

9.0 SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONS

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9.10 Community Relations Goals

Establishing and maintaining positive public relations are responsibilities of the Board of Trustees, the Administration, the teaching staff, and the non-teaching staff. The School sees itself as a cohesive factor in the life of the community in this area; for that reason, efforts will be made to keep the community at large informed about the services, accomplishments, needs and goals of the School, and to involve the community in its work for the benefit of the students. Examples of this include but are not limited to: extra-curricular activities; participation in local service programmes; media coverage; school website; collaborating locally on professional development; and supporting local arts and charitable organisations.

CROSS-REFERENCE: Section 2, Appendix 1 – ISA Vision & Strategic Plan

9.20 Community and Parent Information Programme

All members of the School staff and the student body are expected to project a positive image of the School and to act in an ethical manner. The Board of Trustees endorses a policy of active, open communications between the School, the parents, and the community at large and will support efforts to contribute to the community as well as make use of community talent and resources in the School's programmes.

COMMUNICATIONS TO THE PUBLIC

The Chair of the Board of Trustees will be the official spokesperson for the Board of Trustees.

The Head of School and/or his/her designate, as educational leader of the School, will be the official spokesperson for the educational and personnel aspects of school operations. All staff members who issue communications on behalf of ISA must keep the Head of School and/or his/her designate fully informed.

The Head of School and/or his/her designate shall make every attempt to:

- Keep the ISA Community informed about the policies, administrative operation, objectives, and educational programmes and any other aspects affecting the School
- Provide the means for furnishing full and accurate information, favourable and unfavourable, together with interpretation and explanation of the School plans and programmes.

The School places great importance upon the role of the teacher as communicator and interpreter of the School programme to parents and the students. The Head of School and/or his/her designate shall develop procedures and techniques for ensuring continuous and free communication between the teaching staff and the community with regard to promoting ISA.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM PARENTS AND THE COMMUNITY

The School welcomes discussions, questions, suggestions, and constructive criticism about the School, on the premise that it will benefit the School if parents and the community take an active interest in school affairs.

Individual educational concerns should be properly discussed between parent and teacher; then if necessary, with the Principal, then the Head of School, and finally the Board of Trustees.

The Head of School and/or his/her designate shall have responsibility to ensure that communications from the public to the School are effectively handled.

9.20.1 Public Information Media

The Head of School and/or his/her designate is responsible for routine School announcements to parents.

In an attempt to provide current information about the School, ISA posts weekly newsletters (*Thistle Talk*) on the website. These newsletters inform students and parents of school activities and serve as vehicles for important notices from the faculty and the Administration. All content shall be the responsibility of the Head of School and/or his/her designate. Urgent messages are sent directly to parents by text and/or email.

The Head of School and/or his/her designate is the only spokesperson authorised to represent ISA to any official outside enquiries.

The School's website is an excellent source of information: www.isa.aberdeen.sch.uk

9.30 Board of Trustees' Meetings and Community

The Board of Trustees believes in an open information environment on high-level issues. The Board of Trustees encourages communication among administration, parents, teachers, and the community. The Board of Trustees presents annually on the status of the School at the Annual General Meeting.

Notification of Board of Trustees' Meetings will be published in the weekly newsletter *Thistle Talk*, if required.

Public and/or parent attendance at Board Meetings will take place at the invitation of the Board of Trustees, if and when required.

CROSS-REFERENCE: 2.40 Board Meetings

9.30.1 Release of Meeting Information

The Board of Trustees believes in an open information environment on high level issues between the Board of Trustees, administration, the staff, the parents and the students. For this reason, the minutes of the Regular School Board meetings are available in the Head of School's office or can be posted for public review. In addition, the teacher representatives attending the Board of Trustees' meetings shall advise all staff members of the school IT network location of the minutes of previous meetings.

It is the specific desire of the Board of Trustees that all the staff and parents take advantage of these monthly updates to stay informed and involved in ISA and to step up and participate in making ISA the best school possible.

For other information regarding activities or day-to-day information an appropriate source is the weekly school newsletter and the website www.isa.aberdeen.sch.uk

CROSS-REFERENCE: 2.40.9 Minutes
 9.20.1 Public Information Media

9.40 Community and Parent Involvement in School Affairs

CROSS-REFERENCE: 1.20.3 Parent Involvement in Decision-Making

9.40.1 Parent Involvement in Decision-Making

Parents are involved in decision-making via the Board of Trustees and via the PTO. If specific topics or issues require more parental involvement in decision-making, the Board of Trustees will decide on the proper process and involvement if required.

CROSS-REFERENCE:

- 1.20.3 Parent Involvement in Decision-Making
- 2.30.3 Advisory Committees to the Board
- 2.30.4 Board's Legal Counsel
- 2.30.7 Board Calendar
- 2.40.10 Public and Parent Attendance at Board Meetings
- 9.40.2 Community Resources

9.40.2 Community Resources

ISA strives to make the best use of the talents and resources available. Within the ISA community, a parent volunteer programme, run by the PTO, supports this goal by organising and utilising the many skills parents can contribute. To further enhance the educational curriculum for the students, outside community resources are utilised. These may include guest speakers for career day, classroom topics and workshops run by members of the local community.

CROSS-REFERENCE: Section 1, Appendix 1 – PTO Constitution and Bylaws

9.40.3 Community Activities Involving Staff

School personnel are encouraged to participate in community activities, as long as they do not accept community responsibilities that interfere or conflict with their regular schoolwork.

The Head of School and/or his/her designate and the Principals are expected to participate in public, civic, social and professional affairs to enhance public relations and open channels of communication and opportunities to improve the School.

POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

School personnel have the right to participate as individuals in political activities appropriate to their nationality and/or individual belief. They have the responsibility to ensure that the School is in no way associated or adversely affected with their personal political activity.

CROSS-REFERENCE: 9.20 Community and Parent Information Programme

9.40.4 Community Activities Involving Students

The Board of Trustees feels strongly about integrating the students into the local community and has adopted curriculum to achieve this. For example, the IB Programme requires students to become involved through Creativity, Activity and Service (CAS). Service opportunities are available to all students K-12. The programme offers various community activities such as canned food drives, the Cyrenian Sleep-Out and shoebox appeals. Elementary School students are encouraged to become involved with the local community through various activities such as Red Nose Day, Children in Need, shoebox appeals, Scouts, charity appeals and visits to residential care homes.

9.40.5 Gifts and Bequests

The Board of Trustees may accept, on behalf of the School, any bequests or gifts of money or property for a purpose deemed by the Board of Trustees and the Head of School and/or his/her designate to be suitable.

The Head of School and/or his/her designate will use judgement in recommending to the Board of Trustees the acceptance of gifts and bequests, and will make sure that such acceptance will be in the best interests of the School and in keeping with its non-profit status and educational goals.

Accepted gifts and bequests will be gratefully acknowledged by the Head of School and/or his/her designate, on behalf of the Board of Trustees.

9.50 Community and Parent Complaints and Grievances

Constructive criticism of the School, its programme and its employees is welcome when it is motivated by a sincere desire to improve the quality of the School and to help the School perform more effectively. The Administration, the staff, and the Board of Trustees will listen attentively and courteously to parents, parent groups, students and interested citizens who have a concern or complaint about the School or its people, and will seek to respond to such concerns or complaints in a spirit of openness and willingness to improve.

In general, complaints are best resolved at the level where they arise; between parent or parent group and teacher or student and teacher, at the classroom level. Should a parent or parent group feel that the problem has not been properly resolved, he/she/they may request a meeting with the Principal. The Principal may refer a difficult case to the Head of School and/or his/her designate who may, in exceptional cases, submit a problem to the Board of Trustees or to a sub-committee of the Board of Trustees. In these exceptional cases, the Head of School and/or his/her designate or Board of Trustees will respond in writing within a two (2) week time period.

Whenever a complaint is made directly to the Board of Trustees as a whole or to a Board Trustee member as an individual, the person shall be referred to the Head of School and/or his/her designate, who will take appropriate action.

Anonymous complaints will not be considered.

CROSS-REFERENCE: 2.40.1 Annual General Meeting (AGM)

9.50.1 Complaints about School Staff

The School trusts its employees and wishes to support their actions so that employees can perform their work freely from unnecessary or negative criticism and complaints. For that reason, a complaint about a teacher or other staff member will be discussed promptly and openly with the person about whom the complaint was made, and the person receiving the complaint will do everything in his/her power to ascertain the facts before responding to the complaining party or making any kind of commitment or promise.

If the complaint appears to have merit, the School's Grievance Procedure will be followed.

CROSS-REFERENCE: 5.20.8 Staff Complaints and Grievances
 5.20.9 Disciplinary and Dismissal Policy and Procedures

9.50.2 Complaints about the Curriculum or Materials

The School supports a spirit of free enquiry, and sees education as a continual exposure of young minds to a wide variety of facts and ideas. At times, these facts and ideas may be considered controversial by some and it is true that professional personnel have the responsibility of presenting such controversial issues with care, tact and objectivity. The curriculum and instructional materials used in the School have been chosen with great professional care. Only if, in the professional judgement of the educators in the School, there are overriding educational reasons for doing so will any book be removed from a reading list or library shelf, or will any course content be altered in response to a complaint.

Opinions differ about the appropriateness of certain curriculum offerings or instructional materials. From time to time, an individual parent or a group of parents may take exception to a particular class or textbook or library book. Any school employee receiving a complaint about such matters will try to resolve the complaint informally. Many times, the complaint will vanish when the reason for using a particular book or course content are made clear to the complaining party. It is sincerely hoped that this is how most objections can be handled.

However, if a parent's objection remains, he or she may formally challenge instructional materials or course offerings by taking the complaint to the Principal. The Principal may convene an ad-hoc committee, made up of teachers, librarian, administrators, and other persons as deemed appropriate by the Principal, to consider the instructional materials or course. The person filing the complaint will be invited to take part in the ad-hoc committee's discussion, and to present his or her views in detail.

The Committee or, if the Principal prefers not to convene such a committee but wishes to address the problem him/herself, the Principal will render a decision within two weeks of the initial complaint. If the complaining party is not satisfied with the decision, he or she may appeal to the Head of School and/or his/her designate for a final decision. The Head of School and/or his/her designate may involve the Board of Trustees or a subcommittee of the Board of Trustees, but the final decision will be the Head of School's and/or his/her designates.

Access to challenged materials or courses will not be restricted during the complaint process.

CROSS-REFERENCE: 7.50.8 Teaching about Controversial Issues

9.60 Parent Teacher Organisation

The Parent Teacher Organisation (PTO) is a very strong part of the School's support network, and a valued source of advice and practical resource help for the School and its curriculum and extra-curriculum programmes.

It is the policy of the Board of Trustees to encourage parents to take part in the work of the PTO and to work closely with its leadership in the interests of the School.

The purpose of the PTO is to provide the School with any assistance that serves to enhance the quality of education and associated activities provided by the School. The PTO will also serve as a channel of communication to the Board of Trustees, the Administration, the Teachers' Association, and the non-teaching staff.

The Parent Teacher Organisation shall be considered an auxiliary to the School and not as an outside group. The PTO shall be permitted to hold its regular meetings in the School building.

PTO Board Meetings are open to all members of the community. If an issue needs discussion time, it is recommended the PTO President be notified in advance.

The PTO President is a regular guest at the Board of Trustees' monthly meetings.

CROSS-REFERENCE: Section 1, Appendix 1 PTO Constitution and Bylaws
 9.30.1 Release of Meeting Information
 9.40.1 Parent Involvement in Decision-Making

9.70 Community Use of School Facilities

Community groups may be permitted to use school facilities for worthy purposes, provided that such use does not contravene Board of Trustees' policies, does not interfere with the school programme, complies with the ISA HSSE Policy, and does not impose unwarranted burdens on school personnel.

The Head of School and/or his/her designate is authorised to establish regulations for such use and to give specific permission for each case. An appropriate fee for such use will be assessed at that time.

1. Rates may be negotiated for renting facilities for a partial day or for more than one day consecutively.
2. There will be no charge for an ISA student or parent-sponsored activity when the objective of the activity is "non-profit". However, if it becomes apparent that a custodian or technician, or other member of staff, is required for the activity then an appropriate fee may be assessed at the discretion of the Head of School and/or his/her designate.
3. Groups may only use equipment which they have written authorisation to use.
4. ISA will not be responsible for injuries to people using the facility. Third parties hiring ISA facilities are issued with a Health and Safety Information Sheet on confirmation of the hire.
5. The group using the facility will be responsible for damage and/or maintenance costs resulting from their utilisation of the facility.

CROSS-REFERENCE: 3.40 Income from Sources other than Tuition and Fees
 4.20.3 Buildings and Grounds Safety
 Section 6 Health, Safety, Security & The Environment (HSSE)

9.70.1 Use and Rental of School-Owned Equipment

School-owned equipment is available for school-related functions with the permission of the Head of School and/or his/her designate. Depending upon particular group needs, different guidelines apply and must be in compliance with current UK and other applicable Health and Safety Regulations and any other applicable UK and other legislation.

The use of school equipment such as sports and AV equipment, computer labs, and musical instruments are at the discretion of the Head of School and/or his/her designate.

All funds generated from rental of school owned equipment will be accounted for and deposited in the School's general account.

CROSS-REFERENCE: 3.40 Income from Sources other than Tuition and Fees

9.80 Visitors to the School

The School encourages parents to take an active interest in the School and in their children's education and wishes to welcome parents when they visit the School, in compliance with ISA's HSSE principles.

Any person visiting any part of the School must follow the school sign-in arrangements, and must wear a 'visitor' badge and lanyard at all times when inside the School. This is done to ensure a safe learning and working environment for all members of the ISA Community.

Should parents wish to visit a teacher, prior arrangements must be made with the Middle/High School Secretary or Elementary School Secretary or with the teachers themselves.

CROSS-REFERENCE: 4.20.3.1 Security and Key Control
 Section 6 Health, Safety, Security & The Environment (HSSE)