



19 November 2010

Dear Parents

### New Contact Service - ClarionCall

As a school we are always looking for ways to improve our methods for contacting parents quickly and efficiently in the event of sudden changes to the school day.

Up to now we have sometimes relied on telephoning each family, a method which has proved time-consuming and unreliable. We have often had to leave messages on answer machines, leaving us unsure as to whether the message has actually reached parents. In cases of sudden school closure, due to snow for example, we have used our website as a means of communicating: this has proved quite successful but we have decided to improve the means of communication even more.

I am pleased to advise you that we are now introducing a new system called ClarionCall. We will in future be able to contact you in one of two ways:

- a text message to parents' mobile phones giving a short, important message.

A simple text message might read something like this:

Pre-Prep Sports Day is cancelled this afternoon due to heavy rain but our reserve date of Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> will go ahead as planned

- a text message to parents' mobile phones asking parents to call a number to listen to a recorded message if more detail is required.

When a voice message has been recorded for you, a text message will first be sent informing you of the appropriate action:

Message from The Manor Preparatory School  
Call 01315146111.

When you ring the number, your mobile number will be recognised and you will be played the appropriate message. For example:

Hello, this is Gill Mulford calling from the U11 Netball match away at Portsmouth on Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> October. The coach has broken down and help is on its way. We are anticipating at least an hour's wait. I will get a further message to you as soon as I have more information. All the children are warm and well and we won! Please keep your mobile 'phones with you at all times. Thank you.

The fact that you have dialled in and listened to the message is registered on our system, enabling us to quickly ascertain those parents who have not received the message. This means that in turn we can focus on making telephone calls to the remaining few.

We can assure you that your mobile numbers and e-mail addresses are stored on a secure computer that can only be accessed by Manor Prep School staff and will only be used for parental communications.

If at any point you do not wish the school to use your contact information in this way, please let the school know in writing and you will be removed from the system.

### Testing The New System With Parents

We will be sending out a series of tests to the whole school from **Monday 22 November**. These will take two formats:

- A text message (requiring no action or response). Please note that there is **no facility at all** to reply to school texts. If, when the system goes live, you need to get a message to us as a result of one of our text messages you will need to contact the school in the normal way.
- A text message requiring you to follow the instructions to call a number and listen to a recorded voice message. **Please do follow these instructions, even during testing.** For these messages requiring you to call and listen to a recorded message, the number will always be the same. You may therefore wish to save this number to the 'phone book within your mobile: 0131 514 6111 (please save without spaces).

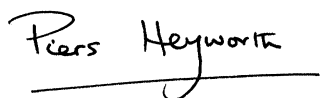
As a result of these tests we will be monitoring your responses to check that you are all receiving our messages, as well as checking for any errors and omissions within our database.

I hope you will agree that this will be a useful addition to the way in which we communicate with parents and ultimately save you waiting/travelling time when collecting children from trips and matches that may be running late or clubs that are cancelled at short notice due to illness.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this system, please direct them, in the first instance, to Mrs Karen Copson in the School Office or Mrs Gill Mulford in the PE Department.

We shall still be using the website for very important announcements (eg snow closure) to complement what you will have been told by text or voice message.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Piers Heyworth". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal line.

Piers Heyworth  
Headmaster