLinks
- Magazine
- Newspaper, Radio & TV

Mission, Vision & Educational Aims

All decisions at ISK are guided by three foundation documents. Taken together, these documents define our purpose, the educational beliefs that drive learning, and the specific learning outcomes we are committed to developing in each student. Those three documents are the Mission, Vision, and Educational Aims.

Mission

ISK provides an exemplary education offering both the International Baccalaureate and the North American diploma. We prepare students within a culturally diverse community to become informed, independent thinkers and responsible world citizens.

Vision

Empowering students to create solutions for tomorrow's challenges.

Educational Aims

ISK aims to empower students to respond successfully to future challenges for a rapidly changing world. To equip our students for these challenges, we strive to develop students of character who:



Educational Aims

(Descriptive Version)

ISK aims to empower students to respond successfully to future challenges for a rapidly changing world.

Characteristics of ISK Students:

Principled: Students will act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness and justice. They will take responsibility for their own actions and the consequences that accompany them.

Respectful: Students will demonstrate respect for the dignity of the individual, groups and communities in their interactions.

Open-Minded: Students will understand and appreciate their own cultures and personal histories and will be open to the perspectives, values and traditions of other individuals and communities.

Caring: Students will show empathy, compassion and respect towards the needs and feelings of others.

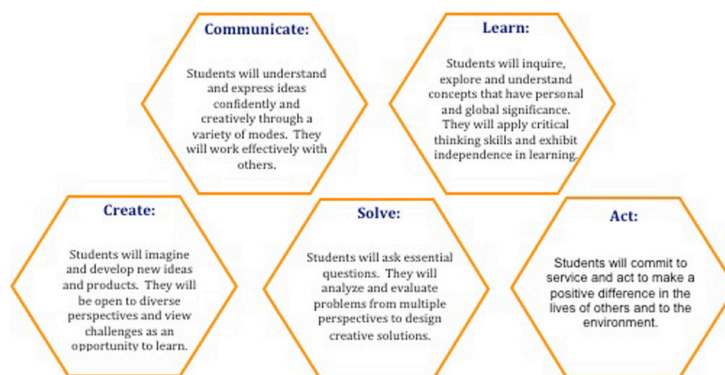
Risk-Takers: Students will approach unfamiliar situations and uncertainty with courage and forethought, and have the independence of spirit to explore new roles, ideas and strategies. They will be brave and articulate in defending their beliefs.

Balanced: Students will understand the importance of intellectual, physical and emotional balance to achieve personal well-being for themselves and others.

Reflective: Students will give thoughtful consideration to their own learning and experience. They will be able to assess and understand their strengths and limitations in order to support their learning and personal development.

Persevering: Students will persist in a task or course of action and seek solutions to problems despite challenges, failure or opposition.

ISK students will apply these character traits in order to communicate, learn, create, solve and act in ways that will enrich themselves, their communities, and the world around them.



The ISK Educational Aims are derived from the following sources: IB Learner Profile, The Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2009, The 21st Century Fluency Project (<http://www.21stcenturyfluency.com/>), and enGauge 21st Century Skills, The Metiri Group (<http://www.metiri.com/features.html>)

ISK Social Media Guidelines



These guidelines provide an outline for employee use of social media.

Principles

The following principles apply to the use of social media when representing or referencing ISK or its community.

- The ISK Code of Ethics and the Responsible Use Agreement apply when using social media.
- Employees should use good judgment and sensitivity in postings that reference ISK.
- Employees should refer media and legal inquiries to authorized ISK spokespersons.
- Employees encountering a situation while using social media that threatens to become antagonistic should disengage from the dialogue in a polite manner and seek the advice of a supervisor.
- Employees should be aware that postings considered private may become public and should therefore obtain permission before posting any images of or references to the ISK community.

Communications Survey

Summary Report & Findings
5 December 2013





252 total respondents

<u>Group</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>% of Group</u>
■ Parents	164	31% (households)
■ Teachers	51	48%
■ Non-teaching Staff	29	16%
■ Students	16	5% (HS)
■ BoD/BoG	8	50%
■ Administration	5	45%



Area represented

<u>Area of School</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>% of Total</u>
■ High School	125	50%
■ Elementary School	95	38%
■ Middle School	74	29%
■ Other	39	15%



Summary of Findings

- The two preferred methods of communication are
 - Email
 - Parent/Teacher Conferences
- SMS messages are a valuable tool for emergency communication
- Members of the Board are not well known & their role is not understood
- The quality of the delivery method of The Link needs improving
- Communication needs to be tailored as much as possible to the recipient



Most effective method of communication

<u>Method</u>	<u>Very effective/Effective</u>
■ Email	80%
■ Parent/Teacher Conferences	79%
■ Print Publications (Directory, Calendar, etc.)	77%
■ The Link	66%
■ Website	64%



Quantity of emails received

<u>Response</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>% Total</u>
■ Too few	16	7%
■ The right amount	167	70%
■ Too many	54	23%



Rate the emails received

<u>Response</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>% Total</u>
■ Very useful & relevant	60	25%
■ Useful & relevant	157	67%
■ Not very useful & relevant	19	8%



Rate The Link

<u>Response</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>% Total</u>
■ Very useful & relevant	56	24%
■ Useful & relevant	130	55%
■ Not very useful & relevant	49	21%



Effectiveness of The Link

<u>Area</u>	<u>Very effective/Effective</u>	<u>Not effective</u>
■ Layout & Format	62%	11%
■ Accessibility & Convenience	57%	16%
■ Content	69%	5%



The Link: Publication frequency

<u>Response</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>% Total</u>
■ Weekly	112	49%
■ Twice a month	71	31%
■ Monthly	46	20%



Least effective method of communication

<u>Method</u>	<u>Very effective/Effective</u>	<u>Not Effective</u>
■ Facebook page	25%	14%
■ SMS Alerts	59%	13%
■ Linked In	10%	12%
■ Twitter	7%	12%
■ Parent Survey	34%	12%



Effective communication between groups

<u>Group</u>	<u>Very Effective/Effective</u>	<u>Not Effective</u>	<u>No Opinion</u>
■ Parents & Teachers	73%	2%	6%
■ Students & Teachers	71%	1%	14%
■ Parents & Non-teaching staff	24%	14%	35%
■ Students & Non-teaching staff	26%	8%	44%



Effective communication between groups

<u>Group</u>	<u>Very Effective/Effective</u>	<u>Not Effective</u>	<u>No Opinion</u>
■ Parents & BoD	16%	13%	46%
■ Parents & Administration	39%	9%	25%
■ Teachers & BoD	12%	14%	63%
■ Teachers & Administration	20%	8%	62%
■ Administration & BoD	14%	2%	78%



Effectiveness of communication with school offices

Office	Very Effective/Effective	Not Effective	No Opinion
▪ Admissions	45%	10%	25%
▪ Advancement	29%	7%	50%
▪ Business	48%	11%	18%
▪ Director	43%	8%	32%
▪ Operations	43%	10%	33%
▪ Security	43%	13%	23%
▪ ES/MS/HS Offices	79%	2%	4%



Sample of Individual Responses:

For purposes of this summary report the following slides provide you with an overview of the responses received in several key areas.



Individual Responses: Social Media

PRO

- ISK Facebook page is easy to access and notifications of posts mainly bulletins are seen on each log in
- The High School Facebook page is the most effective, because it accessible to high school students
- Twitter - real time and versatile
- To make something effective you've to know about them. My friend told me about Facebook for HS

CON

- Most people are trying to avoid the social media like Facebook and the rest. We are not sure how safe we are with them and so afraid of using them
- Facebook. I don't use it a lot
- Face book I don't have
- I don't have a twitter account and I don't like the Facebook page or group as they don't give me information relevant to my child's education



Individual Responses: SMS Alerts

PRO

- SMS messages have not always been effective but I recognize the school's efforts to improve.
- SMS is easy to read and demands my attention
- SMS is most effective - fast and accessible
- SMS is the best way for emergency

CON

- Phone SMS did not receive any during Westgate
- Am sorry but I have NEVER received the SMSing system.
- SMS alerts are rarely received.
- I have only received one text message in 4 years
- SMS too slow



Individual Responses: Website

PRO

- Clear, informative, transparent, well-organized, visually interesting
- Web site (is effective) because I can check it when needed
- Website is easy to navigate and has relevant information.

CON

- The web site needs improvement. The staff directory is out of date and there is no school calendar on the web site.
- Website - not updated
- Password given did not give access to website.
- I don't like having different passwords to access all different areas of the website.
- The website IS NOT a way to get regular information to parents



Individual Responses: Email

PRO

- Email you can refer to any time
- Email is fast, reliable and can be accessed in and out of school
- Having the email come to me provides the information at my fingertip
- Email is the best in my opinion since we have a recorded communication
- Email, that is where I look out for information

CON

- ISK email - I cannot access mine. I tried many times but to no avail
- Email, a number of times emails to teachers/coaches sent and no reply/acknowledgement received
- Occasionally, there is no response to email sent to the teacher or principal. Even if it is just, "I'm looking into it", that is appreciated and appropriate.
- Teachers need to respond as rapidly as possible to queries



Individual Responses: Email

PRO

- Emails from the teacher are the best about understanding what is going on with the students
- Email still is the most immediate, and includes both new notes and links to either the website, publications, surveys or posters that you can open immediately
- Email since I check it regularly and can cache it effortlessly

CON

- Some emails are a bit too long. Would be great to have bold key words
- I get duplicates of all emails because I have 2 children in elementary school
- Any emails other than the Link newsletter and emails from the teacher are ineffective...improved coordination can result in (better) communications



Individual Responses: The Link

PRO

- The Link - Clear & Concise report on the week gone and what's to come
- The Link is the most effective as it gives weekly reminders & updates
- The Link provides up to date information that allows me to easily follow what is happening in the school
- I like the Link as it has everything in one place and comes weekly

CON

- Too wordy, too many, takes too much time to read, and mostly unimportant, i.e. not rewarding
- Link is cumbersome to open and read
- Link needs to be once a month - not enough people read it.
- The website and Link provide information that is irrelevant to high school students
- The Link is annoying to read because of the Issuu limits. Instead, a blog with option of daily-weekly updates and searchable option would seem more useful



Individual Responses: The Link

PRO

- The link (is) modern and easy to read
- I like (The Link) too, nice roundup
- The Link is good although I don't like the format because I read it on my phone or iPad
- I like the link but it is too long

CON

- The method of distribution of the Link is ineffective in getting people to read it.
- The current form of the Link is a pain as it's hard to load, I often forget to open it
- The Link is more info than I need, but others probably like it
- The Link is full of advertising and not used as a school showcase



Action Steps

TIMELINE

- Maximize communication potential of the The Link
 - Publish 2x Month
 - Improve delivery mechanism
 - Content that celebrates student events & achievements
 - Maximize potential of email: timeliness, accuracy, quality of content
 - Improve SMS alert delivery & ensure accurate phone numbers with new SIS
 - Enhance presence of ISK in Social Media
- | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | April 2014 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | February 2014 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | May 2014 (tied to SIS) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | January 2014 |



Action Steps

- Improve the quality of survey questions & delivery
- Ensure website is up-to-date at all times
- Communicate launch of new SIS and advantages to ISK
- Improve admissions process, procedures & communication
– new admissions module in 2014 with online applications
- Incorporate learning into the ISK Communications & External Relations Plan

TIMELINE

- Ongoing
- Ongoing
- May 2014
- Feb.-May 2014
- Completed



Individual Responses: Accent on the Positive

- The Daily Bulletin provides relevant information
- Daily bulletin is easy to access and is concise in terms of information
- Daily Bulletins are most effective in order to follow activities, hand timely permission slips
- Jane in operations has been fantastic in acknowledging my emails when I inform them of the need to change my child's transport
- I very much appreciate the SMS I get from the Security office
- Principal's tea - information current and well thought out. Interactive



Individual Responses: Accent on the Positive

- Face-to-face discussions with teachers...face to face, honest
- Always had good experience dealing with the bus people.
- The ES office has very nice people working there, they are very polite and ready to assist.
- Congratulations to the ES (Anne) for always passing the messages promptly. She is a great example of good communication.
- HS office is great.
- Thanks for this survey, it covers all areas