

## Short Description

Swiss International Scientific School in Dubai (SISD) places considerable importance on effective communication. We strive to be an open, professional organization in which all members of the community feel valued and able to play a full and active part in its development. Communications can take a variety of forms, including verbal (meetings/telephone calls) & written (through emails, letters, social media, website/parent portal).

## Scope

Relevant to all parents and employees of Swiss International Scientific School in Dubai. This policy covers all forms of communication and provides guidelines as well as practical advice for effective communication. All communication must be professional, respectful and adhere to the cultural natures of our international community.

## Purpose

Clarity around communications between all stakeholders in the school community is an essential component for a successful school year. SISD believes that students achieve their best when the school and family work together. This Communications Policy is designed to keep clear communication lines within the school community, with defined expectations for parents and school employees. This policy applies to parents, employees, contractors, consultants, temporary members of staff, and other workers at the school, including all personnel affiliated with third parties.

## SISD Parents

### School Communications

All SISD Communications are centralized through the ISAMS system. Parents will be provided with a welcome email at the start of the year to login to the system. It is the responsibility of the parents to update their contact information in the system and to report any technical issues they are experiencing with the system.

Parents are welcome to book appointments to discuss their child's progress with teachers. We also schedule regular events throughout the year, such as parent information sessions, pedagogical workshops and parent forums, to provide information to parents and address their questions. These include parent information sessions, open days and parent forums. Please refer to our [Assessment Policy](#) for more details on when and how we report to parents.

School events are posted on the online parent portal for scheduling convenience. In addition, all teachers will send weekly newsletters to provide deeper education and reflection on the International Baccalaureate programme and ongoing classroom activities.

Parents are encouraged to maintain a line of communication with their children's teachers and the school in general to ensure consistent messages and optimal student performance. There are a variety sources of information and communication pathways parents can utilise to keep up to date:

- iSams parent application
- SISD Parent Portal

- Homeroom parent contacts
- Parent Forum Committee representatives
- Student SeeSaw Portfolios (Early Years and Primary)
- Managebac (Secondary School)
- Student planners
- Midterm and semester reports
- Parent-teacher-student conferences
- Newsletters
- School Website
- Social media platforms

For appeals or complaints please follow the process described in our school's [Complaints Policy](#)

## Issue Resolution

SISD is committed to an effective and fluid communication with parents. We value the ideas and suggestions of the entire community. Our teaching staff and leadership team are at the disposal of the parents to discuss any aspect of the student's experience at school. Parents are required to maintain a mutual respect when communicating with all members of the SISD community this includes students, teachers, administration staff, security and other parents. This level of respect modelling good online behavior will be expected through all means of communication: email, phone call, text message, WhatsApp, face-to-face, social media etc.

In situations where concerns or situations arise related to the educational experience of a child, families should try to resolve the issue by proceeding through the following staff members until the issue is resolved:

1. Homeroom or subject teacher
2. PYP, MYP or DP Coordinator
3. Deputy Head of Early Years, Primary School or Secondary School
4. Head of Early Years, Head of Primary, or Head of Secondary School
5. Deputy Head and Head of School

Parents may refer to the chart below to identify the appropriate point of contact to help answer their questions.

## Head of School/Deputy Head of School

- General school policies
- Strategic plan
- Accreditations and authorizations
- Serious disciplinary incidents
- Issues not resolved or addressed by faculty or other members of the administration team
- Professional development for teachers
- Curriculum Administration
- General School Assessment

## Head of Early Years

- General school policies in Early Years
- Faculty and staff in Early Years
- General operation in Early Years
- Report cards and assessment in conjunction with PYP coordinator
- Behaviour in Early Years
- Issues not resolved or addressed by faculty
- Support Services (academic, language and social and emotional learning needs)

## Head of Primary/Deputy Head of Primary

- General school policies in Primary School
- Faculty and staff in Primary
- General operation in Primary
- Report cards and assessment in conjunction with PYP coordinator
- Behaviour in Primary School
- Support Services (academic, language and social and emotional learning needs)
- Issues not resolved or addressed by faculty

## PYP Coordinator – Early Years

- Academics in Early Years
- PYP programme structure
- Units of enquiry
- PYP implementation in the classroom
- Homework policy
- Scope and sequence of subjects taught in the PYP
- Content and planning of field trips and action projects
- Report cards and assessment in conjunction with Head of Early Years

## PYP Coordinator – Primary School

- Academics in Primary School
- PYP programme structure
- Units of enquiry
- PYP implementation in the classroom
- Homework policy
- Scope and sequence of subjects taught in the PYP
- Content and planning of field trips and action projects
- Report cards and assessment in conjunction with Head of Primary School

## Head of Secondary School/Deputy Head of Secondary

- General school policies in Primary School
- Academics in Secondary School
- Assessment and Report cards
- Behavioral issues in Secondary School
- General operation in Secondary
- Report cards and assessment in conjunction with MYP coordinator
- Issues not resolved or addressed by faculty
- Support Services (academic, language and social and emotional learning needs)

## MYP Coordinator

- MYP program structure
- Subject and Interdisciplinary units
- MYP implementation in the classroom
- Homework policy
- Scope and sequence of subjects taught in the MYP
- Content and planning of field trips and service learning

## Teaching Faculty

- Teaching and learning in the classroom
- Class communications
- Design and implementation of units
- Design and implementation of the scope and sequences
- Implementation of benchmarks
- Report to parents on child's academic learning, social emotional development, behavior and attendance
- Invite parents as chaperones for field trips as appropriate

## School Receptionists and Personal Assistants

- Daily operations in terms of security, arrivals and departure
- Answer all incoming calls
- Make sure all messages are sent to appropriate party
- Collect and distribute all mail arriving at school
- Organize and administer lost and found area
- Records requests
- Maintenance of student records
- Updating system of records

## Head of Admissions

- Enrollment of new families
- Reenrollment of returning students
- Guidance of new families through school induction

#### Accounting Team Lead

- Point of contact for billing inquiries

#### Head of Marketing

- Definition, implementation and supervision of all school communications and marketing

#### Email communications

Our email address format is as follows: givenname.surname(at)sisd.ae. Please make an appointment to speak to the classroom teacher if needed and try to limit conversations during drop off to a minimum. Extended communication over email is not advised as a substitute for face-to-face or telephone communication.

#### Student portfolios

As an IB school we have a responsibility to show evidence of student progress, learning and achievement. The student portfolio is a record of student involvement in learning, which is designed to demonstrate success, growth, higher order thinking, creativity, assessment strategies and reflection. In Early Years and Primary School we use SeeSaw as our platform for student portfolios. Teachers use a range of media and methods, this may include video, audio, photographic representations etc. In Secondary School, ManageBac is used for this purpose.

#### Parent Portal

SISD's secure Parent Portal allows you to keep up to date with general school information and messages, report cards, assessment reports, invoices and more. After clicking on the link to the portal, you will be prompted to log in with a unique username and password.

#### Class/Homeroom parents

A class parent facilitates communication between parents and the teacher, school administration and/or the parent forum and supports the teacher with issues that may arise. This facilitation can take many different forms and can require anything from a minor volunteer commitment shared with other parents to a large responsibility. For parents interested in becoming a class parent, please contact your class teacher via email with a brief description of your interest and why you think you are suitable for this role. The teacher is responsible for the selection process and we recommend a parent only applies to become class parent for one given class. The responsibilities of a class parent vary from teacher to teacher and grade to grade. Below are some of the tasks a class parent may be asked to fulfil:

- Meet with the teacher to discuss the role he or she would like the class parent to play
- Liaise with the Grade Coordinator and the pastoral leadership team to suggest and support school initiatives
- Collaborate with other class parents on a regular or occasional basis
- Collect the names and phone numbers of all the parents in the class to create effective means of communication; many parents appreciate What's-App groups
- Maintain a positive social environment amongst parents; listening responsibly and channeling feedback
- Attend and/or organize activities for the students and parents in the class i.e. playdates, outings, volunteers
- Distribute helpful information about events i.e. reminder
- Contact parents to facilitate donations of supplies for the classroom and/or events
- Recruit other parents to help during events i.e. field trips, reading groups, projects. Meet with other class parents and/or the school's parent liaison on a regular or occasional basis as needed
- Attend meetings, if any, to support the school's room parent organization
- Manage perceptions on any social media groups to remain positive; including reporting unhelpful behaviours to management
- Collect donations for and purchase gifts for special occasions e.g. teacher appreciation week, leavers gift
- Act as a resource by fielding questions for parents
- Approach the Heads of Sections to suggest partnerships for the school or class from local businesses or other people beside the parents of students in the class.

## Emergency Communications

In situations where the school is under emergency conditions or is closing due to unforeseen circumstances (e.g. weather, facilities failure) parents will be informed via email communication.

## After School Activities

All SISD Communications are centralized through the CHQ online system. Parents will be provided with a welcome email at the start of the year to login to the system. Please refer to the [After-School Activities handbook](#) for more information.

## Public access documents

The school makes available a range of documentation for parents on the sisd website: <https://sisd.ae/parents/>

## SISD Faculty

SISD believes in clear, accurate and reliable top-down and bottom-up communication through all levels of the organisation. Efficient two-way channels of communication ensure that employees understand, are aligned with and help the school achieve its educational and business objectives. Communication with parents, students and internal or external stakeholders, must proceed in line with the school's official stance and strategy.

## Responsible individual behaviour

All SISD employees should, in their daily work, behave as representatives and ambassadors of the school. Therefore, each employee should be committed to preserving and enhancing SISD's reputation. Any illegal or offensive behaviour or statement, including via social media accounts, which could cause damage to the School should be avoided. The core values of Bilingual, Excellence, Sustainability and Togetherness that underpin SISD should be reflected in everything we say or do. Inside information may only be disseminated through an authorised channel (press releases). Employees are personally responsible for the content they publish on social media, blogs, wikis or any other form of user-generated media.

## Confidentiality and Student records

Teachers are to treat all student information as confidential and private. Only official school documents (report cards, conference notes and attendance records) can be released to parents. Student transcripts are managed by the Head of each section. In order to release student files to other schools, the school must receive the appropriate, signed request from another school. If parents request documents from a student's file, they must email the Head of section detailing their needs. Faculty and administration have access to files as needed. Information that is considered confidential is kept in a separate file. Under no circumstances are student files shared outside the school, unless written consent is given by the parent. All communications where decisions are reached regarding a student need to be recorded and placed on file. Copies should be in student file and the Head of Admissions, Head of Sections and Lead Teacher informed as appropriate.

## Communications with parents

Through ISAMS and weekly newsletters (in Early Years and Primary School only) teachers will be responsible for sharing activities inside/outside the classroom with parents. Parents are expected to bring questions or concerns regarding the educational experience of their child first to their lead teacher. Teachers are expected to respond in a timely fashion. An acknowledgement of the parent's contact within one school day is required to confirm next steps. Responses after 5 PM, on weekends and during school holidays are not customary. Teachers shall maintain and file documentation on all questions or concerns as well as actions taken, including notes from meetings and sensitive conversations. Email exchanges with parents are stored and archived.

Whenever students attend the medical centre, the health care practitioner (physician or nurse) will record daily in the online pupil's diary (iSAMS application) the healthcare provided to each student. Their parents will be informed either by telephone, email or directly (preferable) depending on the severity of the case.

## Email etiquette

These guidelines have been drawn up to help enhance the quality of email communications and reduce the quantity of emails both internally and externally.

### General:

- For single recipients, use Outlook. For multiple recipients, use iSAMS and seek departmental-level approval.
- Include a subject line, with the topic of the message
- Use an SISD approved signature
- Use spellcheck



- Group messages are to be sent without recipient addresses being visible/accessible
- In sensitive situations consider an alternative method of communication (phone calls, personal meeting)
- Proofread your message before sending to check for appropriate tone. Electronic messages lack the verbal or facial cues of other communication tools
- Print and/or file messages that refer to a decision, particularly in relation to students
- During periods of absence (vacation, personal leave, etc), teachers and staff must set up an out of office message to include dates of absence and point of contact(s) through absence
- Emails to parents must be kept to a strict minimum- Emails need to be targeted and this will ensure that we do not spam parents.
- Employees are asked to refrain from using the school's email address for private communications
- If you are the "to" addressee, you should always reply. If a full answer will take time to provide, send a holding message.
- If an address is placed in the "cc" field, the message is copied for information only
- If an address is placed in the "bcc" field, it means you do not want the recipient to see that you have copied the "bcc" address. Use this sparingly.
- Think carefully before hitting "Reply all" – excessively doing so can quickly generate unnecessary email traffic and slow everyone down.
- Try and avoid the "high importance" flag unless you really need a swift response.

## ISAMS

- Personalise your message using custom fields – this takes very little time and significantly increases the chance that the message you are sending will be heeded.
- The 'student forename' should be used to help parents make distinctions about which child the letter is regarding; use 'letter salutation' to address the parents personally.
- Replicate your signature in the iSAMS mail template.

## External Communication - The SISD Brand

SISD's goal is to communicate effectively within the local, national and international communities to expand awareness and recognition of the school's unique educational experience. This will result in attracting families who fit our target profile and staff who will contribute to our learning and management objectives. SISD has adopted design and graphics standards that allow the School to have an image and style that is immediately recognizable. We have worked hard to present a single, consistent image to all stakeholders and the national and international community in which we operate. All printed items such as brochures, posters, clothing items, invitations, event notifications including logos, colors and general presentations must be approved by the Head of Marketing and the Head of School. This ensures that the content is approved by the school and that we have consistency in terms of message and brand standards.

SISD's reputation, or brand, is mainly determined by the quality of the services and experiences it delivers to its customers. The school's logo and visual identity are key elements of that brand. The application of SISD's visual identity is detailed in the in the school's Branding Guidelines available to all staff through the shared network, or the Marketing Department. SISD's



logo and/or visual identity must be applied to all communication materials, including emails, newsletters, flyers, posters, presentations et al.

## Online Privacy

SISD employees are encouraged to use appropriate privacy settings to control access to their personal social media sites. However, be aware that there are limitations to privacy settings. Private communication published on the Internet can easily become public. Furthermore, social media sites can change their current default privacy settings and other functions. As a result, employees are responsible for understanding the rules of the social media site being utilized.

## Social Media Guidelines

SISD employees should exercise caution and common sense when using personal social media sites. Social media is defined as any form of online publication or presence that allows interactive communication, including, but not limited to, social networks, blogs, Internet websites, Internet forums, and wikis. Examples of social media include, but are not limited to, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Google+, and Flickr.

When discussing Swiss International Scientific School in Dubai or other school-related matters on the internet, employees must identify themselves with their name and, when relevant, their role at SISD. Employees must make clear that they are speaking for themselves and not for the school. Whenever employees state an affiliation to the school, they must also clearly indicate that "the opinions expressed are my own and not necessarily those of the school". Employees are asked to write in the first person and to refrain from using the school's email address for private communications.

The conduct and behaviour of school employees on social media websites should not differ from their behaviour in general or any other communication/media tool.

This includes for example:

- To behave in a way which preserves the reputation of the school in general. Proper consideration must be shown for others privacy and for topics that may be considered objectionable or inflammatory (like religion or politics)
- To observe the finest moral behaviour principles in accordance with UAE law and regulation
- Not to use the information obtained during performance of his/her job duties for other non-work related purposes

In addition to these requirements and to assure distinction between their professional positions and their personal activities and views, SISD employees must comply with the following policy guidelines when using social media websites on their personal capacity whether to fulfil work-related or personal needs:

- On their personal profiles (if any) on social media sites, SISD employees should not post their school contact details for correspondence. This includes: email, phone number, PO Box etc... Please ensure that your social media profile and related content is consistent with how you wish to present yourself with clients and colleagues.
- It is not recommended that SISD employees "tag" photos of other SISD employees, SISD parents or SISD students without the prior permission of the individuals being tagged.
- Personal social media use during business hours has the potential to result in disruption at school and can be in violation of SISD policies.

- The posting or disclosure of personally identifiable student information or confidential information via personal social media sites is prohibited. SISD employees should not use the SISD logo or claim that their personal social media sites represent the views of the School.

## Blog Guidelines

Bloggging by employees, whether using the school's property and systems or personal computer systems, is also subject to the terms and restrictions set forth in this Policy. Limited and occasional use of school's systems to engage in blogging is acceptable, provided that it is done in a professional and responsible manner, does not otherwise violate school's policy, is not detrimental to school's best interests, and does not interfere with an employee's regular work duties. Blogging from school's systems is also subject to monitoring.

Employees are prohibited from revealing any school's confidential or proprietary information, trade secrets or any other material covered by the School's Confidential Information policy when engaged in blogging.

- Employees shall not engage in any blogging that may harm or tarnish the image, reputation and/or goodwill of school and/or any of its employees.
- Employees are also prohibited from making any discriminatory, disparaging, defamatory or harassing comments when blogging.
- Employees may also not attribute personal statements, opinions or beliefs to school when engaged in blogging. If an employee is expressing his or her beliefs and/or opinions in blogs, the employee may not, expressly or implicitly, represent themselves as an employee or representative of school. Employees assume any and all risk associated with blogging.
- Apart from following all laws pertaining to the handling and disclosure of copyrighted or export controlled materials, school's trademarks, logos and any other school intellectual property may also not be used in connection with any blogging activity

## Media Relations

SISD uses its Media Relations network to broadly communicate its programmes, services and activities. As a publicly accountable institution, SISD proactively engages with the media on all subjects, issues and questions relevant to its activity, so long as doing so does not contravene commercial, legislative or privacy obligations.

The Founder & CEO, the Head of School, the Deputy Head of School, and the Head of Marketing are SISD's only authorized spokespersons. Subject to the approval of the Head of School and Head of Marketing, other designated subject matter experts may be called upon to serve as the authorized spokesperson.

Crisis and Emergency Communications are under the exclusive mandate of the Founder & CEO, the Head of School, the Deputy Head of School and the Head of Marketing.

At any given time, media may be pursuing stories about SISD. These may be about positive topics (community involvement, donations), or reporters and bloggers may be asking for comments from the school regarding clients or sensitive internal

matters. Regardless, all media requests about SISD matters should be immediately referred to the designated SISD media representative(s). At Swiss International Scientific School in Dubai, we have designated the Head of Marketing as the school's media representative(s). They are the only personnel authorized to comment on school matters.

## Presenting at conferences

When speaking at conferences, the presentation must be checked and approved by the Marketing department in advance.

## Official language

SISD recognizes the rich linguistic diversity within the school. However, English has been identified as the official language of the school, and the use of this language should be promoted.

## SISD Confidentiality

All SISD documentation, correspondence and company-related information, unless and until publicly available must be treated as confidential. Non-public information from or concerning suppliers, customers, employees, agents, consultants and other parties must also be protected.

## Compliance

This policy should be read in conjunction with SISD's Confidential Information policy.

## UAE law

The UAE has legislation in place which prohibits certain social media activity. The UAE Cybercrime Law No.5 of 2012 contains severe punishments including fines, imprisonment and deportation. Here are some rules that should be kept in mind:

- Posting photographs: Care needs to be taken when posting pictures of others online, including via social media sites since the Cyber Crimes Law (Federal Law No. 5 of 2012) makes it an offence to use any IT means to breach someone else's privacy, including by taking pictures of others, or publishing or displaying those pictures.
- Privacy and confidentiality: Disclosing secrets relating to someone's private life, without that person's consent can attract liability. Similarly, disclosure of confidential information, such as information belonging to an employer, can also attract legal liability in the UAE.
- Defamatory statements: The Penal Code makes it an offence to publish information that expose another person to public hatred or contempt, or to make a false accusation which dishonours or discredits another person.
- Content contrary to morality, social cohesion: It is an offence to use any IT means for activities which are inconsistent with public morals and good conduct including content that is un-Islamic, blasphemous, lewd, that encourages sinful activity, or that is aimed at corrupting minors, etc.
- Online monitoring: UAE TRA monitors online content available and prohibits content for hacking and malicious codes, Internet content providing unlicensed VoIP services and other illegal Internet content.
- Licensed service providers (du and Etisalat) can also block online content if required and subsequent to complaints of abuse or defamation, authorities can take legal action against those running the sites after verifying the validity and seriousness of the complaint.

For more information

For any questions on communication or online content related to the Swiss International Scientific School in Dubai, please contact your Head of Department or the Marketing department.

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