IPS COMMUNITY RELATIONS STRATEGY

INTRODUCTION

Dalkeith Primary School was honoured to receive Independent Public School status (IPS) in July 2011. As part of new reporting and organisational structures required under the IPS format, a Community Relations Strategy is necessary to ensure the staff, local and wider school community are kept informed of Board decisions and discussions, and for parents/guardians and the whole school community to have the opportunity to be involved and have their opinions considered when planning for the School and its future.

AIM

The aim of the Communications Relations Strategy is to provide avenues for clear and transparent two-way communication between the DPS IPS Board and its community. This is to be developed in accordance with good Corporate Governance and promoting, building and sustaining relationships within our School and wider community. The School community will not only be advised of Board decisions, but will be invited and encouraged to participate in discussions and provide comment.

OBJECTIVES

To create a community relations strategy that will effectively reach and inform the local and wider community of Dalkeith Primary School.

TARGET AUDIENCE

- Parents / Guardians
- Family members / grandparents
- Teachers
- Students (past and present)
- Local members of Parliament
- Local businesses
- Existing sponsors and community partners (eg Nedlands Board, Bluearth, Rotary etc)
- Local community in which the School operates

ACTIVITIES

A range of activities will be introduced and undertaken to communicate with the School’s community and target audiences, these include:

New School IPS Communications Officer

A new part-time position has been created at the School specifically for IPS communications with the Board and school community members/target audiences. This person will coordinate and control all paperwork and control the information flow and communications for the Board, such as letters, minutes of meetings, enquiries from school community members, email enquiries etc and distribute to Board members as required. The Communications Officer will be a central point of contact for all Board members and collate all information.
Consistent School Branding

As an Independent Public School, Dalkeith PS should ensure all its marketing materials and school stationery is consistently branded throughout. Another role of the IPS Communications Officer will be to ensure that all School stationery is consistently branded and contain the school logo/emblem plus have a uniform font and font size. This consistent branding is to cover all communications means such as emails, letterheads, proposals, website, certificates, handbooks etc. In addition, working templates and a style guide for all the communications will be created so the School portrays and conveys a professional, clear and consistent approach to all its communications with key target audiences.

Dalkeith Primary School Website

The school website is a tool used by parents, staff and the wider community. Each week parents / guardians are notified with a link that takes them to the website to view the latest School Newsletter or P&C newsletter.

There are a few ways to use the School Website in communicating with the school community about IPS initiatives and Board activities:

- Create a new ‘drop down’ icon on the Home Page such as “IPS/School Board” which will provide specific information on the IPS, school Board, initiatives and activities.
- Provide a dedicated email address for contacting the Board (see below)

Email address

A specific and dedicated Email address will be created so community members can contact Board members with ideas/comments etc. The email address will be directed to the School’s IPS Communications Officer who will then collate and direct to the Board. The email address will be posted on the School Website home page and under the IPS/Board drop down section, and will be mentioned in the School and P&C Newsletters.

Newsletters

The School communicates with the school community each week with either the School newsletter or the P&C Newsletter. These newsletters rotate weekly throughout the school year. Each newsletter will include a piece from the Board to update the school community on IPS or Board activities.

P&C Meetings

In addition to including any IPS/Board information in the P&C Newsletter when required, a Board member will also attend P&C Meetings, which are held twice a term, to provide a feedback report, update and inform P&C members of any IPS/Board activities etc and ask for input when relevant.

General Mail Box

A “Mail Box” should be established at the School Reception and its purpose will be two-fold:
- Allow school community member to drop suggestions, comments, questions, etc into the box for addressing by Board members
- For Board members to send correspondence to each other.

The information gathered in the mail box will be sorted by the IPS Communications Officer and distributed accordingly for action.
School Notice Board

The School Notice Board is located on the school verandah which is located outside the classrooms and is a high traffic area within the school. The majority of Parents would pass this noticeboard every day. Information such as P&C activities, minutes and school activities are posted on the noticeboard. In addition, information from the Board to school community members should be posted on the noticeboard such as copies of the minutes and invitations to attend Board meetings, and it would need to be updated regularly by the IPS Communications Officer.

School & Student Handbook

The student handbook contains information about the School, its mission, vision, policies, procedures, uniform requirements, and so on. In addition, it is recommended that a section be included on the IPS status and Board to inform parents/students and the school community.

75th Year Anniversary

It is suggested that as part of the school’s 75 year Anniversary celebrations that past students be welcomed back to the school for a celebration. An event should be organised around the Anniversary to celebrate DPS, its rich history and its success.

Looking Ahead to 2012

It is recommended that the school communicates its successes and opportunities to the wider school community in 2012 and promote the Library Upgrade which is an ongoing project and one that is already showing great improvements; and also promote the new Pre-Primary which will be on-site and have new teachers, new playground and facilities. These two projects will provide opportunities to promote to and communicate with the School’s target audiences and inform about IPS and Board decisions also.