

# ISK

## Communications Plan

2018  
2021



**International School of Kenya**

Empowering students to create solutions for tomorrow's challenges

# ABOUT ISK

The International School of Kenya (ISK) is a private, non-profit PreK-Grade 12 school created in 1976 through a joint partnership between the governments of the United States and Canada. Nestled on 40 acres of a former coffee plantation, ISK serves the educational needs of both expatriate and Kenyan students who seek a challenging international curriculum which leads to the rigorous International Baccalaureate Diploma program.

ISK's internationally focused curriculum has helped Kenya become a magnet for foreign business investment and a desired posting for those working for the continuing development of East Africa. Expatriate families consider Kenya a quality career opportunity, in part due to the quality education they find at ISK. Likewise, Kenyan families who want an international, culturally diverse education for their children see ISK as the school of choice.

ISK has over 950 students from more than 65 countries. Graduates earn an ISK North American accredited diploma and approximately 70 percent of ISK graduates earn the IB Diploma, enabling them to study at some of the most respected and competitive colleges and universities in the world. ISK students form a supportive, spirited and diverse community, which enables new students to adapt easily to campus life. Interacting in such a welcoming cross-cultural milieu, ISK students celebrate the unique and wonderful differences and similarities of people from around the world.

The value of respect for each other and for Kenya is evident at ISK, as is a commitment to giving back to the community. Our scholarship program for Kenyan students, together with a broad and dedicated service-learning program which serves our local and national community, have shaped our school values since 1967 and continue today.

In keeping with ISK's strategic mission and vision, we are dedicated to empowering each student to create solutions for tomorrow's challenges. Therefore, we have embarked on a multi-million dollar facility and program expansion project to provide students and faculty with the programs, tools and facilities necessary for success. Once completed, ISK will be able to accommodate 1,200 students with expanded programs and facilities.

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Graphic design and electronic publishing

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International School of Kenya

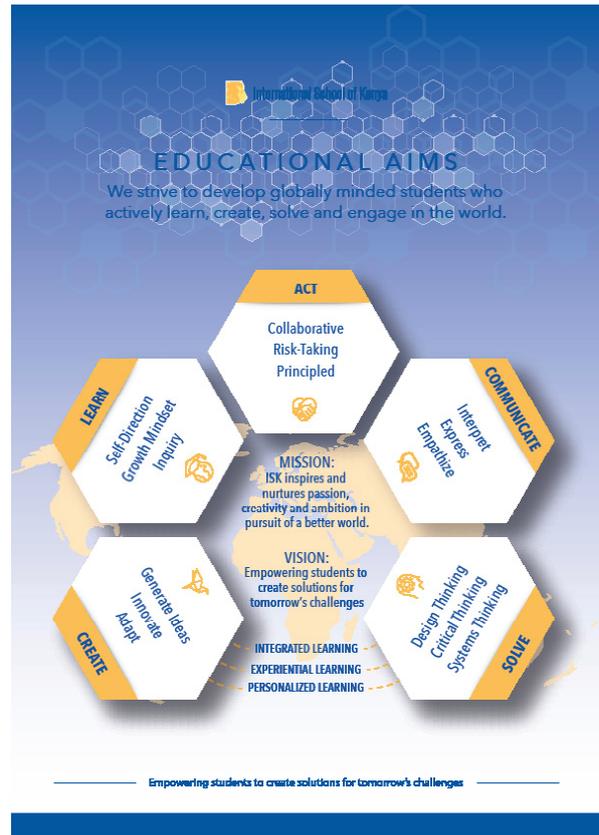
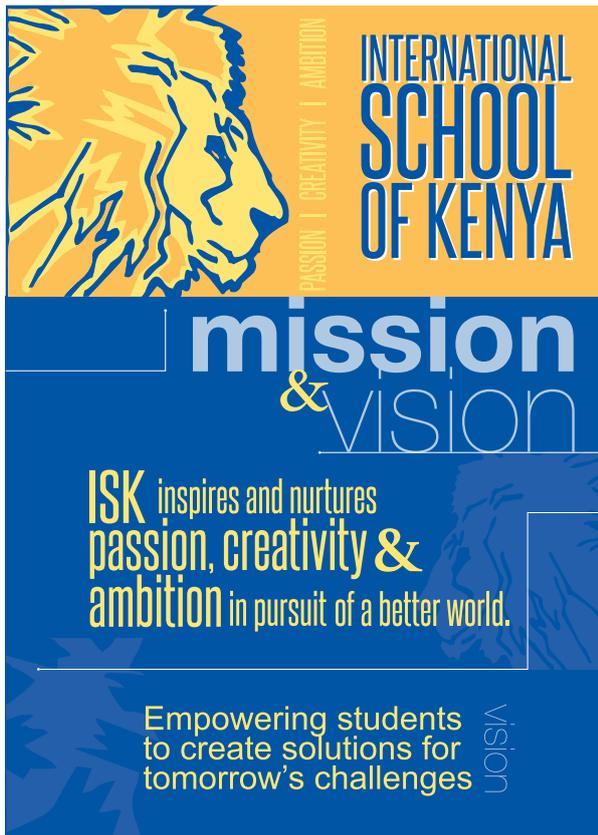
# COMMUNICATIONS PLAN **2018-2021**

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## MISSION, VISION & EDUCATIONAL AIMS

All decisions at ISK are guided by ISK’s three foundational documents. Taken together, these documents define our purpose, the educational beliefs that drive learning, and the global perspective we are committed to developing in each student. They have also guided the development of this communications plan.



## OVERVIEW

ISK values positive relationships between its stakeholders and believes that these relationships are stronger, and student learning is enhanced, when built on a solid foundation of clear, meaningful and timely communications.

Every communication tactic and message we develop serves to connect ISK’s mission, vision and educational aims to our staff, students, parents, news media, and local and international

communities. Our communications enhance learning that supports cultural proficiency, internationalism, interculturalism, global citizenship, and organizational trust. It provides an opportunity to share news about our students, staff, faculty, parents and alumni with the entire school community.

There are four major communication content hubs which are of concern to ISK.



**1. PARENT ENGAGEMENT**

Direct 1-1 communication together with targeted school information and news to construct a positive, meaningful dialogue with parents

**2. INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS**

Perhaps our most important audiences: students, faculty and non-teaching staff. They help ISK live up to our mission, vision and educational aims

**3. MEDIA AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS**

Being proactive with good news and sharing clear, consistent messaging in all media, e.g. print, electronic, social media and in person communications helps tell the ISK Story

**4. CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS**

Fail-safe preparedness and response to emergencies

This 2018-2021 ISK Communications Plan was developed in part by information gained from the 2018 Communications Audit Survey, the 2018 Parent Survey, through focus group interviews with key stakeholders and from a review of current best

practices. This plan is designed to guide the school's internal and external communications in support of ISK's strategic goals and help ensure that our communications reinforce the school's mission, vision and aims.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Ensuring that ISK's communications are timely, accurate and relevant is the overriding objective that guides the 2018-2021 Communications Plan. While our school communications have historically received high marks among parents, faculty and staff, the goal is always to improve. Results of the 2018 Parent Survey revealed that the majority of parents (93%) believe that

communication practices at ISK keep them informed about events, policies, and programs (student handbooks, parent information evenings, The Link, website and the Director's and Principal's Teas).

To build on this positive feedback the 2018-2021 Communications Plan will focus on the following key strategies.

1. Maintain an emphasis on one-on-one communication and email as the school's two primary communication vehicles:
  - The most effective methods of communication according to parents are the Parent/Student/Teacher Conferences (81%), email (74%), and the Link Lite (74%) - 2018 Communications Audit Survey
  - The most effective methods of communication according to faculty & staff are email (81%), Parent/Student/Teacher Conferences (70%), and SMS (70%) - 2018 Communications Audit Survey
  - Parents (84%) and Faculty & Staff (88%) rate emails as very useful/useful and relevant
  - New parents (97%) report that email and phone correspondence with the school is helpful and professional - *New Parent Survey, September 2017 & January 2018*
2. Use the planning tool attached in [Channels of Communications](#) to help guide the community on the various tools/channels that we use to communicate
3. AO in collaboration with the LT will seek to reduce duplicate emails and improve their overall effectiveness. The AO will develop a list of email topics/themes that would justify all parent emails. The Principals will be mindful of their email topics and ask the question "Is this email for my division only or should it be for all school?"
  - Faculty & staff (42%) and parents (30%) report that there are too many emails coming from ISK
    - "Many ES/MS communications are duplicated" (Parent)
    - "Email is very useful but too many emails undermines their value, especially with kids in each school" (Parent)
    - "(There is a) lack of cohesiveness in communications between the divisions" (Faculty & Staff)
4. Maintain the weekly Link Lite as a key communication tool
  - Parents (88%) and Faculty & Staff (73%) read the Link Lite regularly or sometimes each week
5. Publish the Link monthly for the 2018-2019 school year while researching how parents, faculty and staff read the Link and what they like/dislike about the Link.
  - Parents (62%) and Faculty & Staff (82%) reported reading the Link Rarely/Sometimes - 2018 Communications Audit Survey
6. Produce short videos/films that demonstrate students, staff, parents or alumni living the ISK Mission, Vision & Aims. These productions will help tell the ISK Story through various media, e.g. presentations for ISK Learning Designs, highlighting the Aims for inclusion on the website, etc.
  - The Link will continue to be published in Issuu while the AO researches other formats
  - The purpose of the Link remains "to celebrate the amazing events and students happenings in and around ISK"
7. Launch [Social Media Strategy](#) and communicate the ISK Social Media Guidelines (see pg. 8) to the community. The AO will finalize objectives and guidelines with each division.
8. Segment and tailor communication messages and tactics to specific target audiences, whether internal, local or international, as outlined in the [Why, Who & How of ISK Communications](#).

## COMMUNICATION GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Clearly defined Communications Goals for 2018-2021 will help strengthen communications, build stronger relationships between all ISK constituencies, and enhance our brand identity.

Our objectives are threefold: **amplify** the ISK Story and not merely transfer information; **collaborate** with others when telling the ISK Story; **connect** with others by sharing our diverse experiences.

1. Build on the positive intentions of all community members, their commitment to continuous school improvement and a respectful community. The guiding principles are direct, open, and respectful communication.
2. Utilize a variety of media, especially Social Media to reach and communicate with diverse audiences both within Kenya and internationally to support ISK's mission, vision and educational aims and ensure public awareness of ISK's accomplishments locally and internationally.
3. Celebrate ISK events, activities and student accomplishments with parents, students, faculty, staff, board members and alumni through stories, photographs and videos published on the ISK website, in The Link, ISK Social Media and via email.
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. Ensure timely and effective email communication with ISK parents by all constituents in particular faculty, staff and administration, in order to reinforce the importance of email diligence, accuracy, and etiquette among all constituents.
7. Ensure that the admissions process, procedures and communication with prospective families is proactive, timely and informative.

Periodic evaluation of our Communication Goals & Objectives will help measure their effectiveness and allow for necessary changes in a timely manner. The measurement tools to be used are:

**1. SURVEYS:** New and current parents, staff, and alumni

**2. WEBSITE:** Hits and analytic reports on all sections

**3. PRESS COVERAGE REPORTS**

**4. PERSON-TO-PERSON** via scheduled meetings with the PTO, Faculty & Staff, Students, Board of Directors and Alumni

## SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES

ISK values respectful, clear and transparent communications for all members of the ISK community: students, parents, faculty and administration. To this end, the school maintains several official communications channels, most importantly, an open door policy that encourages face to face communication.

Online and print communications complement our emphasis on personal communication and include *The Link*, *The weekly Link Lite*, email messages from administration and faculty, Google Classroom and PowerSchool.

Members of our community are expected to act in a responsible, ethical and legal manner in accordance with school policy, accepted rules of network etiquette, and local and international law.

### MONITORED SOCIAL MEDIA AT ISK

Social Media can help to foster a strong sense of community and serve as a wonderful tool for sharing information and celebrating ISK community life. ISK uses the following social media to communicate with community members.

- Official Facebook page: The School's official organisation page (public)
- Official Alumni Facebook page: The School's official alumni page (public)

- ISK PTO Community Facebook Group: Official, private group. Only for parents, teachers and staff (private)
- LinkedIn: Official, professional profile (public)
- Twitter: Official profile for sharing photos and updates (public)
- Instagram: Official profile for sharing photos
  - **MS Instagram:** Platform for sharing photos of events and activities (private)
  - **HS Instagram:** Platform for sharing photos of events and activities (private)
- International School of Kenya YouTube: Official channel for sharing videos made by and for ISK students (public)

These Social Media tools are managed by or monitored by ISK's Advancement Office, but by the nature of these tools, the school is not solely responsible for content. For those using these tools, the school has guidelines for appropriate communication.

### SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES FOR THE ISK COMMUNITY

ISK is a warm, supportive and diverse community. In order to help celebrate and support this, we have provided the following guidelines to share within groups to help articulate expectations.

1. To protect the privacy of parents, students, and staff, only ISK community members should be added to any group and numbers within the group should not be shared without permission.
2. Refrain from any comments about individuals within our community (students, parents, staff, service providers and faculty) that may be considered personal, disrespectful, inflammatory, or defamatory.

3. Refrain from tagging any student directly on any social media pages.
4. Parent pages should be clearly identified as a parent-run page. It is helpful for parents to understand that these pages are not official ISK pages so they understand the level of messaging they can expect. In the group/page description, group administrators will be requested to note the page is not an official ISK platform using the following text: *This is an ISK Parent-Initiated Whatsapp/FB Group and not an official ISK group.*
5. The school will never use these informal parent group channels to share official information with families. Information and news will always come through email, *The Link/ The Link Lite*, the ISK website first and foremost, and then may also then be shared through other channels. Parents should always seek official information directly from the school, especially in relation to school closures.
6. Please continue to share any school concerns or grievances directly with the relevant person at the school. For details of phone numbers/ email addresses please contact the Advancement Office. If in doubt, bring any concerns directly to the appropriate Principal.

### GUIDANCE AND MODELLING

If a member of the community sees any message that is defamatory, provocative or inappropriate, remember, we all have a responsibility to model positive, supportive behavior. We can respond with a public post, e.g: *"I understand that you are upset by this however, this may not be the correct forum to discuss this. I would urge you to take this matter offline and go directly to the principal/counselor/teacher so that they can help you resolve it."*

## SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES

### ISK PARENT-INITIATED SOCIAL MEDIA

Some ISK parents choose to use social media to form groups (grade level, playdates, sports related, etc.) beyond the school maintained social media groups/platforms. These are typically WhatsApp groups.

No parent is required to join these voluntary groups. While these groups are not official ISK groups, as the membership consists of ISK parents, ISK recommends these groups also follow the school's Social Media Guidelines.

The information shared through these groups is entirely parent-generated and is not monitored by the school for accuracy, nor is the school responsible for the content\*.

The initiator of the group, the PTO and/or Home Room Parents are encouraged to oversee the content shared in these groups. The following section serves to facilitate oversight of these groups by the PTO and Home Room Parents/Whatsapp Group Administrators.

### ISK PARENT-INITIATED WHATSAPP GROUP GUIDELINES

The purpose of Parent-Initiated Whatsapp Groups is to foster a positive relationship between parents by allowing parents to keep each other up to date with information about school or class activities and community events, with the understanding that ISK does not use this as an official communication channel. The following guidelines are recommended for all Parent-Initiated WhatsApp groups\*. Any concerns regarding these guidelines should be shared with the Advancement Office.

1. The group should never be used as a platform to air views/grievances regarding a member of the faculty/ staff, child or parent in the class or school. If there are concerns regarding a member of the faculty or staff, or another parent, you are encouraged to direct your communications with that person and not address it to this group.
2. The language used in these groups should be civil, respectful and take into consideration the diversity of the cultures represented at ISK.
3. The group should not be used to post private or confidential messages or express personal opinions or gossip. Any opinions expressed are the opinions of individual members and may not be representative of the whole group, or ISK.
4. When writing, keep in mind that whatever you say on social media may be forwarded to someone else, and in a matter of minutes could spread well beyond your intended audience.
5. When a question is asked to the group, and a personal response is required, please send that person a private message to reduce the amount of text traffic on our phones.

This is a great space to ask questions and find information. Please don't shy away, as together we are better!

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## QUESTIONS:

Please contact the Advancement Office if you have any questions related to our Social Media Guidelines.

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