



**APPLEWOOD**  
PREPARATORY SCHOOL

**COMMUNICATION POLICY**  
**APPLEWOOD PREPARATORY SCHOOL**  
**JUNE 2017**

*Good communication*

*is much more than an exchange of information.*

*It is through effective and interactive communication that information is transmitted, understanding is developed and shared, trust is built, confidentiality respected and action coordinated.*

*Good communication includes not only the message but also how that message is communicated.*

*Good communication promotes good partnership.*

The following document is Applewood Preparatory School's best practice of communication between staff, staff and parents, staff and children and staff and the general public. Please note that we are moving toward a paper free environment.

**- GOOD ROOTS. GOOD FRUITS -**  
**- TEACHERS AND PARENTS HELP CHILDREN GROW -**

Turning a little person into an adult is a journey in which both the school and family play a vitally important role. When growing a tree and producing good fruit, as a team, we need to know when and where the tree is being watered, fed and trimmed so that we can all stand proudly and watch it flourish.

**A GUIDELINE FOR APPLEWOOD PARENTS**

*(With thanks to Meg Fargher from Somerset College)*

**In the context of the school as a whole:**

1. The Head, Applewood staff/staff members, grounds staff, teachers, pupils, parents and extramural teachers, whilst wearing the school uniform or not, in or out of business hours or on the property or not, understand that they are representative of Applewood Preparatory School and as such, ensure that communication between themselves and others is kind, caring, compassionate, respectful, confidential and with impeccable manners.
2. Understand and embrace the Applewood Ethos.

**OUR PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION**

Pupils who are PARTICIPATORS and PRODUCERS with PASSION and COMPASSION.

Rooted in the PAST, enjoying the PRESENT and PREPARED for the future.

**OUR SCHOOL ETHOS**

A child learns by what he lives and by what he sees. As professional people involved with one of the greatest tasks of all, we acknowledge that we can only succeed if we are dedicated and honest to our profession. We strive to produce learners who are compassionate and respectful, show initiative, display self-control, have high levels of integrity and show true grit.

**Applewood teachers:**

- accept as their primary professional responsibility the guidance of the pupils in their care in the pursuit of knowledge and skills, and in the development of their full potential so that they may become socially responsible and self-supporting citizens.
  - are loyal to the school, obey all lawful instructions and regulations and conduct professional business through the correct channels.
  - do their best to maintain friendly co-operation with the parents of the pupils in their care, do everything possible to uphold the pupils' confidence in their own homes, and keep the parents adequately informed of the well-being and progress of their children.
  - accept their responsibilities as members of a profession that gives lead to the community in respect of the value of education and in the acceptance of personal involvement in communal civic affairs.
  - contribute their share to the dignity and public image of the teaching profession by their professional and personal conduct.
  - value the opinions and feelings of the children in the school.
3. Respect and speak well of Education as a whole.
  4. Understand that Education is an ongoing relationship between the school and its families.
  5. Respect and speak well of Applewood Preparatory School and our community.

### **In the context of your children:**

1. Be aware and involved in the academic, cultural and sporting life of your children.
2. Attend Parent's Evenings, Teacher Information Evenings and Talks held at the school.
3. Read your children's reports, the weekly newsletters, homework diaries and your emails.
4. Show an interest in your children's academic progress.
5. Try to speak kindly of Applewood teachers, even if you do not agree with all of them.
6. If there are issues with teachers, either personal or academic, they are to be dealt with through the following correct channels.
  - a. First contact is with the relevant teacher
  - b. Second contact is with the relevant HOD
  - c. Third contact is the Head
  - d. Fourth contact is the relevant Board member

Board Members allocated per phase

Phase	Name	Email address	Telephone #
Pre-Primary	Nicky du Toit	nicksdutoit@gmail.com	082 314 4115
Junior Phase	Alison Walker	alison@schooneoordt.co.za	082 772 6881
Senior Phase	Marina James	marinajames@webafrica.org.za	082 324 5959

7. Understand that a school's academic programme is supported by extracurricular activities like camps, outings, sport and cultural activities. Encourage your children to take part in as many of these as possible. The world is a busy thriving place, encourage your children to be busy and thriving.
8. However, equally important to the above, make time for your children to play, imagine, create and experience a little boredom.

### **In the context of being an Applewood Parent:**

1. Please ensure that all communication coming from a parent abides by the Applewood code of conduct of integrity, pride, respect and compassion.
2. The carpark or parent (or even pupil) WhatsApp groups are not the ideal source of school information. Rather contact a teacher, the school secretary or the Head if you are unsure about anything school related.
3. Show moral courage. Your children are watching.
4. Respect the role of Applewood. Rather than responding immediately to your child's complaints, speak to a teacher or the Head and give yourself time to understand both sides of the story.
5. Please respect the Applewood rules of attendance, timekeeping and uniform.
6. Try to support your children at sporting or cultural events.
7. Please return documents timeously. It sets a good example.
8. Invest in your school. Give of your time, if you can, in any way you can.
9. Getting your children to school on time sets a good time-keeping example.
10. Applewood sees children as individuals, listen to what their views are.
11. Don't criticise the school or class's star performer. Your child is a champion in his/her own right. Regularly criticising the star performer is a way of telling your children that you're not satisfied with their performance. This leads to fear and fear leads to underperforming.
12. Insist that they grapple with issues. Assist them where necessary, but allow them the space to deal with problems themselves, this builds resilience.
13. Be a parent. Set rules and boundaries. This shows that you love them.
14. Enjoy your children. Enjoy the people that they are, separate from you. Their childhood is short and will soon be gone.
15. Please update your calendar regularly. Click on <http://www.applewood.co.za/school-events/> and press the 'sync' button. It will download into your 'Downloads' folder. Double click to open and it will show in your email programme. Remember to delete the old calendar in your Microsoft Office and on your smartphone, so that the new one may take its place.

### **In the context of WhatsApp Groups:**

We are all navigating our way through modern technological communication tools and learning as we go. As we know, these are incredibly powerful tools and as such they require a great deal of responsibility. The points listed below are put into place to ensure efficient, polite, kind and effective communication and we ask that all members of the Applewood Community support us in this regard.

- The class group-chat (WhatsApp) is used for issues that apply to the entire class and teacher only.
- It is used for school and school related matters; not community posts.
- It may be used for Birthday Invites if the entire class is invited. Please direct message RSVP's.
- Messages are not sent after 7pm or before 6am.
- Issues or questions that apply to a single child only are sent via direct message to their teacher or parent.
- Parents, please be sensitive to a teacher's personal time. Only contact teachers after hours in exceptional circumstances.
- No need to respond to all messages posted on the group, especially if it's a 'thumbs-up' or 'smiley face', only if specific information is requested.
- Parents, please keep an eye on children's WhatsApp groups. These are wide open to cyberbullying and young children have not yet developed the tools to handle this. If you pay the cell phone bill, then you have every right to monitor their online presence.
- The school has a clear communication channel (outlined above) and no complaints/grievances may be communicated via the class group-chat.

### **In the context of Social Media:**

We encourage parents to share their and their children's experiences on social media in a positive way. In doing so, we encourage parents to 'market' our school, as what better way to invite new pupils than the trusted review of an existing parent. In view of this, please take cognisance of the following:

- Both Positive and Negative posts remain cached forever (even if the post is deleted), think deeply before posting something online.
- Watch language and spelling, the world is watching.
- Try not to tag other children or their parents when posting. Keep it vague.
- The school reserves the right to post images of Applewood children for marketing purposes. Names, addresses will never be tagged. If you would prefer images of your child not to be published, then please do send a letter stipulating so, in writing to the school.
- There are clear communication channels for airing grievances, please make use of them.
- Please keep an eye on your children's social media presence. Once again, our young ones are not mature enough to deal with cyberbullying.

In the spirit of Applewood's code of conduct of integrity, pride, respect and compassion; any form of inappropriate content, including, but not limited to, racism and hate speech, will not be tolerated.

### **In the context of Class Representatives**

We would like to thank all the parents who have made themselves available to be Class Parent Representatives. Please take note of the following information regarding their function:

- The PA is in place to act as a communication channel between the school/teacher and the parents.
- They help with the organisation of class functions and outings.
- They meet with the Head each term to discuss various school issues.
- They assist with general questions and discussions.
- Child or staff member specific issues or questions may be addressed through the relevant channels (outlined on previous page).

## **A GUIDELINE FOR APPLEWOOD TEACHERS:**

### **In the context of the teachers, administrators and management:**

1. All communication coming from within the school or from a teacher, staff member, pupil or parent abides by the Applewood code of conduct of integrity, pride, respect and compassion.
2. All written or email communication is standardised across all platforms with the correct logo, correct colours and a unified email signature.
3. All written or email communication is of correct grammar and spelling. This is imperative for an institution of learning.
4. All written or email communication is cognisant of the following important points:
  - WHO – who is the communication going to
  - HOW – which platform is used – refer to below levels of escalation
  - WHY – what is the purpose of the communication
  - WHAT – the message and how we use it to reinforce our Applewood Ethos through tone (e.g. if we are teaching manners, we must also say please and thank you)
  - WHEN – how much warning are we giving and are we communicating consistently
5. Levels of escalation:
  - a. WhatsApp on class group for quick reminders and/or urgent messages.
  - b. Email for official school communication and sports line ups.
    - i. A general class note is sent directly from the teacher from their own email address.
    - ii. A general school note is sent from Ed Admin.
    - iii. An important note from the Head is on an official letterhead and from a branded Head/Secretary email address.
  - c. Printed official branded letters for events/camps/surveys/school work that require a signature by return
  - d. Calendar for school events, term dates and sport.
6. All written or email communication from teachers is to be approved by their relevant Head of Department before sending.
7. Erase all assumptions that parents, teachers or pupils have a pre-understanding of the workings of the school. Pre-Primary and Grade 1 parents and pupils need special attention.

**WE THANK YOU ALL FOR TAKING NOTE OF THIS COMMUNICATION POLICY AND HOPE THAT IT ASSISTS IN  
DEFINING BOUNDARIES AND ENCOURAGING KINDNESS IN ALL ASPECTS OF SCHOOL LIFE.**