



**Birkdale**  
Prep School

*PREP*

*HANDBOOK*

*2023/2024*



## Introduction

Welcome to the Prep Department. The aim of this handbook is to provide you with a guide to life in years P1 to P4 (Y3 to Y6), and explain to you the expectations we have of the children during these vital years.

There is no substitute to coming and talking to us, however, this booklet should provide you and your child with an accessible set of answers to your questions.

As horizons widen in the Prep department and your child will take advantage of increasing opportunities, we will expect them to become organised, independent and mature young people displaying increasing levels of resilience. Consequently, the partnership between home and school is one we consider vital in ensuring the highest possible quality of educational provision.

Thank you for your ongoing support.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Chris Burch".

Chris Burch

BA (Hons) PGCE

Head of the Prep School

## TEACHING STAFF

Mr C J Burch	BA (Hons) PGCE	Head of the Prep School
Mrs J McDermott	BEd (Hons)	Deputy Head (Pastoral), Designated Safeguarding Lead, Online Safety Coordinator, PSHE Coordinator
Mrs S Lambert	BA(Hons) PGCE	Deputy Head (Academic) Prep Form Teacher
Mrs E J Arcari	BA (Hons)	Head of Pre-Prep, Class Teacher
Mr G Bish	BMus	Head of Music
Mrs H Chung	GRSM Dip RCM QTS	Pre-Prep Form Teacher
Mr J H Cooper	BSc QTS	KS2 & Games Teacher, Maths Coordinator, Prep Form Teacher
Mrs W Cooper	BA (Hons) PGCE	Pre-Prep Class Teacher
Mr N Dymock	BSc	Head of PE & Games
Mrs H Fletcher	BMus (Hons)	Music/Drama/Learning Support - Pre-Prep
Miss V Frewin	MA	Art & DT Coordinator/Prep Form Teacher
Mrs C Grover	BA (Hons) PGCE	Pre-Prep Class Teacher
Miss J Harrison	BA (Hons)	Maths & Science Teacher/Prep Form Teacher
Mrs A Hinchliffe	BA (Hons) MSc PGCE	Assistant SENCo (Prep)
Mr J Hollings	BMus (Hons) MA PGCE	Prep Form Tutor/Humanities Coordinator/Charities Coordinator
Mrs G Kay	BA (Hons)	Modern Foreign Languages Teacher (Pre-Prep)
Mrs R Kirkby	BA (Hons) Cert Ed	Assistant SENCo (Pre-Prep)
Mr C Mason	BEd (Hons)	IT Coordinator/Prep Form Teacher
Mrs K Massey	MA (Hons) Med PGCE	Pre-Prep Class Teacher
Mrs L Marsh	BA (Hons)	Whole School SENCO
Mrs L Miles	BA PGCE	Key Stage 2 Teacher/RE Coordinator/Prep Form Teacher
Mrs C Needham	BA PGCE	English & Prep Drama Coordinator
Mrs M Oliver	BA (Hons) PGCE	Pre-Prep Class Teacher
Miss V Roberts	BEd (Hons)	Prep English & Drama/Prep Form Teacher
Mrs V Stoltz	BEd	Prep Form Teacher
Mrs J Squire	BEd	Pre-Prep Class Teacher
Mrs J Thake	BA QTS	Modern Foreign Languages Coordinator

Mrs R Tonks	BA (Hons) PGCE	English Coordinator/ Prep Form Teacher
Mrs F L M Walton	BA MA PGCE	Key Stage 1 Teacher

## TEACHING ASSISTANTS

Miss A Aylott	BA (Hons) PGCE	Teaching Assistant - Pre-Prep Department
Mrs T Hinson	BA	Teaching Assistant- Pre-Prep Department
Mrs L Peat		Teaching Assistant – Pre-Prep Department
Miss A Lister	BA (Hons)	Teaching Assistant – Pre-Prep Department
Mrs A Stols	BEd (Hons)	Teaching Assistant – Pre-Prep Department
Mrs R Mun		Teaching Assistant – Pre-Prep Department
Miss R Hart		Teaching Assistant – Pre-Prep Department
Mrs L Beesley		Teaching Assistant – Prep Department, Breakfast Club Supervisor
Mrs J Whitaker		Teaching Assistant – Prep Department, Breakfast Club Supervisor

## Gap Year Students

Felix Veysey  
Annabelle Wilkinson

## ADMIN

Mrs S Rooper	Prep School Secretary /PA to the Head of the Prep School
Mrs C Boardman	Belmayne House Matron/Receptionist
Mrs R Metcalfe	Belmayne House Matron/Receptionist
Mrs T Davis	Matron

## School's Mission Statement

*Birkdale is an independent school for children aged 4-18 and currently for girls from Reception to Y6 and in the Sixth Form. The Christian faith is of central importance to Birkdale. Stemming from this, our core values are care and respect for all, commitment to each other and to the school, and the pursuit and celebration of excellence. We aim to give all pupils a strong academic education, while developing them as whole individuals prepared for their wider role as responsible citizens willing to serve the community.*

## SCHOOL VALUES & PRINCIPLES

Here are the school principles. They are how we relate to each other, to the children, to the parents and how we expect them to relate to each other. These are displayed around the school and frequently referred to:

- 1 We treat others as we would have them treat us.
- 2 We know we are not perfect and so we say sorry when we get things wrong.
- 3 We encourage each other in all that we do and forgive each other's failings.
- 4 We are truthful and show integrity and humility.
- 5 We share what we have.
- 6 We show support for each other by not gossiping, judging or criticising others: we are loyal to each other.
- 7 We show our respect to everyone by kindness, helpfulness and politeness.
- 8 We listen to each other and like a family we recognise the needs of each other.
- 9 We celebrate our diversity and value each person equally.
- 10 We work together to help each of us to be our best selves.

Across all age phases at the School, from 4 to 18 years of age, and across all elements of it's community, the school reinforces and develops 5 key values:

Respect

Humility

Integrity

Courage

Compassion

These underpin our teaching and learning, policies and procedures, relationships and decision making.

The Prep School helps the pupils understand the values by using 'Principles' and Golden Rules, to help the children develop a practical vocabulary to try and live out these values.

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## 1. Absence from School

Dates of terms and holidays are published well in advance. It is a condition of entry to Birkdale that pupils are not withdrawn from school during term (except in cases of illness) without prior permission from the Head of the Prep School. Any difficulties in this area should be referred directly to him.

Leave requests are made via the school portal.

If you haven't already logged onto the portal you will need to create an account using the email address that the school has on record for you. To access the portal please follow this link <https://birkdalschool.myschoolportal.co.uk/> you will see on the 'my children' page a link to request absence.

If a pupil is ill, parents are asked to telephone the school before registration at 8.45 am. On their return, a letter should be given to the form tutor from the parents giving the reason for absence. If a pupil contracts, or is exposed to, an infectious disease, matron should be informed at once.

## 2. Before School/After School Care

A Breakfast Club is available from 7.30 am. This exists to provide parents with the opportunity to bring their children to school for a healthy breakfast. Pupils are supervised in the dining room between 7.30 and 8.15 am. A charge of £3.25 per breakfast is added to the school bill. There is no need to book. **No other supervision is provided before 8.15 am and the school can accept no responsibility for the safety and welfare of the children before that time.**

We also provide facilities for looking after pupils whose parents are not able to collect them immediately after school ends.

### Late collections

Matron will look after Prep pupils (whose parents have been **unavoidably delayed**) in the reception area until 4.10 pm. Children not collected by 4.10 pm will be taken to After School Care and a charge of £5.00 per occasion will be added to the end of term bill. £5.00 up to the first hour and £7.00 for collection after the first hour ½ (Please note that the governors review these charges regularly. Parents will be informed in writing of any changes). ***Please note that this facility is intended as an emergency measure only.***

### After School Care

If parents of Prep pupils know that they will not be able to collect their children promptly when school ends they are invited to book them in to After School Care. A snack tea will be served and, if time permits, the children can play board games, read, do their homework or play outside, under supervision, if the weather is suitable. The direct line for use after 3.50 pm is 0114 2670407.

### **Parents are asked to ensure that their children are collected by 6.00 pm**

Booking is by email to [afterschoolcare@birkdalschool.org.uk](mailto:afterschoolcare@birkdalschool.org.uk).

**We prefer bookings to be made by the Friday of the preceding week so that we can arrange catering, but we can usually accept a booking made in the morning for that evening.**

A charge for After School Care is added to the end of term bill.

End of school to 5.00 pm	£5.00
End of school to 6.00 pm	£7.00



### 3. Assessment, Grades and Reporting

Your child will already have gone through either our own Pre-Prep Department or through an Infant Department in a primary school elsewhere. Teachers will have made informed assessments of your child throughout each of these school years and, towards the close of Key Stage 1 (in PP3, Y2).

In **P1** and **P2** assessment will continue in a similar way to that in Pre-Prep but with standard tests regularly throughout the year. At the end of Prep 2, assessments are used (alongside performance over the previous year and teachers' professional judgements) to help us determine the sets into which we will put your child for some core subjects in P3.

In **P3** there is a cycle of continuous assessment in the core subjects. These will be papers for the whole year group, all pupils sitting the same paper. The scores for these will be reported to you on the **grade sheets** at the end of term. In some tests we can also report a National Average Percentage to help you gauge their performance nationally.

#### Grades

Grades are sent home on **Grade Sheets** by BirkdalePost throughout the pupil's career in the Prep Department. Grades are intended to enable individual target setting and to provide parents with a summary of progress or otherwise.

In Prep 1 - 4 both Effort and Attainment grades are given termly.

**Effort Grades** are awarded for effort in written work and separately for participation and cooperation. Expected levels are described as such:

**Written work** – takes care with presentation. Responds well to teachers' advice. Consistently focuses on the tasks set.

**Participation/Cooperation** – participates readily and positively. Works effectively with peers.

Grades will be awarded as follows:

**1 Excellent**

**2 Good**

**3 Inconsistent**

**4 Unsatisfactory**

**Attainment Grades** will be given, as well as Effort grades, for the full curriculum range of subjects studied. Attainment grades reflect **academic achievement** in the subject and cover are awarded using the following codes:

**O** means Outstanding

**E** means Exceeding

**S** means Secure

**W** means Working towards

All grades can be modified by a **+ or -** sign. For example, S+ as an attainment grade would signify "A little better than secure".

An example Grade Sheet entry will look like the following:

Subject	Attainment	Effort (Written)	Effort (Participation and Cooperation)
History	S+	1	2

## Reports

Reports are produced once a year for each child, being written in the Summer term when there is no Parents' Evening. Subject reports indicate, in a fairly detailed way, the Learning Outcomes covered in that subject in that year. A written comment will reflect your child's progress in relation to those outcomes and will usually refer to his attitude and involvement in lessons.

Reports are sent via BirkdalePost a week before the end of summer term.

## 4. Bullying

### Definition and Introduction

*Bullying is the wilful, conscious desire to hurt, threaten or frighten someone. It can be physical and/or verbal in nature. It may involve teasing and taunting, intimidation, extortion and physical assault. It may be related to racial, religious, cultural, sexual/sexist, homophobic, disability and cyber (social websites, mobile 'phones, text messages, photographs and email) issues. The weapons of the bully are threat and fear.*

Birkdale views bullying extremely seriously. What follows is a summary of how we deal with bullying and how you might be involved in helping with the issues. Bullying is not tolerated at school and this is made clear to all who study and work at Birkdale. We take a proactive stance and use the strategies below as both preventatives and responses.

Perceptions play a great part in these dealings. On the one hand we cannot simply accept that an event may be just the rough and tumble of the playground, yet equally we must not always assume that an interaction between children is bullying. What might be seen as playful teasing by one child may be seen as verbal bullying by another. Equally, all children have the capacity to be unkind to each other and prolonged unkindness can be seen as bullying.

### How we try to prevent bullying

- observation – staff are vigilant in watching the behaviour of children towards each other, in picking up comments made by other children and in detecting changes in a child's attitude, behaviour or standard of work
- Circle Time within PSHE, including assertiveness training
- playground supervision by designated staff
- shepherd system for new pupils
- sharing of information between staff, informally and via Pastoral Report Forms
- bullying is not seen as 'part of growing up'

- pupils are encouraged to speak to their form tutor or, indeed, any member of staff with whom they feel confident, about concerns they might have
- we ensure that all pupils know they should speak out against bullying; this is not seen as 'telling tales'
- we ensure pupils know that we care about bullying
- we try, as adults, to act in the way we expect of the children.

### **Advice to pupils**

#### **If you are the one being bullied:**

- **DON'T** just put up with bullying. Not telling is playing by the bully's rules
- **DON'T** buy off the bully with presents or money
- **DON'T** hit back. This might encourage the bully and gives them an excuse to hurt you
- **DON'T** blame yourself for what has happened
- **DO** look them in the eye and say forcefully 'I don't like you doing that. I want you to stop it NOW'
- **DO** get away from the situation as quickly as possible
- **DO** report the incident to a member of staff straight away
- **DO** tell your family

#### **When you are talking about a bullying incident with an adult, be clear about:**

- **what** has happened to you
- **when** it happened
- **how often** it has happened
- **who** was involved
- **who else** saw what was happening
- **where** it happened

#### **If you see or know about bullying happening:**

- **DON'T** smile or laugh or join in
- **DO** tell the bully to stop what they are doing
- **DO** show the bully that you disapprove of what they are doing
- **DO** tell a member of staff immediately
- **DO** invite the victim to join in with your activity or group

### **How we disseminate our anti-bullying policy within school and keep the policy alive**

Within the induction booklet for new staff

Distribution to all existing staff

Posters produced by the children

PSHEE and assemblies

Annual policy review in February

### **Advice to parents**

Your role as parents is to urge your child to keep us informed of any worries they may have. We cannot guarantee that we will always be able to remove these worries completely but we will take them seriously and investigate and deal with them as well as we are able.

At the same time, we would assume that you encourage your child to treat others with kindness and respect always.

If you have any concerns that your child is being bullied at school you should in the first instance, talk or write to his form tutor **as soon as you are aware of it**, subsequently you may wish to talk or write to the Deputy Head. Sometimes parents wonder if their concerns are unimportant, or they do not wish to make a fuss, but at school we are experienced in working with children and are usually able to determine the degree of concern which is appropriate. ***We can only act on that which we know about.***

### **What we will do if bullying is detected**

We take any complaints about bullying seriously and do our best to deal with them as soon as we receive the complaint. At some point, usually early on, we bring together both 'bully' and 'victim'. In our experience, in most cases it turns out that there has not been any bullying but behaviour or misunderstanding between the parties has resulted in one or both being upset. Both parties are helped to move on from the situation.

On the rare occasion when there is a clear case of bullying we will punish the bully and contact the parents of both bully and victim. Where bullying is not proved but behaviour is considered unacceptable, some form of punishment will be given; we try to make this appropriate and in proportion to the unacceptability of the behaviour. See the section on Rewards and Punishments in this manual.

These processes are time consuming and we make great efforts to get to the bottom of exactly what might be happening. However, we are not perfect and there are times when we feel we are not completely sure that we have the full picture. Similarly, there may be times when we are simply not informed of particular behaviour.

### **Advice concerning Cyber-bullying**

**Birkdale Prep School has a comprehensive Anti-Cyberbullying policy that can be found in the school Anti-Bullying Document. The key points are as follows:**

**At Birkdale Prep School children are not permitted to carry mobile phones or any such devices. Where a pupil has permission to bring such technology into school it must be handed to the office and collected at the end of the day.**

**If a bullying incident directed at a child occurs using email or mobile phone technology either inside or outside of school time.**

1. Advise the child not to respond to the message
2. Refer to relevant policies including e-safety/acceptable use, anti-bullying and PHSE and apply appropriate sanctions
3. Secure and preserve any evidence
4. Inform the sender's e-mail service provider
5. Notify parents of the children involved
6. Update Parents of a general web-based issue via a parent workshop for the school community

7. Consider informing the police depending on the severity or repetitious nature of offence or using the CEOP 'Thinkuknow' web-based resource
8. Inform the LA online-safety officer

**If malicious or threatening comments are posted on an Internet site about a pupil or member of staff.**

1. Inform and request the comments be removed if the site is administered externally
2. Secure and preserve any evidence
3. Send all the evidence to CEOP at [ww.ceop.gov.uk/contact\\_us.html](http://ww.ceop.gov.uk/contact_us.html)
4. Endeavour to trace the origin and inform police as appropriate
5. Inform e-safety officer

**Children should be confident in a no-blame culture when it comes to reporting inappropriate incidents involving the internet or mobile technology: they must be able to do this without fear.**

## **5. Private Buses to and from School**

Over the years groups of parents have taken it upon themselves, with the support of the school, to organise private transport from their home areas at the start and end of the school day. Consequently several buses, operated by private companies, bring pupils to the school gate each morning and collect them again at designated times at the end of the school day. The buses are usually shared by Birkdale Senior School pupils and children from other local independent schools.

In the morning the children who have travelled to school by bus are expected to make their way directly into school from the bus. In the afternoon two arrangements exist at the Prep School depending on the bus company: a designated member of staff checks that a group is fully assembled and escorts the children to the public road and waits with them and checks that each child has boarded their correct bus.

The buses do not wait for children. At the end of the school day the school will make every attempt to get them on the buses promptly but if a child does not appear at the group assembly point on time there is a possibility that they will not get on the bus. In such a case the school will locate the pupil and telephone parents to let them know the child is not on the bus and that arrangements must be made to collect them from school, where they will be supervised until collection.

If a pupil is in an after-school club, or playing in a match which ends after normal school time, they will not be able to travel home on the bus that day.

When a whole-school event is arranged which will continue after normal school hours (such as the Charities Fair) all parents are informed by BirkdalePost well in advance. Parents of children travelling on buses are given the option (by way of a reply option in the BirkdalePost) to have their child put on the bus at the usual time or to collect them from school themselves.

It must be stressed that the school does not administer these buses and cannot take responsibility for the buses or passengers other than as described above. We do, however, liaise closely with the bus companies and give every support to the arrangement.

If you would like to know more about this private transport and the areas served, please get in touch initially with the School Office.

## **6. Calendar**

The School Calendar can be accessed via the School website. Parents are warmly invited to concerts, plays and matches and your support is much appreciated.

## 7. Charities

We believe our charitable activities with the children promotes an awareness of the plight of those less fortunate than ourselves and breed community spirit and selflessness. A key factor in our fundraising is the role of our pupils. Most initiatives develop from the pupils own ideas and are successful due to their enthusiasm and drive.

We adopt a single charity for which we raise money throughout the academic year. In recent years the charities we have supported are:

2015/2016 Nepal Project	£5,300
2016/2017 Josephs' Goal	£7,295
2017/2018 Sheffield Children's' Hospital with Birkdale Senior School	£30,000 in conjunction
2018/2019 Mercy Ships	£5,700
2019/2020 Young Minds	£3,750
2021/2022 Toilet Twinning	Over 50 twinned toilets
2022/2023 City of Sheffield Sanctuary	tbc

In addition, we have raised money for national projects such as Comic Relief, Sport Relief, Children in Need, Tear Fund and Operation Christmas Child.

The main fundraising event of the year is the Christmas Charities Fair in December. However, throughout the year pupils, staff and parents channel their energies into a range of activities from sponsored events, cake stalls, selling of ice cream to playground games.

## 8. Assemblies & Church Services

There is a Christian based assembly in the hall on each day of the week (except Tuesday) which all pupils and staff are expected to attend.

Twice a year, at Christmas and Easter, we hold a service at a local church. All pupils attend these. There are also special assemblies at Harvest and Remembrance to which parents are invited.

## 9. Clubs

Clubs take place before school, at lunchtimes and after school. The current list, with timings, is in the school calendar and there are activities for children in every class of the school. Most clubs are free of charge, being run by teachers in their own time. However there are a small number of clubs that are run by specialist coaches brought in from outside school and there is a small charge for these, which is added to the end of term bill.

## 10. Correspondence

Correspondence on school business should be addressed to the Head of the Prep School, Birkdale Prep School, Clarke House, Clarke Drive, Sheffield, S10 2NS. All correspondence relating to fees and accounts should be addressed to The Bursar, Birkdale School, Oakholme Road, Sheffield, S10 3DH.

## 11. The Curriculum

### P1 and P2

P1 and P2 are generally based in their form rooms for around 50% of their lessons, delivered by their Form Tutor. The emphasis is to continue to develop literacy and numeracy skills through a high percentage of English and Maths lessons. However, in line with the school's policy of developing the whole person, a varied curriculum is maintained as children experience specialist teaching in Modern Foreign Languages, ICT, DT, PE, Music and Art. There is some specialist teaching in RE, Geography and History. Games, Swimming, Drama and PSHE complete the curriculum.

Period allocation (a period is 30 minutes) is shown below:

Subject	P1	P2
English	10	10
Maths	10	10
Science	3	3
History	3	3
Geography	3	3
Modern Foreign Languages	2	2
RE	2	2
PE	2	2
Music	2	2
Art	2	2
ICT/DT	2	2
Swimming/Drama	3	3
Games	4	4
PSHE	1	1
Reading	1	1

### P3 and P4

P3 and P4 benefit from specialist teaching in all subjects, with continued emphasis on the core subjects of English, Maths and Science. Increased individual attention is achieved through smaller, setted ability groups in these core subjects. Small teaching groups also feature in Music, ICT, DT, Art and RE. The programme continues to provide breadth and variety of experience in all foundation subjects.

Period allocation is shown below:

<b>Subject</b>	<b>P3</b>	<b>P4</b>
English	8	8
Maths	8	8
Science	4	4
History	3	3
Geography	3	2
French	3	3
RE	2	2
Music	2	2
Art	2	2
ICT/DT	2	2
PE/Swimming	2	2
Games	8	8
PSHE	1	1
Reading	2	2
Drama	1	1

## **12. Handwriting**

Pre-writing skills with a variety of activities begin in Pre-Prep 1, thereby setting the correct habits from the start. Our aim is to enable each child to develop a personal style of handwriting that is:

1. Neat, with accurately formed letters
2. Legible
3. Swift
4. Economical of effort
5. Stress free
6. Flowing

It is expected that speed will develop over time regarding each of these 6 elements.

By the end of Pre-Prep 3 we expect that every pupil will be able to write freely in a reasonable style.

Pupils enter P1 with a reasonable handwriting style. The foundations of correctly-formed letters and figures in a clear and simple style have been laid down firmly.

The Prep Department continues to put great emphasis on presentation and the development of a clear cursive joined style. There will be problems; handwriting booklets will be used to remedy these. Many



sheets are available for problem letters and for children who have particular difficulties in directionality, posture, letter proportions, reversal and other skills.

Pupils learn to write with a sharp pencil to begin with. In P2 they move on to writing with blue fibre tip manuscript handwriting pens.

### **13. Health Education**

This is taught as part of the science curriculum and includes teaching on diet, exercise, medicines, illegal drugs, tobacco and (in P4) human reproduction. Each of these topics is taught as per the National Curriculum guidelines.

### **14. Homework and the Homework Diary**

**Homework** is given throughout the school, starting in PP1. In general, the amount of time expected to be spent on homework increases as a child progresses through the school.

Homework can be used for:

- reinforcement of work covered in class, usually that day
- preparation for forthcoming work
- practice in tackling questions on a topic
- an opportunity for expanding on a topic and for further research
- revision for an imminent test
- searching a reference work or the internet for specific information
- fostering academic discipline and study skills which will stand a pupil in good stead for their future.

**Homework is not used for assessment** because parental input can vary from child to child. Attainment grades are sometimes given for individual pieces of work in the Prep 3 or 4 to give feedback to the pupil and their parents.

Many pupils get on with their homework without any fuss, but some parents dread homework time! It is probably best to establish a routine, homework being done as soon as your child arrives home or immediately after the evening meal, if not too late. A quiet place away from the TV is essential for a good productive session!

The standards of neatness and handwriting expected are the same as those expected in class.

In **P1** homework is set on four evenings and is expected to take the 'average' child about 20 minutes per night. We also encourage all pupils to read for at least 20 minutes a day. This could be shared stories, audiobooks or reading books from school.

In **P2, P3 and P4** homework is set for each evening, the expected time varying from 20 - 30 minutes in P2 and P3 to about 40 minutes in P4. Where two subjects share a homework night, one will be required to be handed in at a later date than the other so please prioritise the more urgent piece. Certainly your child may exceed these times in order to complete a task but we would not expect a *significant* difference to the above times. Your child should have a homework timetable.

From P1 each pupil is issued with a **Homework Diary** which they are expected to carry with them at all times. A major purpose of the Diary is for you to help us by monitoring the standard of work done by your child. It also keeps you informed of the work being done at school. Further, it is a means of two-way communication between you and the form tutor (for example, if you think the time taken was too long or too short) but do bear in mind that the Form Tutor may only collect in the Diary once a week.

## 15. Instrumental and Music Tuition

Music is an important part of our school life and we encourage all pupils to take an active part in music making, whether through timetabled music lessons in which all the children are introduced to the keyboard and a variety of other instruments as well as singing, or through more specialised individual tuition on an instrument.

There is also a range of group ensembles, both vocal and instrumental, to suit all age groups and musical disciplines. Individual lessons are available in piano, keyboard, singing, recorder, flute, oboe, clarinet, saxophone, bassoon, violin, viola, 'cello, cornet, trumpet, tenor horn, trombone, euphonium, and guitar. Individual lessons are taught by visiting teachers and there is an extra charge for this. Everyone who learns an instrument is encouraged to join the most appropriate ensemble.

## 16. Insurance

The school is fully covered for third party liability, but there is only very limited cover for personal possessions and parents are strongly advised to arrange full cover through their own household insurance policies. Bringing valuable items to school is strongly discouraged, except where absolutely necessary (e.g. musical instruments).

The school also has comprehensive world-wide travel insurance for all official trips and expeditions.

The school can arrange absence insurance which will provide a refund of fees in the event of absence due to sickness, accident or quarantine. It can also arrange personal accident insurance and private medical insurance. Details of any of these insurances may be obtained from the Bursar.

## 17. Lunches

School lunches are provided by 'Wilson Vale' catering and are prepared on site.

Every day we provide a hot meal with a vegetarian option. Both are served with potatoes or other carbohydrate choice and fresh vegetables.

Jacket potatoes, baked beans and homemade soup with freshly sliced bread are available on the salad bar, which always has four protein choices and various composite salads.

Our desserts are made on site every morning and consist of fresh fruit salads, fruit jellies or yoghurts or a hot dessert.

Water is provided. All dishes are freshly prepared everyday and ingredients are sourced as locally as possible. **The kitchen is a nut free environment.**

## 18. Marking Policy and Presentation of Work Marking

The aims of our marking policy are:


- to implement a consistent approach within the school when marking classwork and homework
- to promote positive and practical marking, praising what is good and offering manageable and purposeful help to improve every pupil's work, we find that in the moment, feedback is most effective.

Marking will include attention to punctuation, grammar and spelling. In general, marking of **incorrect spellings** is limited to a maximum of six per piece of work, of which up to three may be rewritten by the pupil using the Write - Cover - Rewrite - Check method to promote learning of spellings. The pupil is given time to complete their corrections within the lesson or they are encouraged to achieve this in their own time by the next lesson or when the next piece of work is marked.

The teacher will obviously use discretion appropriate to the individual needs of the pupil.

The following **symbols** are intended to provide a common framework for the marking of spelling, punctuation and grammar:

#### From P1

- sp. placed in margin to indicate spelling mistake
- Thier underline part of word misspelt
-  circle inappropriate or incorrect punctuation and explain mistake in margin where appropriate
- a/lot slash used to indicate a space needed

#### From P3, add the following to above:

- We're going their dotted lines underline wrong choice of word, poor phrasing, repetition or incorrect context
- gr. place in margin and underline in dotted line the grammatical error
- // indicates new paragraph needed

**Comments** at the end of, or within a piece of work, should be positive and constructive, providing advice on how to improve if appropriate. Target points denoted by a 'T' are intended to enable the child to improve a specific skill or the work in general.

In some departments teachers might give an **attainment grade** at the end of a piece of work from A - E, the purpose being to give feedback on where the piece of work stands in relation to our standards. See above section on Grades. A numerical score may also be given where appropriate.

### **Presentation**

Work should be presented neatly and clearly, within the capacity of the child. The following model should be used:

DATE

TITLE

CLASSWORK/HOMEWORK\*

(\* may be omitted in **P1**)

Underlining should be in pencil, using a ruler.

If a mistake is made the error should be struck through once using pencil and ruler. The use of ink eraser is discouraged, except in the case of display work when it is at the teacher's discretion.

Individual sheets must, of course, be named.

## **19. Medical Care**

The school has a Medical Room, and a Matron is always on duty during the hours of 8.00 am and 4.00 pm.

Matron will administer all necessary medicine during the school day. Any medication you wish your child to have during the day should be brought to the Medical Room by parents/carer, not left with teachers or pupils. This should be clearly labelled with your child's name and form and taken directly to the Medical Room. It should then be collected from Matron at the end of the school day.

The fact that we have a matron on site does not mean it is acceptable to send your child into school if they are unwell before leaving home. Therefore we ask that children are not sent to school if they are unwell; **and must not come into school for at least 24 hours after any episode of diarrhoea or vomiting.**

If your child should become unwell during the school day we will make them comfortable and telephone the contact numbers we have and ask for them to be collected. **Hence it is important that the school is informed immediately of changes to contact numbers.**

While we maintain links with the Schools' Nursing Service, your GP should of course be the first point of contact if your child is unwell.

## **20. Parents' Evenings**

Parents' Evenings take place twice yearly, in the Christmas and Easter terms. These are an opportunity to review briefly your child's progress and for you and the teacher to raise specific issues. We allocate 5 minutes per interview, ten minutes for P1 & P2 form tutors. If longer discussion proves necessary the interview is used to set up a separate meeting at another time, usually after school.

The dates of parents' evenings are given in the term calendar. A BirkdalePost is sent out in advance of each parents' evening for you to indicate which teachers you would like to see. You are recommended to respond promptly so that we can do our best to accommodate your preferences – but please be aware that it may not be possible (for purely practical reasons) for you to see every teacher you have chosen. Do not feel that you have to see every teacher. Remember that teachers can usually see you immediately after school on most days, though a prior appointment is appreciated and advisable so that we can have any relevant information to hand.

There will also be frequent opportunities for parents to visit school for other curriculum themed events.

## **21. Pastoral Care**

All members of staff hold pastoral care in high regard and devote much time to the welfare of the pupils. Paramount among our ideals is the uniqueness of the individual and their safety and wellbeing.

At the core of the school is its Christian ethos which we attempt to reflect in all aspects of school life. To distil that further one could say that we are promoting the move from selfishness to selflessness. The pupils would see this simply as putting others first. Indeed if one were to crystallize the list of school rules to only one then it should be: 'Think of others'

In this school there are, as in many other schools, the following stages in dealing with undesirable social behaviour:

Detection

Discussion

An attempt to change the behaviour

Punishment (where appropriate)

Reparation for the injured party

Forgiveness on all parts

The pupils are encouraged to report openly any observed poor or anti-social behaviour, especially bullying. They are also encouraged to interact with offenders in dissuading them from their actions.

Talking through the actions that offenders have carried out is essential in preventing repeats of these actions:

Why it is wrong

How it is wrong

How things should continue.

An emphasis on the action rather than the person is also important, i.e. 'Sorry, I like you but not the things that you do!'

Punishment both reinforces the unacceptability of the action and establishes that there are consequences for our actions.

The main aim for discipline is that the pupils will behave well because they do not want to alienate themselves from either staff or pupils. The long term objective is for self-discipline forged by being presented by a very definite view of right and wrong.

To merely focus on behaviour would be to ignore the influences outside the school which contribute both positively and negatively to the wellbeing of the child. Developments in the home are often reported informally to teachers with whom the parent feels comfortable. These developments, no matter how seemingly trivial, can have significant effects on the individual and therefore all those who teach him need to be made aware.

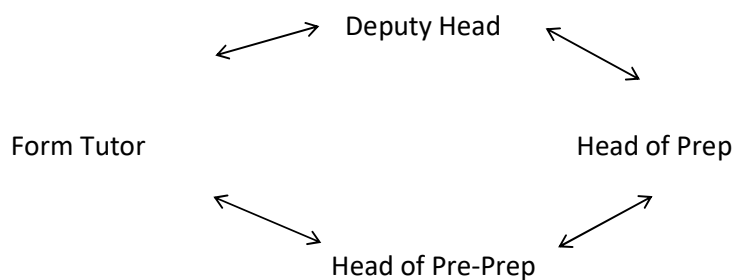
## Policy

### Aims

- To keep staff informed about a pupil's welfare and behaviour.
- To collate information which can be used to identify developing patterns of behaviour
- To ensure that children know there is a system in place which supports them and that they have easy access to staff for this support.
- To ensure pupils know that staff are concerned for their welfare.

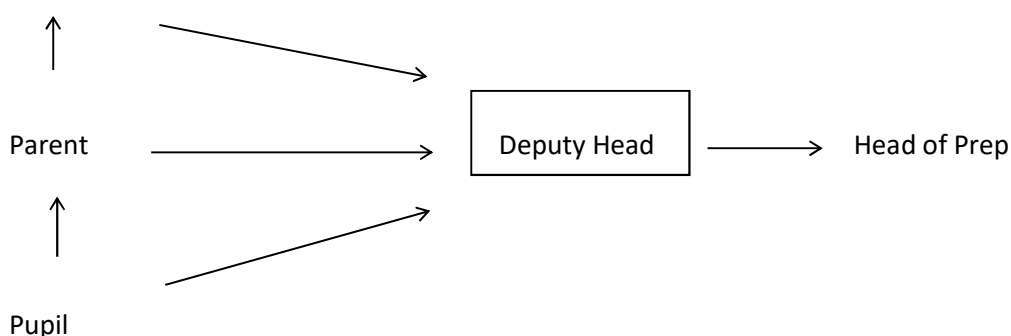
### Pastoral Structures

Pastoral responsibility is devolved as follows:



However, in practice pupils should be encouraged to make their first approach to the member of staff with whom they feel most confident. The Deputy Head coordinates pastoral care and acts as a clearing house:

Form Tutor (or other member of staff)



### **Opportunities for pupils and staff to talk**

1. Weekly Form Time.
2. It is part of the ethos of the school to create an atmosphere for friendly pupil/staff interaction and pupils are encouraged to approach an adult of their choice if there is something they wish to discuss in private.
3. **School Council** – Throughout the school year, representatives from each form attend the school council. Giving the children the opportunity to provide feedback on aspects of school life, develop opportunities for them to be involved in planning and contributing to school events, providing opportunities to make requests for action, and purchase or consideration based upon their insights.

### **Opportunities for pupils to take responsibility**

- Form Captains (Form Captains and Vice Captains are members of the School Council)
- Monitors
- Prefects
- Librarians
- Head Boy/Girl and Deputy Head Boy/Girl
- Team Captains
- Tech monitors

## **22. Payment of Fees**

Tuition fees are charged in advance. Most extras are charged in arrears.

The School's charges are invoiced termly and settlement is required in full in advance before the start of each term. Payment should be made by cheque made payable to 'Birkdale School' - for security reasons, payment by cash cannot be accepted. The School reserves the right to charge interest on fees and extras which are overdue after the first day of term at the rate of 2% over the Bank of England base rate.

You can pay your school bill (Fees), a Registration Fee, an Acceptance Deposit, or Trip/Expedition instalments online via the school website **by Debit Card or Credit Card**.

Alternatively, the School's charges may be paid by Direct Debit on either a termly or a monthly basis. If paid monthly, an administration charge of £50 per annum is payable. There is no administration charge for payment by Direct Debit on a termly basis. If you would like to pay by Direct Debit, either termly or monthly, please contact the Bursar's Department.

The tuition fees include lunches, textbooks, general stationery and games travel. Uniform, and the school magazine (published annually; one per family) are compulsory extras. All other extras are optional. These include Pupils' Absence insurance, Personal Accident insurance (PAI), private medical insurance. Details of the cost of all extras may be obtained from the Bursar's Department.

## **23. PE, Games and Sport**

### **PE**

All PE in the Prep department is taught by a specialist teacher, usually in the school hall but outside if the weather is suitable. Weekly lesson allocations are as follows:

P1                                      one double period

P2 and P3                              one double period

P4 one double period which alternates with swimming on a half-termly basis

### Swimming

P1, P2 and P4 have a double period of swimming each week at Ponds Forge but this is arranged on a half-termly basis; that is, one form in the year group does swimming for one half of a term, changing over at half-term. Currently we are unable to offer swimming to P3.

There is an annual Inter-House swimming gala at the end of the Easter term, to which parents are invited as spectators.

### Games

P1 and P2 have 4 periods of games per week throughout the year on a Friday morning, and P3 and P4 have two x 4 periods of games per week throughout the year on Tuesday & Friday afternoons. In addition we currently run teams in football, rugby and cricket & netball which compete against other schools.

Games take place at our school pitches and transport is arranged on private buses. Full changing, showering and first aid facilities are available at the games field.

Pupils are taught in groups selected by ability.

Games are arranged as follows:

Year Groups	Christmas Term	Easter Term	Summer Term
P1	Rugby	Football/Netball	Cricket
P2	Rugby/Hockey	Football/Netball	Cricket
P3 & P4	Rugby/Hockey	Football/Netball	Cricket

### Fixtures

At Birkdale we believe in the value of competitive sport and healthy competition. We organize regular fixtures against other schools in Rugby, Football, Netball and Cricket. There are also school teams for Cross-country & Swimming.

Large numbers of pupils get a chance to represent Birkdale. In addition to school matches we have house matches and a summer Sports Day, which offer great competitive opportunities. We inculcate the values of good sportsmanship, including being both good winners and good losers. Competitive sport by its nature has winners and losers, and it is an important aspect of sport, and a lesson for life, that pupils, while playing to win, must also learn to manage disappointment and failure.

Our policy regarding team selection is to pick sides which give our opposition the best game possible and usually teams are picked based on ability. Coaches and match managers are constantly making fresh assessments of a child's ability and potential and there will be movement between teams and groups.

Pupils are expected to play if selected. Team sheets are displayed on the noticeboard outside the changing rooms. The team sheet will contain all relevant details. In the event of particularly inclement weather, a decision about any particular fixture will be made by the lunchtime in question.

Parents are warmly invited to watch any of these fixtures which are held during the normal school week. Parents are asked to endeavour to keep these dates free.

A more detailed policy on competitive sport and team selection is available on request.

## **Trophies and Colours**

We have a number of trophies to be awarded for the various sports. In addition, colours are awarded to some children in Prep 4 who have shown the required expertise, enthusiasm and commitment.

## **Off Games Policy**

Whilst we fully expect pupils who are in school to take a full part in all lessons, we do understand that at times health might prevent them from taking part in sports activities.

If a child is well enough to attend school but is unfit for Games, PE or Swimming, parents are asked to send a doctor's note/parental letter to the school marked 'For the attention of Matron /Mr N J Dymock' who will liaise with the relevant members of staff. The number of pupils at Birkdale Prep School who are 'off games' is very small but when there are pupils 'off games' the following procedure is used:

1. Pupils not well enough to take part in Games/PE/Swimming lessons will accompany the group and watch the lesson, be it at school, Ponds Forge or Castle Dyke. In the case of Castle Dyke, pupils 'off games' are expected to bring wet weather clothing (gloves, hats, coats etc) in order to stay warm. At Castle Dyke there is **no** provision for inside supervision.
2. In circumstances where an injury or illness occurs at school, Matron will provide a note excusing a particular child at her discretion.
3. Where it is not possible for them to go out to watch, either due to very bad weather or due to pupil illness, pupils may occasionally be supervised at Clarke House by staff, where they will be expected to do any outstanding work. Please note this is a rare occurrence and will be organised by the Head of the Prep School (or in his absence the Deputy Heads) and the Head of PE & Games.
4. Pupils off games can be picked up from Prep School no later than 1:30 pm with permission from the Head of Prep.

**Please also note that pupils who fail to bring the required kit for PE, Games and Swimming are likely to receive a Demerit and the pupils are aware that non-participation may affect future selection for school teams. In the case of Swimming, pupils will usually be sent to Matron, who has a limited supply of clean swimming kit and towels.**

## **24. School Photographs**

The school photographs are taken by a specialist firm and are arranged as follows:

1. Form, group and individual photographs (annually)
2. Whole of the Prep School, including all staff, as a single photograph (4 yearly)

Form photographs include the Form Tutor. When a child has a sibling within the Prep School, a photograph with the sibling is taken on the same day as the individual photograph.

The dates of the photographic sessions are notified in the school calendar and all pupils are expected look smart.

Photographs are available to purchase on-line.

## **25. PSHEE**

Within the PSHEE curriculum participants learn about themselves, about others and about relationships with others. They explore good citizenship, social skills and about their own and others' feelings and emotions. PSHEE is also used to explore issues which might arise during the course of a term, such as bullying, reasons for school rules, worries about impending tests or transfer to another school. It is a feature of PSHEE that it can react immediately to issues as they arise in the form or school.



PSHEE can be used to bolster self-esteem in pupils who feel that they are not coping or who feel excluded from a group. It is used, in appropriate classes, to deliver and discuss curriculum work such as legal and illegal drugs and to teach strategies for 'Saying No'. Thus the aims are mainly concerned with personal and social awareness and developing skills to cope with the world in which they live.

In P4 the children are involved with the 'Crucial Crew' project that provides them with practical life skills.

The benefits of PSHEE to the individual, the group and the school can be immediate but in general they should be seen as long-term.

## **26. Celebration & Prizegiving**

Celebration & Prizegiving (also referred to as 'Prep School Celebration') takes place during an afternoon in the Summer Term in the last week of the school year. All pupils are required to be present for this important school event and parents (and other family members) are warmly invited to attend, whether or not their child is to receive a prize. Invitations are sent to all parents well in advance and the date is given in the school calendar.

Celebration & Prizegiving is considered as an occasion when the 'Prep School family' has the opportunity of looking back on the year and celebrating our successes - large and small. It is, also, often a time of looking forward which affords a time of reflection.

There are Prep 4 awards for distinction in music, sport, drama and other areas of school life. A trophy is presented to the winning house in the house points competition which has run throughout the year.

Prep 4 prize winners are nominated and chosen by the teachers. Pupils who have won a prize are notified in advance by letter. The letter contains a book token which should be used to purchase a book or books which should then be brought back to school for inscribing and presentation at Celebration & Prizegiving.

It is a particularly special occasion for Prep 4 and their parents as they prepare to leave the Prep School. All the pupils in Prep 4 will be presented with their Records of Achievement and a Leavers' Bible.

## **27. Reading**

Having followed various schemes and reading strategies in Pre-Prep, P1 children continue on the widening selection of books within the colour coded scheme which operates throughout the Prep Department.

Throughout the reading schemes pupils are encouraged to branch out into 'free-reading' fiction books at the appropriate level as it is most important that they see reading as an enjoyable activity rather than as a mechanical process with stages to be worked through. Comprehension skills are as important as reading the words and children need plenty of thoughtful reading at an appropriate level, before moving on to something more difficult. If a child has to struggle with books which are always rather difficult, or whose theme is really beyond the reader's level of social or emotional maturity, the young reader can easily become demotivated.

Reading books should be taken home daily and parents are encouraged to read with, and to, their children regularly. Pupils should spend some time each evening reading. In order to encourage an interest in books and a good reading habit, teachers read a variety of stories and poems to their classes and take the children to the library to explore the widening range of books to be found there, many of which have been recommended by other pupils.

As part of this campaign for reading, reading lessons are an important part of the school weekly routine; this helps raise the profile of reading. The children look forward to these opportunities for guided reading of a class book each term.

## 28. Rewards and Sanctions

### Summary

#### Positive behaviour or work

Good house points

Roll of Honour

#### Poor behaviour or work

Demerits (Minor infringements)

Bad house points (More serious infringements)

Breaktime detentions (as a result of collecting bad housepoints)

Report card

After-school detentions (Second offence for bad housepoints)

Internal exclusion

Temporary or permanent exclusion

### Further explanation:

#### House Points

Pupils are allocated to Houses, usually on a random basis, on entry to the school. Siblings are usually allocated to the same House. The Houses are:

**Asterley**

**Griffiths**

**Heeley**

**Hall**

There is an ongoing competition to be the House which gains the most house points in the school year, a shield for which is awarded at the end-of-year prizegiving. Half termly totals are announced at Monday Prayers and small cups are presented (one for Pre-Prep and one for Prep), to be held by the winning House in each department for a half term. The cups are collected by members of PP3 and P4, chosen on a rota basis within those Houses.

In the Prep Department, if a pupil collects two Bad House points in a week (for more serious offences or repetition of minor offences) a letter is sent to his parents detailing the reasons why they were given them. They have to explain their Bad House Points to their form tutor and the Head of the Prep School and a breaktime detention is given.

#### Roll of Honour

Names are recorded on the weekly Roll of Honour which is pinned up outside the Head of the Prep School's Study. The award is usually for an outstanding piece of work (relevant to the individual pupil) which is submitted to the Head of the Prep School. The work is then returned to the pupil so that they may show their parents. The weekly Roll of Honour is read out by the Head of the Prep School in Monday Prayers and those pupils stand up and are applauded by pupils and staff.

#### Detentions

Most detentions are break-time detentions; the child is kept in while the others play. Usually they will be given an appropriate task to do under supervision. In the Prep Department this task is often a proprietary Junior Detention Paper which is specific to the situation; for example, on bad manners, or teasing and

annoying and making another child unhappy. The format of these detention papers is to ask questions on a hypothetical situation and then give the opportunity to reflect on their own actions.

If an after school detention is indicated parents are informed at least 24 hours in advance.

### **Exclusions**

These are very rare occurrences because, when a pupil falls short of our expectations on behaviour, our policy is to help and guide them towards meeting these expectations. These extreme sanctions are likely to be employed only when other avenues have been explored.

### **Corporal punishment**

There is no corporal punishment at Birkdale.

## **29. Record of Achievement**

When a pupil leaves from P4 they are presented with a bound Record of Achievement. This should contain details of their non-academic achievements, some of the highlights of their school career since first entering the school. It should contain also a record of their responsibilities at home, any non-school organizations to which they have belonged, special interests, things they have enjoyed doing, things they have enjoyed less and ambitions and hopes they have cherished at times over their early years.

In order to prepare the Record of Achievement, form tutors give out the record book twice a year, in the Christmas Term and the Summer Term and the children fill it in, under the guidance of the form tutor.

Children are encouraged to bring in any certificates, badges and trophies awarded on behalf of their out-of-school activities so that their form tutor can make a note of them (and, indeed, so that the Head of the Prep School can commend them in Assembly).

Each P4 pupil is presented with his Record of Achievement at the Prizegiving and Celebration. It should be a record of an important part of their childhood which, it is hoped, will provide interest, enjoyment and perhaps amusement when they look at it in the years to come.

## **30. School Rules**

A copy of the current school rules is in the Appendix.

## **31. School Security**

We aim to make the building as secure as possible from intruders without engendering a 'fortress' atmosphere. **Pupils must not enter the school via Clarke Dell.**

### **During the school day**

As you will be aware, Birkdale Prep is a very friendly school where the partnership between home and school is highly valued and where we readily welcome visitors.

Every two years, as part of our development planning, we review our procedures and arrangements regarding the security of the school site. As a result of this review it is necessary to implement some new procedures and remind everyone of the rules we have on this subject. Therefore please could I ask you to take careful note of the following:

- All visitors and parents who enter the school between 8.50 am and 3.30 pm **must** report to the school office.
- All entry and exit points to the school after **8.50 am** should be via the main entrance. Other doors will be locked; please do not try to enter or leave by the other doors.

- If your child has left any belongings in the cloakroom or classroom please encourage them to collect it themselves. Being in charge of their own belongings is a vitally important part of your child's learning.
- If you do have to enter the school after **3.30 pm** to retrieve items, please be aware that there are lessons taking place in many rooms until 3.50 pm. This applies particularly to the classrooms in the vicinity of the hall.
- Please could I ask that you do not enter the building to watch your child take part in an activity until 3.50 pm.
- Please do not enter the PE changing room or any changing room at Castle Dyke. This also applies to siblings and child minders. This is a vitally important safeguarding measure as at many times there will be children changing in these rooms.
- Birkdale Prep School cannot be held responsible for the safety of siblings who are waiting or who are playing outside.
- A further reminder that parents **should not drive down Clarke Drive at all before 4.30 pm**, unfortunately a small number of parents still continue to disregard this very important rule which is there to protect the children's safety.
- Please note that when your child is dismissed from an after school activity they should be collected promptly. We have had several children recently who have not been collected for over 30 minutes after their activity. If you are not able to collect at the correct time please book them into after school care. **Please note that sending your elder son/daughter to collect your child from an activity and then asking them to wait in the school is not allowed. We do need written permission if elder siblings are collecting and leaving the site.**

### **After school**

Children who are not collected promptly at the end of the school day and who are not in After School Care or an after-school club wait in the Reception area and are supervised by Matron until 4.10 pm, after which they go to After School Care, for which there may be a charge.

Children who are taking the bus are escorted to the collection point by a member of staff, supervised there and seen safely onto the correct bus.

All external doors are locked at 4.10 pm with the exception of the main entrance. Parents and others collecting children from clubs and After School Care are asked to use this door only, which is kept under as much surveillance as is possible at this time.

Children leaving clubs, and late returners from matches, are required to wait within the building until collected from there. The member of staff running the club or team is responsible for their supervision at this time. If a child is not collected at the end of a club he would usually be put into After School Care, for which there may be a charge.

### **Fire practice**

The whole-school emergency evacuation procedure is practised on a regular basis in observation of the fire safety regulations.

### 32. Setting

While our maximum class size in the Prep Department is 24, we separate the children into groups (**sets**) of smaller numbers for some subjects.

Setting achieves smaller class sizes, allows us to be more flexible and to tailor teaching to specific needs.

In **P3 and P4** there are three sets for each of the **core subjects** (Mathematics, English and Science). Science & English are taught in mixed attainment sets. Maths has some element of ability setting but this can vary between cohorts.

We will always put a pupil into the set where we think they will learn best. Much thought and consideration is given to individual setting arrangements and to movement between sets where this is indicated. Staff review the sets at least once a term.

In order to facilitate timetabling it is usual for us to teach some **non-core subjects** within the setting arrangements. For example, pupils who are in P4 Science Set 1 will be in the same set for RE.

Pupils in Prep 3 and 4 spend 60% of their time in their different sets.

### 33. Relationships & Sex Education

Relationships & Sex Education is taught within the PSHE sessions following ISI Statutory guidance.

This is taught in P4 within the 'Growing Up' module of the Birkdale Science curriculum. Please use this link to access the School's Relationships and Sex Education Policy <https://www.birkdaleschool.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/15-Relationships-and-Sex-Education-Policy.pdf>

### 34. Spelling

In Pre-Prep the development of good visual memory and an early awareness of the structure of words is one of our aims. We operate a number of approaches to develop this, including our phonics programme which follows the Twinkl phonics scheme.

The structure of the Twinkl Spelling programme used in Prep builds on the Twinkl phonics programme and is followed throughout the Prep school. Twinkl Spelling covers all of the statutory exception words and spelling rules from the National Curriculum, it focusses on a different spelling rule each week.

Each week, children will learn about the new spelling rule and will be asked to learn 10 spellings that they will be tested on the following week. We encourage the children to practise their spellings using methods that suit their personal learning style, and we suggest different approaches that the children can try. Twinkl spellings also allows children to practise their weekly spellings on an app where they can play a variety of online games to reinforce their understanding of the spelling rule.

Pupils who find spelling particularly difficult are given a variety of strategies to suit their individual needs to use in the classroom. They may also be referred to the Learning Support Department for extra help.

### 35. Snacks

We recognise that many children have breakfast very early, therefore we allow pupils to bring in a snack to be consumed during mid-morning break to tide them over until lunchtime. We prefer the snack to be healthy, such as a piece of fruit. Sweets and chocolate **are not** permitted. Water can be brought into school in a rigid container (not a waxed carton, since these tend to get crushed in bags), although a water fountain is available to all the pupils inside the school and outside in the playground. Nuts or snacks containing nut oils **must not** be brought into School.

### 36. Preparation for Transfer to Senior School

The majority of pupils transfer to Birkdale Senior School in the September after leaving P4. Many understandably, approach this with some apprehension. Therefore a particular effort is made in P4 to allay any fears, positively promote the excitement and opportunity, and generally make the transfer as smooth as possible.

Much of this is achieved through form periods in the individual P4 forms under the guidance of the form tutors. Worries and fears, questions and opportunities are brought forward and discussed in an informal atmosphere. Personal concerns may also be brought to form tutors in a private one-to-one situation.

Staff who will look after the pupils in the first year of the Senior School (S1) are encouraged to make themselves known to P4, perhaps by attending individual subject lessons or by taking Prep School Prayers. Some of these staff will already be known to children because of contact through school sport or other inter-school teaching commitments.

A Senior School Open Day takes place in the Christmas Term of each year and all Prep 4 and their parents receive a written invitation to this.

S1 has a three form entry, the extra form being provided through children entering the Senior School from junior schools other than Birkdale Prep. At transfer the opportunity is taken to intermix, not only from other schools but also the pupils in the two P4 forms, throughout the three new S1 forms. Thus new friendships can be forged (and the school can take the opportunity, if thought necessary, to discourage associations which have proved less than beneficial in the past).

This intermixing is **not** done on a random basis, however. At some time during the latter half of the P4 year the P4 form tutors will ask their form to note down three friends they would each like to be with in the same form in S1. The Director of Studies then takes on the difficult task of trying to create three S1 forms in which each pupil will be with at least one of the special friends they have chosen. Thus the new groupings are made by Prep School staff who know the children well.

It must be remembered that, even if a child appears to be separated by this process from many of their old classmates, in S1 all the pupils are based in the same building and share the same facilities. Further, they are divided into teaching sets for several subjects. Thus they meet their old classmates both in and out of lessons.

Shortly before the end of the Summer Term in P4 a Senior School Induction Day is arranged. P4 pupils (plus the new entrants from other junior schools) visit the Senior School for a specially-arranged induction programme. They meet their new form tutors and other subject teachers and are shown round the school by ex-Prep School pupils who are approaching the end of *their* S1 year. There is a programme of specially-designed subject lessons and games, and lunch is taken in the Heeley Hall. School uniform is not worn on this day but pupils are expected to attend in smart casual clothes appropriate to the occasion.

Birkdale Prep pupils are encouraged to welcome the new entrants from other junior schools and, especially, to include them in their group activities, bearing in mind that many of the new entrants will have had no experience of an independent school.

All Prep School children and parents are especially welcome at appropriate plays and concerts which take place at the Senior School throughout every year. These are advertised in advance in the school calendar and by other means. This all helps to familiarize children and parents with the Senior School environment, staff and pupils.

## 37. Visits and Expeditions

### General

Trips are an important and integral part of school life. They are part of a programme which extends from Pre-Prep through to Sixth Form in the Senior School. Some are completed within a day and some are residential, taking place over a number of days.

There is no compulsion for pupils to join a trip but we strongly encourage that they all join in. Similarly, if a child desperately does not want to join in an activity such as rock-climbing, we will encourage them but not force them.

Trips often involve an extra payment which is notified to parents in advance and added to the termly bill. All staff taking part in trips do so on a voluntary basis, with no extra payment, often giving up their own time. The flavour of our trips can be experienced from articles written by the pupils in the school magazine.

The aims of trips within the Prep School are:

- fun and adventure!
- social: to forge and cement relationships within pupil groups and with the staff, and also to promote acceptable behaviour and good manners when in the outside world
- pastoral: to enable staff to get to know the children better (and vice versa!) outside the usual school environment
- academic: to add to and reinforce work done within school.

### Safety

Safety considerations are paramount whether the trip is an hour's visit to a local church or a residential expedition to France. A high Birkdale staff-pupil ratio is always maintained and sometimes parents or other adults are individually invited to join a trip in order to increase the adult-pupil ratio further.

Pupils remain under the direct supervision of Birkdale staff at all times, including when they are with instructors.

When outdoor activity instructors are employed we check that they hold the currently-required qualifications and are appropriately insured.

When the trip is residential the facilities are always visited and inspected by the school staff running the trip before the booking is confirmed.

Staff always carry a mobile phone and parents and the school are kept informed, whenever possible, of changes to expected timings.

### Parent responsibilities

We expect that parents will cooperate by making sure their child is delivered to school or the departure point on time and, **particularly, that they are present at the collection point on time or preferably a little before.**

All trips involve parents reading and responding to a BirkdalePost message, depending on what the trip involves. **These must be responded to by the deadline given.** In most circumstances it is not possible for us to take a child away unless the relevant form(s) have been fully and correctly completed.

Kit lists, (especially for outdoor and residential activities) have been compiled by staff after much thought and experience. **We expect parents to comply with these** and reserve the right not to take a child if they do not have the proper equipment, particularly with regard to outer clothing and footwear.

On a residential trip we may contact parents if a pupil's behaviour is not acceptable and require them to collect the child immediately. Parents will be informed via BirkdalePost text message if there is to be an unavoidable delay or change to collection arrangements.

When a child is away with the school on a residential trip we strongly discourage contact with parents except in an emergency. This is because it may conflict with the social aims of the trip. Of course we are aware that it may be their first time away from home without mum and dad, and that some children get homesick, but most of our staff are mums or dads themselves and all staff will do their best to act as a parent would in the circumstances. In our experience most children do not feel homesick and, if they do, it soon fades away because there are so many exciting things to do!

### **Payment**

Costs are notified to parents well in advance of a trip. Payments are added to the termly bill.

### **Pocket money**

Staff running a trip can predict a reasonable amount of pocket money to be taken. Sometimes staff take charge of pocket money and give it out when appropriate. It is unfair to other pupils if a child takes more than the set amount.

### **Medication**

Staff will take charge of and do their best to administer necessary medications when on a trip; provided the medicine is clearly labelled and parental consent has been obtained.

### **Non-participating pupils**

As stated above, we strongly encourage all pupils to join a trip. If, however, a child cannot join a trip it might be possible for us to arrange a timetable for them at school, although we cannot guarantee they will follow their usual teaching timetable.

### **School uniform**

Pupils may or may not be required to wear school uniform, depending on the trip. Whatever clothes are worn, however, we do expect certain standards to be maintained and pupils will be told of these before the trip.

### **Example Schedule of Trips in the Prep Department\***

<b>Term</b>	<b>Year group</b>	<b>Trip</b>	<b>Duration</b>
Summer	P1	Alton Towers	Day
	P2	Castleton trip	1 night
	P3	Lake District Trip	4 nights
	P4	Crucial Crew	Day
	P4	London	3 nights

\*This does not include games teams and swimming.

### **Notes on the residential trips**

#### **P2 Castleton Trip**

Prep 2 stay at the Hollowford Centre, a purpose-built activity centre not too far from Sheffield. During the trip they have the opportunity to try archery, orienteering, climbing, high ropes, assault course, zip wire and various other outdoor activities under the guidance of expert qualified instructors and using the



appropriate safety equipment. The weekend includes a visit to Peveril Castle and Treak Cliff Cavern, walking the route around the fields between the two.

### **P3 trip to the Lake District**

This residential expedition to the Lake District gives the children a chance to partake in numerous outdoor activities, whilst also exhibiting key teamwork and leadership skills. Links are made with the Geography curriculum and work based on the trip is carried out in other curriculum areas both before and after the week in the Lakes.

### **P4 visit to London**

Pupils stay at a hotel and experience a variety of activities in the Capital, this may include shows and workshops, museums and galleries, interactive visits and experiences. It will be seen that our residential trips increase in duration as the children get older. On residential trips we try to arrange that our school has sole use of the facilities, although this cannot always be achieved.

### **The Oakes, Norton**

Some years, Prep children stay at the restored Oakes Park Mansion at Norton in Sheffield, where they enjoy indoor and outdoor activities such as archery, team building and adventure exercises, night exercises and craftwork, all within a Christian framework.

### **Beyond the 4 Walls**

As part of our continued commitment to making sure that our pupils have quality learning experiences outside the classroom, chances to establish friendships, time away from screens and a focus on mental health, we have a partnership with Beyond the 4 Walls and take every form in the Prep School out of the classroom for two days of the year for outdoor learning opportunities and experiences. This takes place under the guidance and supervision of qualified Teacher and Mountain Leader Dom McDermott. Please do visit the website [www.beyondthe4walls.co.uk](http://www.beyondthe4walls.co.uk) for more information.

## **38. Timetable - A Typical Day - P1 to P4**

7.30 - 8.15	Breakfast Club
8.15	School Opens
8.45	Registration
9.00	Prayers
9.20	Period 1
9.50	Period 2
10.20	Morning Break
10.35	Period 3
11.05	Period 4
11.35	Period 5
12.05	Period 6
12.30	P1 Lunch

12.35	P2 Lunch
12.40	P3 Lunch
12.45	P4 Lunch
1.45	Period 7
2.15	Period 8
2.45	Break
2.50	Period 9
3.20	Period 10
3.50	End of School Day
4.00	Prep Clubs begin

### **39. Extreme Weather Conditions**

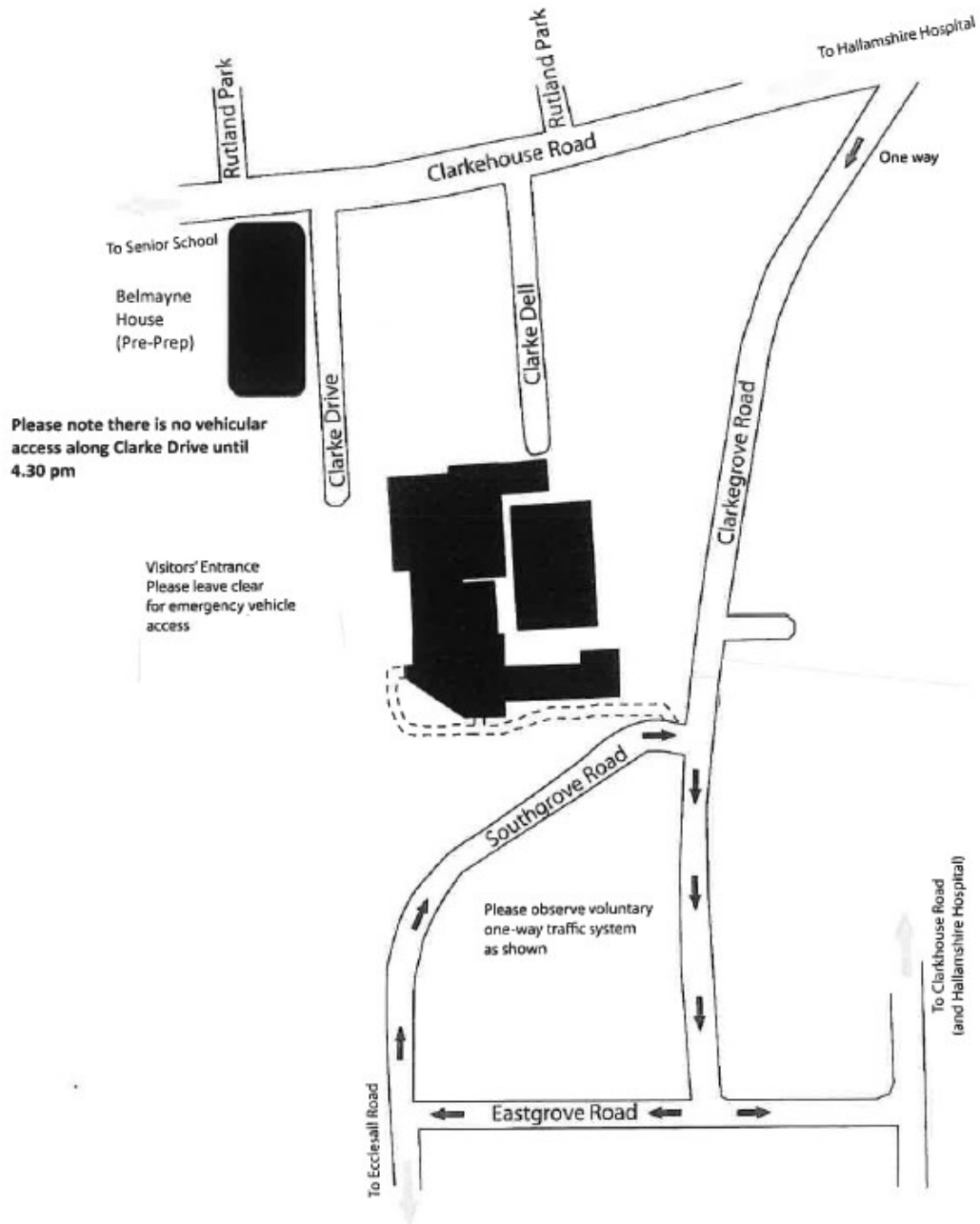
Birkdale School will normally remain open even in the event of a heavy snow fall. If it is necessary to close the school because the site is unsafe then the decision will be made before 7.00 am on the morning concerned. In the event of a sudden deterioration in the weather and after consultation with the bus companies it may be necessary to close the school early. Decisions on closure of the school will be communicated via the school's website and where possible by text and email. Detailed information and updates will also be communicated via the website. Parents should avoid telephoning the school and should discount any communications from pupils concerning school closure if it conflicts with the information on the website.

If the weather conditions mean that travelling to school represents a significant risk, pupils, teachers and other members of staff should remain at home.

## **Appendix**

- Site Map
- School Rules

### Birkdale Prep School Road Map



## **Prep School Rules**

Pupils should behave at all times with consideration for others and their belongings.

### **Attendance**

Pupils should be present in form rooms for registration at 8.45 am.

Pupils must not leave the premises during the school day unless accompanied by a member of staff.

If a child is absent from school they should bring a note from their parent(s) on return to school.

Permission to miss school, for reasons other than illness, must be obtained in advance from the Head of Prep.

### **Bounds**

The following are out of bounds:

**All** grass and flower beds, unless permission has been granted by a member of staff including play equipment on grassed area.

All roofs and fire escapes unless under the direction and supervision of a member of staff.

the car parks, unless under the direction of a member of staff.

### **Security**

External doors are kept locked during lesson times. Pupils should not open any of these doors. They should inform a member of staff if someone is asking for entry.

Large sums of money and expensive items should not be brought to school. If this is unavoidable they should be handed to a member of staff for safe keeping until the end of the school day. There should be no buying or selling between pupils.

All clothing and property should be clearly and permanently named.

### **Appearance**

Pupils are expected to look tidy at all times. Hair styles should be free from extremes.

Correct school uniform should be worn at school and in public places.

### **General**

Eating during lesson time is forbidden, unless directed by a member of staff.

Knives, fireworks, guns, water pistols and catapults of any description are forbidden on school premises.

Sweets, chewing gum, bubble gum, crisps and similar snacks, drinks in glass bottles or cans are all forbidden on school premises, unless as directed by a member of staff.

Snowballing and sliding are forbidden unless directed and supervised by a member of staff.

The possession of solvent-based glues, erasers and liquid paper is forbidden.

The possession of mobile phones during the school day is forbidden. If it is deemed necessary for a child to have a mobile phone at the end of the day, they should hand it to the school office to look after. (It must be clearly labelled).