ACORNS INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

INSPIRING AND EMPOWERING

COMMUNICATION POLICY

Reviewed: April 2022

AIS is proud of the positive relationships it builds with our students' families. We believe that connection, communication, and understanding between home and school is vital to promote a child's education.

Reviewed by:

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Communication Policy

Acorns International School (AIS) is very proud of the positive relationships it builds with our students' families. We believe that connection, communication, and understanding between home and school is one of the most effective ways to promote a child's education.

1. Multiple Avenues of Communication

For this reason, we provide multiple avenues for parents and teachers to communicate:

1.1 Phone and Email
1.2 Class WhatsApp Groups
1.3 Student Diary
1.4 Teachers' 'Open Door'
1.5 ManageBac (For Secondary Only)
1.6 Complaint Procedure

1.1 Phone and Email

Parents are able to communicate with the school through phone calls and email. Updated lists of email addresses and phone numbers are provided at the beginning of every year for parents in the Parent Handbook. Parents can feel free to use them at any time to contact the main school line or a HoD.

Homeroom teachers have school emails, which they share with parents, however, parents are requested to contact them during the school hours (8:00am – 5:00pm). Teachers are not expected to give out their personal phone numbers/email IDs to parents. Parents wishing to speak to a homeroom teacher can email or call the main office/HoD and request to speak to the teacher from the main office phone.

ACORNS INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

Upon enrolment at AIS or throughout the year, parents can request to be put on the mailing list. This list of parents will receive updates, letters, newsletters, announcements, etc. to their email. Parents wishing to be added to this list can inquire about it in the Administration Office. Teachers do not have access, and are unable to add parents, to this list.

1.2 Class WhatsApp Groups

Every class at AIS has its own WhatsApp group. The purpose of the group is to provide updates, announcements, and information to parents. The groups are run by a member of AIS Management and the homeroom teachers.

An AIS Management member is in the group to ensure messages are being sent and communication runs smoothly. They also assist in sending messages from AIS Management, when it applies to the whole school or department.

Messages can only be sent by AIS management member or the homeroom teacher. In case, a parent wishes to ask a question or raise concern, they can reach out to the homeroom teacher. Parents are requested to notify the school of any change to the email address or the phone number at the earliest.

1.3 Weekly Academic Communication

1.3.1 Weekly Academic Communication – EC and Primary Department

All students at AIS EC and Primary are provided with a Diary, which they should bring to school every day and bring home every night.

The Diaries serve varied purposes for the students, depending on the Department, and have different formats. However, all can be used by parents and teachers to communicate.

Teachers can use the Diaries to communicate encouraging comments, needed support, or day-to-day information specific to the student. Teachers will most likely use this form of communication, if the parents are not seen during drop-off and pick-up.

Parents should also use the Diaries to notify teachers of any needed information. Teachers are to check the Diaries every morning so that information from parents can be noted.

1.3.2 Weekly Academic Communication – Secondary Department

All students in IB MYP, Cambridge AS and A Levels, and IB Diploma Programme have access to ManageBac. Parents of the secondary students also have parent login credentials. Daily home assignments, tests, assessments, announcements are all posted in Managebac which can be easily accessed by the students as well as the parents. The curriculum coordinators conduct an induction programme for both the students and the parents at the beginning of the year and as and when the student is enrolled at AIS. Parents can post the attendance excusal, reply to notes etc through Managebac as well. They can also access and download the term report cards, keep track of grades and comments for all assessments both summative and formative through Managebac

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1.4 Teachers' 'Open Door'

Parents and homeroom teachers are free to communicate on school grounds during the school day. Parents may find that during pick-up and drop-off times, the teachers will have 'Open Doors', and this is an easy way to get quick feedback on small matters throughout the week.

Teachers are expected to be on school grounds from 7:30 am to 4:30 pm, Monday through Thursday, and 7:30 am to 4:00 pm on Friday. Parents are free to meet teachers spontaneously before classes begin in the morning. If a parent is unable to meet during those timings, or would like to discuss a matter requiring a formal meeting, teachers will provide other timings, when they are available to meet.

While teachers should make themselves available to parents, parents should not expect teachers to start lessons late or leave lessons in order to meet with them. A teacher's first priority is the students and the class, so if there is a lesson, that is their focus. Parents should not interrupt lessons.

Parents should note that after school some teachers have varied responsibilities. Club supervision or daycare duty, collaborative planning, professional development, etc. are all valid reasons teachers may be unavailable to meet for an impromptu meeting after school.

For the ease of timely communication, parents are requested to seek prior appointment with particular teachers by writing to the respective Head of Department.

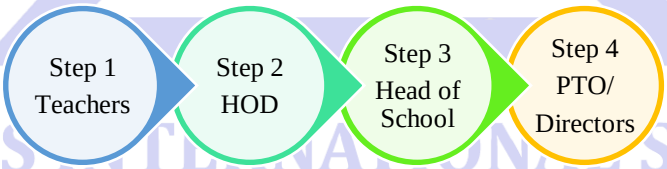
1.5 ManageBac Portal

All students in Secondary are provided with a school Gmail account and login credentials to the ManageBac portal. ManageBac is the official means of all curricular and academic communication in Secondary. The student can access the timetable, unit plans, digital resources, worksheets and assignments etc through ManageBac. The students are expected to submit many assignments and assessments through ManageBac as well. It is mandatory to maintain the programme portfolios- CAS for IBDP and Community Project for MYP 3 through ManageBac. All grades and comments for all assessments and even term- end reports are to be accessed through ManageBac.

1.6 Complaint Procedure

While we hope that through all the forms of communication parents and school staff are able to effectively communicate, we understand that from time-to-time misunderstandings and complaints are going to arise.

It is always the goal to reach an understanding with one-another quickly, but at times, either offended party may feel the problem is not resolved. Below is the procedure for parents and staff communicating complaints and the guidelines that should be followed at each step:



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1.6.1 Step One: Teachers

Parent communication should always start at this level and it is the intention that most matters are communicated and resolved between parents and teachers.

Parents and teachers should both take advantage of opportunities for communication. Meaning, both parties should not wait until there is a problem to communicate with each other for the first time. As stated above there are many ways to communicate about matters to resolve miscommunication on the part of both the teacher and parent. However, it is possible that a complaint, or a private matter, needs to be discussed and a formal meeting can be requested by either the parent or the teacher.

Guidelines:

- Teachers should respond to a parent request for a meeting with suggested timings within three school days.

- Teachers should feel free to request a formal meeting with parents in order to discuss varied matters.
- Parents should feel free to request a formal meeting with the homeroom teachers in order to discuss varied matters.
- Change should not be expected immediately. It is also important to note that for both the teachers and parents, it is crucial to allow time for change after a point is discussed. Change on behalf of either party or the student may not happen immediately.
- Parents and teachers should keep in contact regarding communicated matters so all feedback can drive further decisions.

1.6.2 Step Two: Communication with the Head of Department

If a parent or teacher feels that, after communicating as outlined in Step One and allowing time for progress, a matter is not resolved, they may approach the Head of Department (HoD).

Similarly, to teachers, HoDs are on school grounds during school hours and are able to meet spontaneously or for a scheduled meeting.

While HoDs may not have lessons, they may have other obligations that keep them from meeting spontaneously, so the same guidelines for setting a meeting will apply.

HoDs can be approached for a meeting in person, through email, and/or calling the main office.

Guidelines:

- Parents and teachers must first communicate as outlined in Step One before involving a HoD.
- Parents can approach the HoD for a meeting.
- Teachers can approach the HoD to set a meeting with the parents.
- The HoD should give parents suggested timings for meetings within three school days.
- Upon hearing the reason for, the HoD should investigate the situation to reach a full understanding.
- These meetings should include all appropriate members. Therefore, HoDs may or may not invite other HoDs, class teachers, and/or may require both parents to be present.
- The goal of the meeting should be to reach an understanding and set a path forward. All members of the meeting should attend the meeting with this intention.

1.6.3 Step Three: Communication with Head of School

If after following through with both Step One and Two and allowing time for progress to be made, the parents or teacher may find it necessary to contact the Head of School to request a meeting.

This meeting is only available upon formal request. No spontaneous meetings will be granted to either parents or teachers.

Meetings will only be granted after the teacher or parent has written a formal request for a meeting in the form of a letter or email. After the letter/email is submitted to the Administration Office or emailed to the Head of School, it will be reviewed by the Head of School. Upon

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reviewing the complaint and speaking to involved parties, the Head of School holds the right to grant a formal meeting or ask that the respective HoD handles the complaint.

Guidelines:

- Whoever is requesting the meeting should write a letter/email request for a formal meeting. The Head of School will not be expected to take walk-in meetings of this nature.
- The letter/email requesting the meeting should include the details explaining the issue and how it has not been resolved after taking both Step 1 and 2.
- The Head of School should review all complaints and provide feedback to the filer of the complaint within three school days. This may be granting a formal meeting or asking respective HOD handles the meeting.
- These meetings should include all appropriate members. Therefore, the Head of School may or may not invite HODs, class teachers, and/or may require both parents to be present.
- The goal of the meeting should be to reach an understanding and set a path forward. All members of the meeting should attend the meeting with this intention.

At the end of this meeting, the Head of School will have to make a final decision to resolve the issue and move forward. If the parent or teacher feels the resolution made during this meeting is unfair, they can appeal to the Parent Teacher Organistion (PTO) or Directors.

1.6.4 Steo Four: PTO or/and Directors

If a complaint that has been raised by a teacher or parent has attempted to be resolved through the teacher, HoDs, Head of School, and still is not resolved, it can be brought to the AIS PTO or/and Directors.

This meeting is only available upon formal request. No spontaneous meetings will be granted to either parents or teachers.

ACORNS INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL
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Meetings will only be granted after the teacher or parent has written a formal request for a meeting in the form of a letter or email. The letter must detail all relevant information about the complaint and previous steps taken to resolve the issue. After the letter/email is submitted to the Administration Office or emailed to the PTO or/and Directors, it will be reviewed by the related party. Upon reviewing the complaint and speaking to involved parties, the AIS PTO and Directors holds the right to grant a formal meeting or ask that the Head of School again tries to resolve the complaint.

Guidelines:

- Whoever is requesting the meeting should write a letter/email request for a formal meeting.
- The letter/email requesting the meeting should include the details explaining the issue and how it has not been resolved after taking both Step 1, 2, and 3.
- The PTO or/and Directors should review all complaints and provide feedback to the filer of the complaint within five school days. This may be granting a formal meeting or asking the Head of School to hold another meeting with the filer.

- These meetings should include all appropriate members. Therefore, the Directors may or may not invite Head of School, HODs, class teachers, and/or may require both parents to be present.
- The goal of the meeting should be to reach an understanding and set a path forward. All members of the meeting should attend the meeting with this intention.

If after this final step, the conflict is not resolved and the involved parties cannot come to an understanding over the issue, it may be best that there is an agreement to part ways.

Reviewed by:

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