

New Parents' Handbook

Advice and Information from Current Parents



PRIOR PARK
COLLEGE
BATH



INTRODUCTION

This booklet is in the form of frequently asked questions. It was originally put together by Prior parents who were thinking back to how many questions they had before their son or daughter started at Prior Park College. We are very appreciative of the time they spent collating this information and hope you find it useful.

You are of course, always welcome to contact the school directly to seek clarification on any points, or if you have further questions.

This Handbook is not meant to take the place of the Community Handbook, but rather provide supplementary information. The two should be used hand-in-hand.

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COLLEGE LIFE

WHAT IS BAINES HOUSE?

Baines is the House Lower 3 (Y7) children's form. There are four, co-educational tutor groups within the House and students meet with their tutor two times per day, so the staff know the children well. Baines pupils have their own building, which is situated close to the main teaching block. It comprises a common room, changing facilities and ICT facilities and is a happy, bustling place. Baines pupils are strongly linked with Brownlow, our F3 (Y8) House.

WHAT IS THE HOUSE SYSTEM FOR OLDER PUPILS OF 13+?

The House system provides a community for each pupil. There are seven senior Houses, some for day pupils only, some are mixed, with both boarders and day pupils. The Houses are also physical places where pupils meet their tutors and much of the pastoral care is developed through their House. The House system enables friendly rivalry and competition.

The Houses are as follows:

Baines	Junior House, L3 (Y7) mixed boarding and day pupils
Brownlow	F3 (Y8) mixed boarding and day pupils
Allen	Boys, mixed boarding and day pupils
Arundell	Girls, day pupils only
Burton	Boys, day pupils only
Clifford	Boys, day pupils only
English	Girls, day pupils only
Fielding	Girls, day pupils only
Roche	Boys, mixed boarding and day pupils
St Mary's	Girls, boarding pupils only

WHAT TIME IS LUNCH?

Lunch for most pupils is at 1.15pm. Baines and Brownlow pupils have a free period immediately before lunch on some days, which enables them to have lunch at 12.30pm. During these extended lunch breaks, some activities and sports fixtures take place.

DO I NEED TO SEND A DRINK OR SNACK TO SCHOOL WITH MY CHILD?

Yes. Most pupils take a snack to bridge the period from breakfast to lunch. There are House tuck

shops and a central facility in the Dining Hall. House tuck shops tend to supply confectionary, while the central one offers hot food, fruit, biscuits and chocolate. Drinks are also available. Overall, taking a snack is advised.

WHAT LANGUAGES WILL MY CHILD LEARN AND WILL I GET A CHOICE?

When they begin at Prior Park College (PPC), all pupils learn French, they will also be introduced to Mandarin and Spanish. In Form 3 they choose to continue with two languages. Latin is also taught to the majority of pupils.

WHEN WILL MY CHILD BE ABLE TO TAKE PART IN ACTIVITIES?

Pupils are requested to take part in at least one activity after school. There is a full programme to choose from. There are additional activities taking place at lunch times which are optional. They will attend an Activities Fair after lessons finish on the first day of the year. Here they can choose from the selection on offer for the term. Some children are 'pre-selected' for certain activities (eg. sports training squads and choir), and they will be required to attend. Students sign up online via the pupil/parent portal.

There is also a full programme of activities taking place on Saturday mornings called Saturday Active. It is possible to sign up for one of these activities via the pupil/parent portal. Saturday Active is not compulsory, but it is a great way for new pupils to meet each other outside the classroom environment. Saturday Active does not take place on exeat weekends.

CAN MY CHILD COME HOME BEFORE 5.45PM?

The normal school day finishes at 5.45pm, but everyone is allowed an 'Early Home' once a week. They can come home at 4.30pm. Please note that there are no buses leaving at this time so you will have to pick up your child. The school is flexible if there are any further needs for an early home. This should be discussed with their Housemaster/ Housemistress.

**WHAT HAPPENS IF MY CHILD HAS A DOCTOR OR DENTAL APPOINTMENT?**

In this case, you should send an email to your child's tutor, copied to their Housemaster or Housemistress and write a note in their diary. On arriving and leaving school, children need to sign in and out at Reception.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I CAN'T PICK MY CHILD UP AFTER SCHOOL (AS A ONE OFF EVENT)?

Pupils can stay to supper. An email is needed to the child's tutor to explain, and 24 hours notice is required. It is also useful to do this when your child is attending a performance or talk after school and it serves no purpose for them to come home first. Any child requiring supper must collect a supper ticket if they are not a boarder.

If you are unable to pick up due to an emergency, pupils should go to the Mansion and report to Reception. They will be looked after until you can get to school to pick them up. They will be provided with some supper and can do prep while they are waiting.

IS IT POSSIBLE FOR MY CHILD TO STAY IN A BOARDING HOUSE OCCASIONALLY?

Yes, space permitting. For more information contact the relevant Housemaster/Housemistress.

IS PREP SUPERVISED?

Yes, there is always a teacher supervising the pupils during prep and a pupil may ask for help if required. ICT facilities are also sometimes available.

WILL MY CHILD HAVE TO DO PREP AT HOME TOO?

In the earlier years of the school, most pupils are able to complete most of their prep during prep time. But there are often assignments for which a pupil does not have the materials, or an extended assignment, which are normally completed at home. The amount of prep the pupils receive increases as they move up through the school so more prep will be done at home.

WHAT IS CCF?

CCF stands for Combined Cadet Force. It's a Ministry of Defence sponsored youth organisation

in the United Kingdom. Its aim is to 'provide a disciplined organisation in a school so that pupils may develop powers of leadership'. PPC runs the Army and Navy sections but not the Air Force.

WILL MY CHILD BE PART OF THE CCF?

Any child aged 12 years 9months can take part. It is a one year commitment and is optional.

WHEN DO CCF ACTIVITIES TAKE PLACE?

4.30 - 6pm Tuesday

DO I NEED TO BUY UNIFORM FOR CCF?

You will need to buy boots, but the rest of the uniform is given to pupils at the beginning of the year and must be returned at the end.

WHAT IS THE OPEN MORNING AND DOES MY CHILD NEED TO ATTEND?

In the first half of the Michaelmas Term the College holds an Open Morning for prospective new parents on a Saturday. Pupils are expected to attend wearing school uniform. A special timetable will be followed that morning.

DO THE SCHOOL BUSES RUN ON OPEN MORNING?

Buses run to the school, but not home.

WILL THERE BE SOMEWHERE FOR MY CHILD TO STORE THINGS SECURELY?

All Baines and Brownlow pupils are assigned a locker on their first day. They are given a key. The school holds a spare. If the pupil loses the key, there may be a small charge for a replacement. Some Senior Houses also provide lockers.

IS THERE SUNDAY MASS AT COLLEGE?

Sunday Mass is held in the College Chapel (Our Lady of the Snows) from 11.00am every Sunday within term time. Parents and day pupils are welcome to attend (day pupils do not need to wear uniform). Boarders attend on a regular basis. The Senior Chapel Choir (and once a term, the Junior Chapel Choir) perform at Mass.

SPORT**WILL MY CHILD PLAY SPORT FOR PRIOR PARK COLLEGE?**

Almost certainly. Each sport has several teams so he or she should get a chance to play in one of them. There are more games for the A and B teams than for C and below, but they should all get a chance sometime.

WHEN ARE THE SPORTS MATCHES PLAYED?

The main sports fixtures are held on Saturday afternoons. There are also midweek matches which are held during that year group's games lesson and on occasions, after 4.30pm. Baines and Brownlow pupils often have Wednesday matches.

Pupils are expected to play if selected in the squad (whether as player, substitute or reserve). Families are expected to support the idea of pupil availability for all matches. Only a major event (like a wedding in the family) would justify absence and this would be requested at least two weeks in advance from the Deputy Head (Operations).

CAN PARENTS WATCH SPORTS MATCHES?

Yes, support is welcomed and encouraged at both Saturday afternoon and weekday matches. Pupils will receive a cooked tea after matches (both home and away) and parents are also welcome to join them for some tea, cake or soup. It is held in the Dining Room for home matches. Parents are allowed to take their children home after weekday matches but must inform the member of staff in charge that they are doing so.

HOW DO I KNOW IF MY CHILD IS PLAYING A MATCH?

Details of all upcoming fixtures can be found in the School calendar (online and in Parent Portal) plus the sport website. Shortly before the match, you can also see the team sheets. There are no Saturday fixtures on most exeat weekends.

WILL MY CHILD BE ABLE TO GO HOME ON THE SCHOOL BUS AFTER AN 'AWAY' SPORTS MATCH THAT IS HELD DURING THE WEEK?

Usually, but occasionally they don't get back in time. We suggest you have a back-up plan in place

that you have discussed with your child.

IS THERE A SPORTS DAY?

Yes, in Summer Term during games time. As many pupils as possible will be included in the athletics events.

CAN MY CHILD CONTINUE TO PLAY FOR HIS/HER LOCAL SPORTS TEAM?

Yes. They can still attend matches or training sessions during the week by using their early home.

WILL MY CHILD BE ABLE TO PLAY FOOTBALL AT PPC?

Football is not part of the Games or PE curriculum. There are various activities during the week which sometimes include football so he/she should still have a chance to play at some point. Football is available as an option in senior games.

FEES**CAN I GET ANY DISCOUNT FROM THE FEES BY PAYING FOR THE WHOLE YEAR IN ADVANCE?**

A Fees in Advance Scheme is operated, please contact the Financial Controller for further information.

THERE ARE SOME SMALL BUT UNEXPECTED CHARGES ON TOP OF THE FEES ON MY FIRST BILL. DO I HAVE TO PAY THEM ALL?

Insurance schemes are recommended but optional so you can discuss this with Finance. Extra charges incurred during the term can be placed on the bill for the following term. These include items like field trips, occasional suppers and bus fares – of course it is worth checking this bill to ensure all is correct.



UNIFORM & EQUIPMENT

WHERE CAN I BUY SCHOOL UNIFORM?

The sole supplier of school uniform is John Moore Sports who are located at 2 Argyle St, Bath, BA2 4BA. You can also buy through their website:

www.johnmooresports.co.uk

Second-hand school uniform is also available.

For more information contact Reception:

reception@priorparkschools.com

DO I HAVE TO BUY ALL ITEMS FROM JOHN MOORE SPORTS?

No. Boys' white shirts, navy socks, girls' tights and white PE socks can be bought from any school wear source.

CAN BOYS WEAR SHORT-SLEEVED SHIRTS?

Yes.

WHAT ABOUT SHOES?

All shoes should be solid black and polishable. They should be in a traditional style and practical for walking across an extensive site. Boys' shoes could be laced, velcro or slip-on. Girls should wear practical comfortable shoes as they will cover a lot of distance in a day across the school site.

WHICH SPORTS EQUIPMENT DO I NEED TO BUY?

BOYS	Michaelmas Term	Rugby	Rugby boots, trainers (for walking to the pitch), mouth guard, (scrum cap optional)
	Lent Term	Hockey	Astro shoes, hockey stick, mouth guard, shin pads
	Summer Term	Cricket	Cricket Whites, Astro shoes or cricket boots, bat, helmet, box, (pads optional)
GIRLS	Michaelmas Term	Hockey	Astro shoes, hockey stick, mouth guard, shin pads
	Lent Term	Netball	Trainers
	Summer Term	Tennis/Rounders	Tennis racket, trainers

IS THERE ANY UNIFORM THAT I SHOULD NOT BUY STRAIGHTAWAY?

- For PE lessons any navy blue swimming costume/trunks and cap can be used. The school ones are only necessary if your child swims for the school.
- Cricket whites don't need to be purchased until Summer Term.
- All accessories are optional.
- Cricket whites don't need to be purchased until Summer Term.

WHICH SCHOOL BAGS SHOULD I BUY?

Sports: The big one – almost everyone does and those who buy the small one end up having to buy the bigger one. Many parents of boys also buy a cricket bag for Summer Term as so much equipment is carried to school.

Academic: The school rucksack is compulsory for all Baines pupils. It should be embroidered with pupil initials (this is done by the uniform shop).

DO THE PUPILS SHOWER AFTER EVERY GAMES LESSON?

Pupils need a named towel for routine PE/Games lessons. PE staff encourage pupils to shower, but some pupils like to shower at home after afternoon games lessons.

DO I REALLY NEED TO NAME ALL ITEMS OF UNIFORM AND EQUIPMENT?

Yes. An efficient system deals with lost items, but it is vital to name items for ease of return. We actively encourage this as the children can be very 'relaxed' when deciding whose shirt to wear!

COMMUNICATION

HOW DO I FIND OUT WHAT'S HAPPENING AT PRIOR PARK COLLEGE?

A weekly message from the Headmaster called 'Prior Knowledge' is sent to all parents. It's in the form of an email newsletter, which parents receive on Fridays. A school diary is published electronically. Any diary changes are updated on the PPC website and in the parent portal. Parents of Baines and Brownlow pupils also receive a weekly House bulletin.

The College's website is very useful for finding all sorts of information including upcoming sports fixtures and team sheets, events at school and all the latest news.

WHAT'S THE BEST WAY TO CONTACT MY CHILD'S TEACHERS?

For subject specific matters, contact the teacher concerned. The best way is through email. Their email addresses are listed on the website, in the contact section. For more general matters about your child's progress, you should contact their tutor. Again, email is the best option.

ARE THERE ANY OTHER WAYS TO COMMUNICATE WITH MY CHILD'S TUTOR?

Yes. Your child will receive a diary and his/her tutor will read it each week and sign the relevant page. You are also expected to sign it to show that you are checking that prep is completed and have read any notes from the tutor.

WHEN DO WE RECEIVE SCHOOL REPORTS?

Grades are reported each half term. They are viewed through the school's Parent Portal, which can be accessed from the College website. You will receive an email informing you that they are ready to view and you will also be sent instructions and login codes to access the website in the first term.

They need to be kept safe for subsequent reports but if you do lose it, please contact showe@priorparkschools.com for new login instructions.

WHEN CAN I MEET THE TEACHERS?

There is usually an event within the first week or two of term where you can meet your child's tutor and a few other teachers. There will be a Parent/Teacher evening once a year. It is held at different times of the year for each year group. You will be allotted time to speak to each of your child's teachers. Times are booked in advance. From year 9 onwards your child will attend these meetings.

WHAT IS THE CONTACT BOOKLET?

The Contact Booklet is an initiative which lists the names and contact phone numbers of parents by the year level of their child. Updated every year, inclusion in the booklet is optional but it is a good reference point for contacting the parents of your child's friends. You will be invited to have your contact details included at the beginning of each academic year.

TRANSPORT

ARE THERE SCHOOL BUSES AND WHERE DO THEY STOP?

The bus routes are published on our website. The current stops are listed but if there is no suitable bus stop for you on a route, do contact the Transport Manager, Tony Jenkins, as new stops may be included so long as the bus is not significantly delayed as a result. Also, if you wish your child to go by bus and there is no bus going close to your home, let the Transport Manager know. If enough people want a new bus route, they may create one.

HOW DO I KNOW EXACTLY WHERE THE BUS STOPS?

This should be clarified with the Transport Manager Tony Jenkins, before the beginning of term to avoid confusion. The routes/times are listed on the College website.

DO ANY OF THE PUPILS USE PUBLIC TRANSPORT?

Yes. Pupils use public buses and some come by train. These pupils transfer to one of the college buses, which picks them up near the station.

**WHERE SHOULD I PARK MY CAR?**

Parking on site is controlled and any parental parking should be in the Butts Car Park for routine school events. Pupils can be picked up and dropped at the Butts, near the Swimming Pool and at the Pavilion, but please be aware it can be busy and waiting is only possible in the Butts.

Parents are not allowed to park on site to walk dogs or to access Bath train station as we have limited parking.

CAN MY CHILD WALK HOME FROM SCHOOL AND CAN THEY GO INTO BATH?

Yes. Once a pupil has left the grounds of the school at 5.45pm, (or 4.30pm for an early home), they are no longer the responsibility of the school. Where they go is up to you and them, but we would normally expect them to go directly home. Boarders can only leave the site with permission. Day pupils must stay on site during the school day, although Sixth Formers can visit Combe Down village at morning/afternoon break. Pupils staying for evening events are expected to stay on site until collected.

MUSIC**MY SON/DAUGHTER ALREADY LEARNS AN INSTRUMENT OUTSIDE SCHOOL. SHOULD I CHANGE TEACHERS SO THAT HE/SHE CAN LEARN IN SCHOOL?**

This is a personal choice. Pupils often wish to continue a good relationship with their teacher. There are pros and cons to learning inside and outside school. The pros to learning inside school are that your child does not have to attend a music lesson after a long and busy day at school or at the weekend. The pros to learning outside school are that they will not miss any lesson time and you may be able to negotiate a more flexible arrangement with the teacher than is possible in a large school. It is a case of working out what is best for you and your family. Whatever you choose, the school will be inclusive with regard to your son/daughter playing in concerts and ensembles.

WHEN WILL MY CHILD'S INSTRUMENT LESSON BE?

Lesson times below Sixth Form rotate (change weekly), so that the same class is not missed each week. It could be at any time, including lunchtime or during prep. The day may not always be the same each week. Sixth Formers have fixed lessons in their study periods.

HOW DOES MY CHILD FIND OUT WHAT TIME HIS/HER LESSON IS?

At each lesson, the music teachers inform pupils what time their lesson is for the following week. There is a notice board in the Music Department which shows the lesson times. It is not always possible to supply everyone with next week's time straight away, and times may get posted up later. It always remains the responsibility of the pupil to go upstairs to check their lesson time. In September, a timetable is also placed in Baines House to help the new L3 pupils for their first lessons.

WHERE WILL THE LESSON TAKE PLACE?

In practice rooms in the Music Department, which is on the top floor of the Mansion.

HOW DOES MY CHILD KNOW THAT HIS/HER LESSON HAS BEEN CANCELLED?

If it was known in advance that the lesson has to be cancelled, your child will have been informed by the Music Department through their tutor. If it is at short notice due to sickness, etc, there will be a notice on the practice room door.

CAN MY CHILD SWAP HIS LESSON TO A DIFFERENT TIME IF NECESSARY?

If a swap is really necessary, the pupil must contact the Music Secretary who will assist in arranging a swap. They will be as accommodating as possible but swaps require at least one week's notice. They discourage lesson swapping as it causes much work and the confusion often results in missed lessons.

WHEN CAN MY CHILD PRACTISE?

He/she can practise at any time, so long as a room is free.

MY CHILD WANTS TO START LEARNING A NEW INSTRUMENT. DO WE NEED TO BUY ONE?

No, you can hire most instruments from the school for a trial period. A small termly fee is charged. These instruments can mostly be taken home too.

WHEN DO WE NEED TO REQUEST MUSIC LESSONS?

As soon as possible, as some instruments are popular and sometimes we have waiting lists. L3 classes offer all pupils the opportunity to try out some instruments for free. An application form for music lessons is in the Community Handbook, can be downloaded from the website, or just contact the Music Secretary.

WHAT HAPPENS IF THE TEACHER MISSES THE LESSON?

The teacher will endeavour to make it up within the term. If this is not possible it will be made up within the school year. If this is impossible, the lesson will be credited to your bill.

WHAT HAPPENS IF MY CHILD MISSES HIS/HER LESSON?

It is lost and will not be made up. A message will be sent direct to the Pupil's tutor who will then inform them of the next lesson. If a pupil misses three lessons, the Director of Music will send a letter home to inform parents. Pupils should also find out the time of their next lesson by looking at the teacher's timetable in the Music Department. Lost lessons are expensive so in order to avoid this happening, if a child knows that they cannot make a lesson due to a clash of obligations, they must discuss it with the Music Secretary as soon as possible.

WHAT MUSICAL GROUPS CAN MY CHILD JOIN?

These change year on year depending on the available talent and personnel, but last year's options available in Baines were:

- Junior Chapel Choir (Auditioned)
- Junior Choir
- Baines Wind Band
- African Drumming
- Junior Brass
- Orchestra (Auditioned)

Opportunities available from Form 4 onwards were:

- Senior Chapel Choir (Auditioned)
- Choral Society (Open to staff and parents too)
- Schola Cantorum (Auditioned)
- Big Band (Auditioned)
- Concert Band (From Grade 4 approx)
- Senior String Quartet (Auditioned)
- Saxophone Quartet (Auditioned)
- Orchestra (Some selection involved; from Grade 4 approx)
- African Drumming

WILL MY CHILD SING AT MASS IN CHAPEL ON SUNDAYS?

The Senior Chapel Choir sings for most Sunday Masses. Once or twice per term, it is sung by the Junior Chapel Choir. If your child is in either of these two choirs, they will be expected to attend the appropriate Masses.

WHAT OPPORTUNITIES ARE THERE FOR MY CHILD TO PERFORM?

Once a week there is an informal free lunchtime recital in the John Wood Chapel, where pupils perform in front of a small and encouraging audience. This is a wonderful opportunity for them to get a gentle introduction to performing. It is open to all musicians of all ages and abilities, including pupils who do not learn their instrument through school. Pupils wishing to perform at one of these concerts should ask their teacher to put their name forward to the Music Secretary. Parents are also welcome to attend the concerts and they are all listed in the school diary.

In addition to this, there are many opportunities within the major school concerts, shows and events throughout the year, which include Baines House Music, Senior House Music, Bandnight, Junior and Senior Musicals, and concerts outside the College.



TERMINOLOGY AND ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviations are in common use at PPC and it can look like a foreign language sometimes! Here is a summary to aid understanding.

COMMON ABBREVIATIONS AT PRIOR PARK COLLEGE

PPC	Prior Park College, Bath
TP	The Paragon School, Bath
PPG	Prior Park Gibraltar
PPS	Prior Park Schools
PPA	Prior Park Alumni
ACH	Academy Hall (1st floor of the Mansion)
RR	The Round Room (basement of the Mansion)
JST	Julian Slade Theatre (by the Theatre Car Park)
JWC	John Wood Chapel (turn right after Reception in the Mansion)
CCF	Combined Cadet Force
PSHCE	Personal, Social, Health, Citizenship, Education
DofE	Duke of Edinburgh (Award Scheme)
POP	Parents of Prior

OTHER TERMS EXPLAINED

Pastoral Evenings	Evening events for parents which are meant for going over issues which are being discussed with the pupils that are relevant to their age group.
Exeat Weekends	Weekends where boarders spend time away from school. The whole school is closed for the weekend and there is no Saturday Active or sports matches.
Voluntary Exeat	As above, but the school isn't closed for the weekend, and it's not compulsory to leave the campus. There is no Saturday Active or sports matches.

YEAR GROUPS

YEAR GROUP NOMENCLATURE

PPC Name	UK Standard Name
Lower 3 (L3)	Year 7
Form 3 (F3)	Year 8
Form 4 (F4)	Year 9
Lower 5 (L5)	Year 10
Upper 5 (U5)	Year 11
Lower 6 (L6)	Year 12
Upper 6 (U6)	Year 13

PARENTS

I'M INTERESTED IN MEETING OTHER PARENTS. WHAT SOCIAL ACTIVITIES ARE AVAILABLE FOR PARENTS?

There are many opportunities offered, whether by Houses, or the school as a whole.

Sports fixtures offer a chance to meet other parents.

Parents of Prior aims to develop a warm community of parents, teachers and pupils within the college. To welcome and support new and existing parents or guardians in whatever way is needed. POP run regular coffee mornings, fundraising events and second hand uniform sales throughout the College term with the aim of raising money for the benefit of the children at PPC. Items are sold with a 50/50 split between the seller and POP's fundraising activities.

If you enjoy singing there are two choirs which you could join. The Choral Society meets on Thursday afternoons from 5.00pm - 6.00pm. The Paradonnas is for ladies only and meets in the Chapel on Friday mornings from 9.00am - 10.00am.

There are many music and drama productions throughout the year which parents are very welcome to attend.

You are kept up to date with upcoming events through the Headmaster's weekly Prior Knowledge bulletin, and on the website Box Office page.

You can follow Parents of Prior on Facebook or Twitter.

 @parentsofprior

 ParentsOfPrior



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Information given in this document is believed to be correct at the time of printing (May 2018).

This, however, does not form part of any agreement between the College and current or prospective parents.

Those requiring information on specific matters should seek written confirmation from the College.