



COMMUNICATION POLICY

Contents

1. Policy statement and purpose	4
1.1 Purpose	4
2. Scope	4
3. Communication principles	5
4. Roles and responsibilities	6
5. Approved communication channels	8
6. Communication with parents and guardians	10
7. Internal staff communication	11
8. Communication with students and student voice	11
9. Public, media, marketing and partnership communication	12
10. Digital communication, WhatsApp and social media	12
10.1 WhatsApp and messaging groups	12
10.2 Social media	12
11. Safeguarding, confidentiality and data protection	13
12. Inclusive, accessible and intercultural communication	14
13. Standards, response times and professional etiquette	14
13.1 Message standards	15
14. Meetings, records and document control	15
15. Concerns, complaints and escalation	15
16. Risk, crisis and emergency communication	16
16.1 Activation	16
16.2 Crisis communication steps	16
17. Monitoring, review and continuous improvement	17
18. Breaches of the policy	17
Appendix A. Communication channel and approval matrix	17
Appendix B. Escalation pathway	19
Appendix C. Crisis communication checklist	19

Appendix D. Practical communication standards20

Email.....20

WhatsApp / messaging.....20

Phone / meeting.....20

Public / social media.....20

1. Policy statement and purpose

Light International School Nairobi (LIS Nairobi) is committed to communication that strengthens trust, supports student learning and wellbeing, enables informed decision-making and reflects the school's values of Leadership, Integrity, Good Judgement, Honour and Trustworthiness. Communication should help every member of the community understand what they need to know, what action is required, who is responsible and where to seek clarification.

The school's current public identity emphasizes "Education with Purpose" and the development of morally upright, socially responsible and academically competent learners. Communication therefore has an educational as well as an operational function: it models respect, accuracy, responsibility, inclusion and good judgement.

1.1 Purpose

Provide a consistent framework for internal and external communication.

Ensure information is accurate, timely, relevant and appropriately authorized.

Clarify which channels should be used for different types of messages.

Define responsibilities for creating, approving, sending, receiving and recording communication.

Protect students, staff and families through appropriate confidentiality, safeguarding and data-protection practices.

Promote constructive two-way communication and meaningful stakeholder voice.

Reduce duplication, contradictory messages and unnecessary information overload.

Provide a clear approach to high-risk, emergency and crisis communication.

Protect the school's reputation by ensuring that public statements and claims are factual, ethical and consistent with approved school status and policies.

2. Scope

This policy applies to communication created, sent, published or represented on behalf of LIS Nairobi, whether formal or informal, written, verbal, digital, visual or face-to-face. It includes communication between the school and students, parents/guardians, employees, prospective families, alumni, partners, regulators, accreditation bodies, media organizations and the wider public.

It covers school email, the approved School Information System (SIS)/parent portal, website, letters and circulars, newsletters, SMS, WhatsApp, telephone calls, meetings, surveys, social media, printed publications, presentations, media interviews, events, emergency alerts and other approved platforms.

Important: Personal messaging applications or personal social-media accounts do not become official school channels simply because a staff member uses them for work. Where a communication is significant for a student, family, safeguarding matter, decision, complaint, finance issue or school record, it must be transferred to or confirmed through an approved school channel.

3. Communication principles

Principle	What it means in practice
Accurate	Information must be checked before it is shared. Dates, names, fees, program status, accreditation claims, results and public statements must be verifiable.
Timely	Information should reach the intended audience early enough to support action. Urgent safety information takes priority.
Clear	Messages should use plain, concise language, identify the purpose and state any action or deadline clearly.
Respectful	Communication must protect dignity and model the school's values, including in disagreement.
Inclusive	Communication should consider language, accessibility, culture, family circumstances and the age/maturity of students.
Secure	Personal or confidential information is shared only through appropriate channels and only with people who need it.
Proportionate	The channel and level of detail should match the importance, urgency and sensitivity of the message.

Principle	What it means in practice
Two-way	Stakeholders should know how to ask questions, provide feedback, raise concerns and receive a response.
Consistent	Where more than one channel is used, the core message must remain the same.
Purposeful	The school avoids over-communication. One primary channel should normally carry the full message; reminders or complementary channels are used only where helpful.

4. Roles and responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Governance / Proprietors	Provide strategic oversight; support compliance, resourcing and accountability; approve or receive high-level communication where required.
Principal	Holds overall accountability for school communication; approves school-wide high-risk or sensitive messages; authorizes the school spokesperson; ensures communication aligns with policy and school values.
Head of Projects, IT and Marketing / Communications Lead	Coordinates public communication, website and social-media governance, branding, major publications, campaigns, media relations, communication systems and crisis-message support; monitors accuracy and consistency across public channels.

Role	Responsibility
Senior Leadership Team	Coordinates section-level and whole-school communication; verifies operational information; ensures messages reach the right audience; follows up unresolved matters.
Heads of Section / HODs / Coordinators	Communicate academic, pastoral and operational information within their remit; verify content; maintain records of significant communications; escalate sensitive issues.
Class Teachers / Mentors	Maintain professional, constructive communication with students and families about learning, progress, attendance, wellbeing and routine matters; escalate concerns appropriately.
Boarding Team	Communicates residential routines, wellbeing, leave, incidents and emergencies with boarders and parents using approved channels and in line with safeguarding expectations.
Admissions / Front Office	Provides accurate information to prospective and current families; maintains consistent admissions messages and directs specialist queries to the correct school owner.
Finance / Operations / Transport / Health teams	Communicate information within their specialist remit and protect confidential information; significant decisions are recorded through official systems.
IT / Data Protection responsible staff	Maintain approved platforms, access controls, security, data-handling processes and technical support for communication systems.

Role	Responsibility
All staff	Use professional language, protect confidentiality, keep appropriate records, avoid unauthorized public statements and refer matters beyond their remit to the appropriate leader.
Students and parents/guardians	Use school channels respectfully; keep contact details current; read key communications; raise questions through the correct route; avoid sharing confidential or misleading school information publicly.

5. Approved communication channels

LIS Nairobi uses a range of channels. The channel should be selected according to the audience, urgency, sensitivity and need for a permanent record. The school's public website currently provides school news, academic information, calendar links, newsletters, handbook/profile information and contact details, while the school also maintains official social-media channels including Instagram, Facebook, TikTok and YouTube and provides WhatsApp access through its official social-media hub.

Channel	Primary use	Owner / control
School Information System (SIS) / parent portal	Academic information, attendance, reports, notices and other functions enabled by the current approved platform.	Relevant school owner / system administrator
Official school email	Formal internal and external communication, individual student matters, meetings, decisions, attachments and records.	All authorized staff; owner responsible for accuracy

Channel	Primary use	Owner / control
Website	Public information, admissions, calendar, policies/handbooks where published, news, school profile and official contact information.	Communications/IT; content owner verifies facts
Circulars / formal letters	School-wide or targeted formal information, policy updates, trips, events, major academic or operational matters.	Relevant leader; Principal/delegate approval according to sensitivity
SMS / emergency alert	Time-sensitive notices, urgent reminders, emergency updates or short operational alerts.	Authorized administration/communications staff
WhatsApp	Fast, limited-purpose communication through approved school accounts/groups; reminders, logistics and approved community communication.	Designated administrator; group owner accountable
Phone	Urgent, sensitive or relationship-based communication where conversation is more appropriate than text.	Relevant authorized staff; significant outcomes recorded
Face-to-face / virtual meetings	Complex, sensitive, developmental or relationship-based matters; parent conferences; staff meetings; approved home visits where applicable.	Relevant leader/staff member; key decisions/minutes recorded

Channel	Primary use	Owner / control
Newsletter / yearbook / school magazine	Celebration, reflection, learning stories, community information and future highlights.	Communications team with contributors and approval process
Official social media	Public storytelling, achievements, events, campaigns, community engagement and admissions/brand communication.	Communications/marketing team only or authorized contributors
Surveys / forms / student voice mechanisms	Feedback, consultation, evaluation and community input.	Relevant leader; data handled securely
Media / press statements	High-profile public statements, interviews and external media responses.	Principal or formally designated spokesperson

6. Communication with parents and guardians

Parents and guardians are key partners in student learning and wellbeing. The school will provide clear routes for routine communication and for escalation when a matter cannot be resolved at the first point of contact.

Routine classroom or subject matters should normally begin with the relevant teacher, mentor or subject leader.

Year-group, pastoral or repeated concerns should be escalated to the relevant coordinator/head of section.

Serious safeguarding, health or safety concerns follow the school's safeguarding/emergency procedures rather than the normal communication hierarchy.

School-wide information should be issued through official channels and should clearly identify the sender, purpose, action required and deadline where relevant.

Where a telephone or face-to-face conversation results in a significant decision, the key outcome should be confirmed in writing or recorded in the approved system.

Parents should keep their email, telephone, emergency and authorized-contact information up to date.

Staff should not be expected to conduct routine parent communication through personal social-media accounts. Personal telephone numbers should not be used for routine work unless specifically authorized or operationally necessary.

Home visits, where used, must have a clear educational/pastoral purpose, be approved through school arrangements and follow safeguarding and professional-boundary expectations.

7. Internal staff communication

Official email and approved internal systems are the primary channels for formal instructions, decisions, meeting records and documents.

Staff WhatsApp groups may support speed and coordination but should not replace formal records for decisions, safeguarding, performance management, complaints or confidential student matters.

Messages should be targeted to relevant recipients. “Reply all” should be used only when the response is genuinely required by the full group.

Leaders should coordinate whole-school announcements to avoid conflicting instructions from different departments.

Important changes to policy, timetable, safety, assessment or operations should be communicated in a format that can be retrieved later.

Staff should respect reasonable working hours. Non-urgent messages sent outside normal working hours do not normally require an immediate response unless the recipient is on duty or the message relates to an emergency.

8. Communication with students and student voice

Communication with students must be age-appropriate, respectful and consistent with safeguarding and professional boundaries. Students should understand school expectations and also have safe, meaningful opportunities to express views, ask questions and raise concerns.

Key messages may be communicated through lessons, assemblies, mentor/class meetings, approved digital platforms, notices and student leadership structures.

Individual academic or pastoral feedback should support learning and dignity and should not unnecessarily expose personal information to peers.

Students should know how to contact a trusted adult, Child Protection/Safeguarding Officer, counsellor, mentor or member of leadership when they have a concern.

Student councils, surveys, focus groups, suggestion mechanisms and program reflections may be used to gather student voice.

Where student feedback identifies a significant issue, leaders should communicate appropriate follow-up so that students can see that participation has meaning.

9. Public, media, marketing and partnership communication

Public communication should accurately represent LIS Nairobi and should demonstrate the school's educational purpose rather than rely only on promotional claims. The website and official social channels are the primary public sources for school information and storytelling.

Only authorized staff may publish on official school accounts or speak to media on behalf of the school.

Public claims about curriculum, examination results, partnerships, accreditation, authorization/candidacy status, awards, facilities or student outcomes must be accurate and current.

Marketing material must not imply a status the school has not formally achieved. Program and accreditation logos may be used only where permitted by the relevant organization's branding rules.

External partners should be named accurately and only where the relationship is genuine, current and appropriately approved.

Student stories should prioritize dignity, learning and authentic achievement. Consent and privacy requirements must be checked before identifiable student content is published.

In a sensitive or controversial matter, staff should not provide informal comments to journalists or post personal responses that could reasonably be interpreted as the school's official position. Media enquiries should be referred to the Principal/Communications Lead.

10. Digital communication, WhatsApp and social media

10.1 WhatsApp and messaging groups

Any official or semi-official group must have a clear purpose, named administrator and identifiable school owner.

Membership should be limited to people who need to be in the group.

Ad hoc groups should be closed or archived when the purpose has ended.

Confidential safeguarding, medical, disciplinary or highly sensitive personal information should not be discussed in general WhatsApp groups.

Important decisions or agreements made in messaging apps must be transferred to an official record where appropriate.

Messages should remain professional; humor, forwarding, emojis or informal language must not compromise clarity, dignity or safeguarding.

No member should be pressured to join a non-essential group using a personal account if an appropriate alternative channel is available.

10.2 Social media

Official school accounts are managed by authorized communications/marketing staff.

Posts should be checked for factual accuracy, spelling, image quality, permissions, relevance and alignment with school values.

Live posting from trips or activities must not create avoidable safety or location risks.

Staff should not publish confidential school information, internal disagreements, identifiable student concerns or unreleased decisions on personal accounts.

The school will respect recorded media-consent/opt-out choices and remove or correct content when a valid privacy or safeguarding concern is identified.

11. Safeguarding, confidentiality and data protection

Communication involving children must place their safety, privacy and best interests first. Kenya's Children Act 2022 protects children's privacy and requires children's personal data to be processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2019. The Office of the Data Protection Commissioner (ODPC) also provides specific guidance for education institutions and the processing of children's data.

Personal data must be shared only for a legitimate school purpose and with appropriate recipients.

Bulk external emails should protect recipient addresses, for example by using approved mailing tools or BCC where appropriate.

Sensitive student information should not be included in public channels, large group chats or unsecured personal accounts.

Safeguarding concerns must be reported through the safeguarding procedure immediately; staff should not attempt to investigate or debate allegations through messaging groups.

Screenshots, recordings and forwarded messages containing personal information must be handled as personal data and shared only when necessary.

Where consent is the basis for optional publicity, such as publication of an identifiable child's image, video or achievement for promotional purposes, the school must verify and document the appropriate parent/guardian consent and respect withdrawal/opt-out choices.

Confidential information should be stored and retained through approved school systems in accordance with the school's privacy/data-retention arrangements.

Communication with a child about sensitive matters should be age-appropriate and should respect the child's dignity and right to be heard.

Safeguarding rule: No communication priority, reputation concern or marketing objective overrides the duty to protect a child. If communication and safeguarding requirements appear to conflict, safeguarding procedures take priority and the concern is escalated immediately.

12. Inclusive, accessible and intercultural communication

LIS Nairobi serves a culturally diverse community. Communication should therefore be designed so that families and students can understand and engage with important information regardless of language background, culture or individual need.

Use clear, plain English for essential instructions and avoid unexplained jargon or acronyms.

Where reasonably necessary, provide translation, explanation or alternative support for key information. The school website currently supports multiple language options, reinforcing the school's commitment to accessibility across a diverse community.

Consider font size, readability, document structure and accessible digital formats when producing important notices.

Avoid language, images or humor that could stereotype, marginalize or disrespect cultural, religious or personal identities.

When communicating about behavior, attainment or wellbeing, focus on evidence and actions rather than labels.

Provide reasonable alternatives for families who cannot access a particular digital platform.

13. Standards, response times and professional etiquette

The following are school service expectations rather than automatic contractual guarantees. Complex matters may require more time, but the sender should be kept informed.

Priority / timeframe	Typical example	Expectation
Immediate / emergency	Safety, safeguarding, medical emergency, missing student, serious security risk	Act immediately through emergency/safeguarding procedure; do not wait for normal email response.
Within one working day	Routine parent/staff message requiring acknowledgement	Acknowledge receipt where a full response is not yet possible.
Within 2–3 working days	Routine query requiring information or consultation	Provide a substantive response or explain when one will be available.
By stated deadline	Forms, consent, event/trip responses, operational requests	Sender states deadline clearly; recipient responds within the requested timeframe.

Priority / timeframe	Typical example	Expectation
Next working day	Non-urgent messages sent outside working hours	No immediate response normally expected unless the recipient is on duty or has agreed otherwise.

13.1 Message standards

Use a clear subject line and identify the purpose early.

State required action, owner and deadline when relevant.

Check names, dates, attachments, links and audience before sending.

Use courteous and professional language even when challenging a decision.

Do not communicate while angry; pause, verify facts and use an appropriate channel.

Avoid unnecessary copying of recipients and avoid sending the same full message across multiple channels unless there is a clear reason.

Sign formal messages with the sender's name, role and appropriate school contact information.

14. Meetings, records and document control

Meetings that make significant decisions should have an agenda or clear purpose and an appropriate written record/minutes.

Circulars, major parent letters, crisis messages and formal notices should be stored in an accessible school record.

Significant telephone/face-to-face outcomes relating to a student, complaint, safety matter or formal decision should be documented.

The final approved version of a whole-school message should be identifiable so that conflicting drafts are not circulated.

Contact lists and distribution groups should be reviewed regularly to remove leavers, correct addresses and reduce data exposure.

Published website information should be reviewed when facts change; obsolete or misleading information should be corrected or archived promptly.

15. Concerns, complaints and escalation

Good communication does not require agreement, but it does require a respectful process. Concerns should normally be resolved as close as possible to the source while allowing escalation when needed.

Begin with the person or team directly responsible for the matter, unless the issue is serious, sensitive or presents a conflict of interest.

If unresolved, escalate to the relevant HOD/coordinator/head of section.

Matters that remain unresolved, affect policy, involve repeated concerns or carry significant risk are referred to senior leadership/Principal.

Formal complaints follow the school Complaints Policy and its documented timelines/process.

Safeguarding concerns bypass the normal complaints route where necessary and are handled immediately under safeguarding procedures.

Public social-media criticism should not be answered defensively by individual staff. The matter should be referred to the Communications Lead/Principal, who will decide whether a response is appropriate.

16. Risk, crisis and emergency communication

The earlier LIS communication policy correctly identified the need for coordinated risk/crisis communication and the possible appointment of a school spokesperson. This revised policy formalizes that process.

16.1 Activation

The principal or delegated senior leader activates the crisis communication process when an event could significantly affect student/staff safety, school operations, public confidence, legal obligations or the school's reputation.

16.2 Crisis communication steps

1. Protect people first and activate the relevant emergency/safeguarding procedure.
2. Verify the facts. Distinguish confirmed information from assumptions or rumors.
3. Identify the communication team and appoint one spokesperson.
4. Identify affected audiences: students, staff, parents, governance, emergency services, regulators, partners and/or media.
5. Prepare an initial holding message where needed: what is known, what action the school is taking, what the audience should do and when the next update will follow.
6. Use the fastest reliable approved channel for urgent audiences; use complementary channels where necessary for reach.
7. Protect confidential and personal information. Do not speculate, assign blame or identify affected individuals without lawful and appropriate reason.
8. Monitor feedback, misinformation and media/social channels; correct material inaccuracies when necessary.
9. Issue updates at a frequency appropriate to the situation, even where there is no major new information.
10. After the incident, review communication effectiveness, record lessons learned and update procedures.

Spokesperson: Only the Principal or a formally designated spokesperson may provide an official media statement during a crisis. Staff should refer media enquiries to the designated person and should not speculate on personal accounts.

17. Monitoring, review and continuous improvement

The effectiveness of communication should be reviewed rather than assumed. The school may use stakeholder surveys, parent feedback, student voice, staff feedback, website/social analytics, enquiry/response data, complaints themes, event attendance and incident reviews to identify where communication is strong or where messages are unclear, late, inaccessible or duplicated.

The Communications Lead/SLT reviews major channel effectiveness at least annually.

Recurring communication failures are treated as a systems issue and should lead to changes in roles, templates, channels or workflow.

Feedback from parents, students and staff should inform review of the policy.

New platforms should not be adopted simply because they are popular; they should be evaluated for purpose, security, accessibility, workload and record-keeping.

Training and induction should include communication expectations, safeguarding, confidentiality, professional boundaries and approved channels.

18. Breaches of the policy

Failure to follow this policy may create safeguarding, privacy, reputational or operational risk. Depending on seriousness, the school may respond through clarification/coaching, removal of communication access, corrective action, formal staff/student procedures, reporting under data-protection or safeguarding processes, or other action required by school policy or law.

Accidental misdirection of personal information, loss of a device/account, unauthorized disclosure, compromised credentials or publication of inappropriate content should be reported immediately to the relevant school leader/IT/data-protection contact so that risk can be contained and assessed.

Appendix A. Communication channel and approval matrix

Communication	Audience	Primary channel	Owner	Approval	Record?
Routine class/subject update	Parents/students	Email / SIS / approved message	Teacher / mentor	Teacher or HOD as appropriate	Yes, if significant

Communication	Audience	Primary channel	Owner	Approval	Record?
Academic progress concern	Parent/student	Email + meeting/phone	Teacher/HOD	Relevant academic leader	Yes
Pastoral/wellbeing concern	Parent/student	Phone/meeting + secure written record	Mentor/pastoral leader	Pastoral leader; safeguard if needed	Yes
School-wide circular	All/target parents	Email/SIS + optional SMS reminder	Relevant leader	Principal/delegate	Yes
Trip/event information	Target families	Circular/email /SIS	Trip/event owner	Coordinator/Principal per risk	Yes
Fee/account matter	Individual/target parents	Official finance channel/email	Finance	Finance leader / Principal if exceptional	Yes
Urgent operational alert	Affected community	SMS/WhatsApp/email as appropriate	Admin/operations	Principal/delegate	Yes
Safeguarding concern	Safeguarding team / necessary parties	Secure direct channel	Any reporter -> Safeguarding Officer	Safeguarding procedure	Yes – confidential
Website/news /social story	Public	Website/social media	Communications/Marketing	Communications Lead; Principal for sensitive content	Published archive
Program/accreditation claim	Public/parents	Website/presentation/circular	Program owner/Communications	Principal + relevant program lead	Yes

Communication	Audience	Primary channel	Owner	Approval	Record?
Media enquiry	Public/media	Formal response/interview	Communications Lead	Principal/designated spokesperson	Yes
Crisis/emergency	Affected audiences	Multi-channel as needed	Crisis team	Principal/designated spokesperson	Yes

Appendix B. Escalation pathway

Routine matter → appropriate first contact → relevant coordinator/HOD/head of section → senior leader → Principal. The normal pathway does not apply where there is an immediate safeguarding, medical, safety, legal or serious reputational risk; such matters are escalated immediately through the relevant specialist procedure.

Level 1	Direct resolution	Teacher / mentor / service owner / relevant staff
Level 2	Coordination / repeated concern	HOD / coordinator / boarding or pastoral leader
Level 3	Significant or unresolved matter	Head of section / relevant SLT member
Level 4	Policy, high-risk or formal matter	Principal
Immediate bypass	Safeguarding / emergency / serious safety risk	Safeguarding Officer / emergency lead / Principal as required

Appendix C. Crisis communication checklist

- ☐ Immediate safety/safeguarding action taken
- ☐ Facts verified and source identified
- ☐ Principal/senior leader informed
- ☐ Crisis communication team activated
- ☐ Spokesperson appointed
- ☐ Key audiences identified

- ☐ Initial holding message approved
- ☐ Channels selected for reach and accessibility
- ☐ Confidentiality/data protection checked
- ☐ Staff given internal guidance / talking points
- ☐ Media/social monitoring assigned
- ☐ Next update time agreed
- ☐ All significant messages archived
- ☐ post-incident review completed

Appendix D. Practical communication standards

Email

Use a meaningful subject line.

Address recipients appropriately and keep tone professional.

Keep one main purpose per message where possible.

Use BCC or approved mailing tools for large external lists where addresses should not be disclosed.

Do not send sensitive student information to personal email accounts unless specifically authorized and secure.

Check attachments before sending and avoid unnecessary personal data in filenames.

WhatsApp / messaging

Keep messages short and operational.

Use official groups/accounts where available.

Avoid confidential case discussion in large groups.

Do not assume a message has been read when acknowledgement is critical; use an appropriate follow-up channel.

Close/archive temporary groups when their purpose ends.

Phone / meeting

Verify the identity of the person before discussing confidential information.

For sensitive or complex issues, choose a private setting.

Record significant decisions or follow-up actions.

If emotions are high, focus on facts, listen, clarify next steps and avoid argument.

Public / social media

Check consent, names, facts, dates and program/partner references.

Use approved branding and current logos only.

Avoid publishing live information that could create a security risk.

Correct material errors promptly and transparently.

Refer controversial or media-sensitive issues to the Principal/Communications Lead.