



Homefield Preparatory School

Communication Policy – Home/School

Introduction and Aims

Homefield Preparatory School recognises the importance of the partnership between home and school. In understanding and valuing the parents' role in supporting children throughout their school life, and in consideration of the aspects of school organisation that impact upon the home, the school is actively seeking to develop clear lines of communication.

We believe that clear, open communication between the school and parents/carers has a positive impact on pupils' learning because it:

- Gives parents/carers the information they need to support their child's education
- Helps the school improve, through feedback and consultation with parents/carers
- Builds trust between home and school, which helps the school better support each child's educational and pastoral needs

The aim of this policy is to promote clear and open communication by:

- Explaining how the school communicates with parents/carers
- Setting clear standards for responding to communication from parents/carers
- Helping parents/carers reach the member of school staff who is best placed to address their specific query or concern so they can get a response as quickly as possible

In the following sections, we will use 'parents' to refer to both parents and carers.

Roles and Responsibilities

Headmaster

The Headmaster is responsible for ensuring that communications with parents are effective, timely and appropriate.

Staff

All staff are responsible for:

- Responding to communication from parents in line with this policy and the school's ICT and internet acceptable use policy;
- Working with other members of staff to make sure parents get timely information (if they cannot address a query or send the information themselves).

Teaching Staff will not respond to communications outside of school hours (8.00 am to 5.00 pm), or their working hours (if they work part-time), or during school holidays. We normally aim to respond to emails within 48 hours. For urgent matters, please telephone the school office on 020 8642 0965.

Parents

Parents are responsible for:

Ensuring that communication with the school is respectful at all times;

- Making every reasonable effort to address communications to the appropriate member of staff in the first instance;
- Respond to communications from the school (such as requests for meetings) in a timely manner;
- Checking all communications from the school.

Any communication that is considered disrespectful, abusive, or threatening will be dealt with in line with our parental terms and conditions.

How we communication with Parents and Carers

The sections below explain how we keep parents up-to-date with their child's education and what is happening in school.

Parents should monitor all of the following regularly to make sure they do not miss important communications or announcements that may affect their son.

Email

We use email to keep parents informed about a number of things, such as:

- Upcoming school events
- Fees
- Scheduled school closures (for example, for staff training days)
- School surveys or consultations
- Class activities or teacher requests

Text messages

We may text parents about:

- Short-notice changes to the school day
- Collection timed for delayed trip returns
- School bus run timing issues
- Emergency school closures (for instance, due to bad weather)

School Calendar

A link to our calendar for the term can be found on our website.

Where possible, we try to give parents at least 2 weeks' notice of any events or special occasions (including trips, non-uniform days, special assemblies or visitors, or requests for pupils to bring in special items or materials). This information is sent out through SIMS In Touch and also included in the school calendar.

Phone calls

The School may need to contact parents in an emergency or urgent situation to inform you of a situation involving your son or to discuss payment of fees etc. Parents are required to provide the contact numbers for three individuals who may be able to collect their son and ensure that these details are kept up to date.

Examples of reasons to phone parents include:

- If your child has been sick and needs to be taken home to be looked after
- If your son has had an accident, especially head injuries, or if consent for medication is required

SIMS In Touch (Electronic messaging service)

We send the following information home regularly, through SIMS In Touch:

- Letters about trips and visits
- Consent forms
- Our bi-weekly newsletter – Headlines
- Key messages from the school to either the whole community or selected groups of parents

All the messages that are sent to parents via SIMS In Touch should be read, so that key information is not missed.

Microsoft Teams - Homework

In line with our policy on Homework, all work that is set is placed on Microsoft Teams, which can be accessed through the internet. Microsoft Teams provides all the necessary information including the tasks that have been set and the date on which the work is due.

Meetings

We hold a number of parents' evenings each term, for specific year groups, across all parts of the school. During these meetings, parents can talk with teachers about their child's achievement and progress, the curriculum or schemes of work, their child's wellbeing, or any other area of concern.

The school may also contact parents to arrange meetings if there are concerns about a child's achievement, progress, or wellbeing.

Parents of pupils with special educational needs (SEN), or who have other additional needs, may also be asked to attend further meetings to address these additional needs.

Pre-Prep

Parents are offered the opportunity of daily contact with the teaching staff when collecting their children from the school. They are also invited to attend a variety of events, such as plays and sports day during the year.

In the Autumn term, the Pre-Prep staff hold an information evening. A further parental consultation evening is staged in the Spring term.

Parents are invited to an Open Afternoon in the Summer term and receive a full report of their son's progress for the academic year.

Junior and Senior Departments

Parents have the opportunity of daily contact with the teaching staff when collecting their children from the school. Parents are also invited to attend various events such as plays and sporting fixtures throughout the year. In the Autumn term we hold pastoral tutor meetings and in the Spring terms parental consultations are arranged. Each boy receives a full end of year report.

In the Senior Department

Every boy also receives half-termly grade cards, one at half-term and one at the end of term (via SIMS).

School website

Key information about the school is posted on our website, including:

- School times and term dates
- Important policies and procedures
- Important events and announcements
- Curriculum information
- Important contact information
- School fees
- Information about before and after-school provision

Parents should check the website before contacting the school.

Parental Surveys

All parents may occasionally receive questionnaires on aspects of the service provided by the school. Replies are confidential and are collated and analysed. Issues arising are discussed by Governors, the Senior Management Team and staff and are used to help the school devise its Development Plan.

How Parents and Carers can communicate with the School

Please use the list in appendix 1 to identify the most appropriate person to contact about a query or issue, including the school office number and email address.

Email

E-mail offers an efficient and speedy communications tool; parents are encouraged to contact the school via e-mail as an alternative to telephone or letter.

School contact details:

Website: www.homefieldprep.school
General enquiries: administration@homefieldprep.school
Absence notification: absence@homefieldprep.school
Minibus enquiries: minibus@homefieldprep.school

Direction on how to contact individual staff via e-mail is posted on the school website.

For non-urgent issues, parents should always email the school, or the appropriate member of staff, in the first instance. We aim to acknowledge all emails within two working days, and to respond in full (or arrange a meeting or phone call if appropriate) when possible thereafter, during term time. If a query or concern is urgent, and you need a response sooner than this, please call the school and speak to the office staff.

Parents are requested to use their son's Form Teacher or Tutor as the first point of contact in matters relating to pastoral care, academic achievement or administration. In the senior school, they may also wish to e-mail the subject teacher directly to satisfy a query relating to a particular subject. If parents feel that they need further clarification they are invited to contact the relevant Senior Management Team member. Should further resolution be required, parents should e-mail the Headmaster.

Parents are required to maintain an up to date email address and to notify the school of any change. Staff are expected to check their e-mail traffic daily as it is also used for internal communication.

Phone calls

If you need to speak to a specific member of staff about a non-urgent matter, please email the school office and the relevant member of staff will contact you within two working days, subject to their teaching commitments.

If this is not possible (due to teaching or other commitments), someone will get in touch with you to schedule a phone call at a convenient time. We aim to make sure you have spoken to the appropriate member of staff within five days of your request, during term time.

If your issue is urgent, please call the School Office.

Urgent issues might include things like:

- Family emergencies
- Safeguarding or welfare issues

The school's main telephone number is **020 8642 0965**.

The switchboard is manned from 08.15am to 5.15pm, Monday to Friday during term time. Outside these hours, parents can leave a message on voice mail. The voice mails are checked daily during term time. The office staff will relay the messages to the relevant member of staff.

The extensions are:

- 1 for the reporting of absences¹
- 2 for the Admissions Department
- 3 for the Finance office
- 4 for the Marketing Department
- 5 for the Catering Manager
- 6 for updates of Sports fixtures

¹ If a child is absent, parents are required to telephone the school before 8.25 am. Otherwise they will be contacted on the first day of their child's absence. Holidays during term time should be avoided, where at all possible. Should a request prove necessary, parents are required to obtain permission from the Headmaster.

Meetings

If you would like to schedule a meeting with a member of staff, please email the appropriate address (see appendix 1), or call the school to book an appointment. We try to schedule all meetings within three working days of the request.

While teachers are available at the beginning or end of the school day if you need to speak to them urgently, we recommend you book appointments to discuss:

- Any concerns you may have about your child's learning
- Updates related to pastoral support, your child's home environment, or their wellbeing

Links with other policies

The policy should be read alongside our policies on:

- ICT and internet acceptable use
- Parental Terms and Conditions
- Complaints Policy

Who should I contact?

If you have questions about any of the topics in the table below, or would like to speak to a member of staff:

- Email the most appropriate address
- Include your child's full name in the subject line

I HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT...	WHO YOU NEED TO TALK TO
My child's learning/class activities/homework	Your son's Form Teacher/Tutor/Subject teacher
My child's wellbeing/pastoral support	Your son's Form Teacher/Tutor
Fees and payments	Bursary
Notice of withdrawal from School	The Headmaster
School trips	Member of staff that has sent out the information regarding the trip
Uniform/lost and found	The Welfare Assistant
Medical issues and Health Care plans	The Welfare Assistant
Attendance and absence requests	If you need to report your child's absence, call: 020 8642 0965 Option 1 If you want to request approval for term-time absence, contact The School Office
Behaviour	Your son's Form Teacher/Tutor
School events/the school calendar	The School Office
Special educational needs	SENCO
Before and after-school clubs	Your son's Form Teacher/Tutor
The Chair of Governors	The Bursar
Catering/meals	The Bursar

Complaints

If you would like to file a formal complaint, please follow the procedure set out in our Complaints Policy, a copy of which can be found on the School's website.