

St Paul's Tone of Voice and Style Guide

This document should be read in conjunction with the St Paul's brand guidelines document.

Our Tone of Voice

At St Paul's we are proud of our history but wear it lightly. Our boys are lively, 21st century children, teenagers and young adults, living and studying in one of the most vibrant and cosmopolitan cities in the world.

Every time we write a document we should think about our audience, be it parents, Old Paulines or the wider community. We speak using clear, well-crafted English and aim to be open, warm and approachable. Our community is international, well-read and knowledgeable about world affairs, which is reflected in our communication style. We enjoy humour but it is subtle and on the dryer side. We are genuine and praise is given where deserved, without being flowery or overly gushing. We are modest, but keen to share where the pupils, staff and alumni have excelled. We believe in excellence without exclusivity and are inclusive in our writing style.

Ultimately, we are curators of this great school. It was here before us and will be here long after us. We have that in the back of our mind as we write.

St Paul's House Style

To ensure clarity and consistency:

Description	Definitive style
General styles	
Date	Wednesday 31 December 2025. Days and months may be abbreviated only in instances where space is at a premium (e.g. in a table).
Time	9.30am, 4pm, 12 noon, 12 midnight
Percentages	Use percentage symbol % in body text and tables
No full stops in these abbreviations	St/Mr/Mrs/Dr/plc/RAF
Full stops in these abbreviations	i.e. / e.g. / etc.
Individual names in full at first reference, titled thereafter in external communications (for text aimed at pupils, it should always be in title/last name format)	John Milton, the Head of History, will lead the school trip to Normandy this year. Mr Milton has led the trip for the last five years.
English spelling	organis <u>a</u> tion and programme
And/&	Write 'and' except for company names such as: Ernst & Young, Standard & Poor's
Web addresses	Lower case for web addresses. Don't start with http (unless there is a technical reason) www.stpaulsschool.org.uk
Use of slash (no space after slash)	word/word
Use of full stop	Only ever use one space after a full stop in sentences, do not double space.
Oxford comma: use if it adds clarity	'This book is dedicated to my parents, Ayn Rand, and God' not 'This book is dedicated to my parents, Ayn Rand and God'

Abbreviations	
Public limited company abbreviated	plc
Limited abbreviated	Ltd
In column heads spell out ‘Number’ not ‘No.’	Number
Pounds million/billion abbreviated for column heads	£m or £bn
Written in full, not abbreviated	Pence e.g. 36 pence
Country abbreviations	UK, USA or US, not U.K. and U.S.A.
Abbreviating in brackets – no quotation marks	Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI)
Bullet style	
Bullet points should start with a capital letter each time, and there should be a full stop at end of list	<p>Here are a few of my favourite things:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cream-coloured ponies • Crisp apple strudels • HMS Belfast • Schnitzel with noodles.
Capitalisation/lower case	
General principles – using capitals	<p>Overuse of capitals, especially when it comes to titles, can seem pompous, dated, or shouty. Remember also, that titles can also be descriptions, and descriptions can be titles. Aim to use the description if possible. For example:</p> <p>Title: Head of History John Milton, will lead the school trip to Normandy this year.</p> <p>Description: John Milton, the head of History, will lead the school trip to Normandy this year.</p> <p>Exceptions are Pauline terms that can only be titles: High Master, Surmaster, Undermaster</p>
Capitalise ‘Head of’, ‘Director of’, ‘Board of’	Head of English; Director of Communications; Board of Governors
Capitalise ‘S’ when referring to the School	the School
Capitalise ‘C’ when referring to specific clubs or committees, and ‘S’ when referring to specific societies	Old Pauline Cricket Club; ICT Committee; History Society
Upper case for subject names	Physics, Chemistry, English, Mathematics
In table column headings, only first initial capital	e.g. Options granted during the year
Lower case used for currency	pound, dollar, euro, zloty etc. - not Pound, Dollar, Euro, Zloty etc.
Hyphens	
Adjectival versus noun use. When used as an adjective before a noun, hyphenate.	Long-term, short-term, medium-term, extra-curricular
When used as nouns, eg ...in the long term a hyphen is unnecessary	...in the long term.”
Use hyphen to separate similar letters:	Co-operate, co-ordinate, re-engineer However: skiing, reopen
Other distinct spellings of words and use of phrases	<p>pro forma — not proforma</p> <p>focused — not focussed</p> <p>whilst — not while</p> <p>website — not Website or web site</p> <p>core — is a singular. Therefore “core achievement” not “core achievements”</p>

	internet – not Internet email – not E-mail or Email
Numbers and figures	
Use ‘£m’ / ‘£bn’ and ‘£000’ without apostrophe	£m, £bn, £000
Telephone number, provide international access code	+44 (0)121 415 7046 or + (1) 781 575 4555
Use words for numbers one to ten	One, two, three etc (except when referring to page numbers or sums of money)
Use figures for numbers 11 and above	11, 12, 13 etc
Write out fractions in full and hyphenate	Three-quarters, one-and-a-half
Pounds million and billion written in full in body text	£7.9 million
Use currency symbols not abbreviations	£ \$ etc, not USD or GBP
Quote marks and apostrophes	
Double quote marks for direct quotes	___ stated “I’m forever blowing bubbles”
Single quote marks for non direct quotes	Our view on this is ‘one for all and all for one’
Titles of books, films, songs etc	
	Titles of books, journals, plays, films, musical works should be in italics, as in: <i>A Midsummer Night’s Dream</i> or <i>Les Misérables</i> . If you are referring to an individual short story, song, article etc within a larger publication, use single quotation marks as in: ‘Circle of Life’ is a song from Disney’s 1994 animated film <i>The Lion King</i> .
Titles of organisations	
	When mentioning other companies, schools, organisations, etc always check their website to see how they describe themselves, even if you think you know. The University of Oxford – not Oxford University The University of Cambridge – not Cambridge University

Pauline words (talking about ourselves)	
St Paul’s School	Not St. Paul’s School (no full stop after St). The first reference to the school must always be St Paul’s School. Thereafter, within the same article or page, it can be referred to as St Paul’s. St Paul’s School may be abbreviated to SPS.
St Paul’s Prep School	‘St Paul’s Prep School’ should in its first instance be referred to as St Paul’s School and thereafter St Paul’s Prep School, or St Paul’s Prep. It should <u>not</u> be referred to as SPPS.
Senior School/Prep School	St Paul’s School may be abbreviated to the Senior School, only when the full school name has initially been used and is only used in the context of recalling an event or activity outside the classroom, such as sports and societies. St Paul’s Prep School may be referred to as the Prep School within the same circumstances as above.
Pauline	a pupil at the School
Old Pauline	Upper case O and P. A former pupil at the school. List their school dates in brackets after their name, as in: John Smith (1984-89). If this spans a century include full year, eg (1998-2003). In the plural, “OPs”.

pupils	We should always refer to 'pupils' and not 'students'. Pupils can also be referred to as 'boys' or 'Paulines' - the latter two generally used for describing life outside of the classroom within the context of the school.
High Master	Capitalise
Surmaster	Capitalise
Undermaster	Capitalise
the School	Capitalise
Houses	Capitalise (Warner House; House Social)
Remedy	Capitalise. This refers to a holiday within term-time (including half-term breaks, Bank Holidays etc.) Christmas, Easter and Summer are simply "holidays".
Numbers in sport	Team numbers should be in digits with no hyphenation or spaces (U16 or U12D, NOT U-16 or U-12 D), unless it refers to the top teams (eg 1 st XI or U18 VII). Winning places should be represented as 1st, 2nd, 3rd. Sport scores should be written in digits (eg 4-1) as timed results (eg. 9.93 seconds or 1:03:25)
Referencing year groups or ages	St Paul's Juniors year groups are named as follows: Lower First, Upper First, Lower Second, Upper Second, Lower Third, Upper Third. Year groups should be written out in full and not abbreviated: 'Lower First Year', 'Sixth Form' <u>NOT</u> L1st, 6 th etc. St Paul's School year groups are named: Fourth Form, Fifth Form, Sixth Form, Lower Eighth, Upper Eighth.
Buildings and grounds	We typically capitalise the names of locations around the school, including but not limited to: Dorfman Theatre Wathen Hall John Colet Hall Kayton Library Milton Building Founder's Court Music School Atrium Boathouse