

In-tray exercise for leadership interviews:

Context: It's a typical Thursday morning and you have just sat down at your desk. It's 7.15am and you receive the following information via email; voicemail; text message and paper. The headteacher is off-site until 11am. You are leading staff briefing at 8.30am and lesson one starts at 9am. These tasks must be resolved by the time the headteacher returns from a council meeting at 11am. You are teaching an examination class period 1 (9am-10am) and have a scheduled meeting period 2 (10am-11am) with the Head of Geography as part of your fortnightly meeting cycle. After morning break, you have 12 potential new parents on-site for a school tour and you are observing a lesson after lunch.

Read the following scenarios and the time and format you have received them. Rank in order of preference how you would resolve each issue; detailing decisions and reasons made. You will have the opportunity to discuss your responses and explain what you would do and why. For this exercise you have 30 minutes.

Time / Day	Format	Scenario
Wednesday 6.30pm	Voicemail on your phone	1. An angry parent claims her child had her money stolen in a PE lesson, she says her daughter was made to take her shoes and socks off in class, and had her bag searched. She is coming to the school at 3pm today to see you.
Tuesday 12pm	Paper via Head of Year in-tray	2. A letter from a parent wants to take her child to Poland, to attend a religious ceremony during term time. The event is in 3 school days (from date received) and length of the time away from school is for 4 days. The child will miss some of their mock exams. There are no contact details on the letter.
Thursday 7am	Paper letter addressed to you.	3. You receive a letter from the daughter of a <i>former</i> teacher at the school who has died. The member of staff worked at the school for 3 years and left in 2010. The funeral is next Wednesday. They have left their telephone number and hope the school will attend
Wednesday 8am	Email via local residents.	4. Write a letter to the parents of two boys who have been involved in a fight outside the school. Both boys have been involved in similar incidents in the past. Further action will be required.
Monday 3pm	Email from Head of LEA	5. An email forwarded by the headteacher, says 'Sort this out urgently!' It is from the local authority asking for missing data reports for pupils in Key Stage 3. The deadline is Friday noon, before going to print.
Thursday 7.45am	Text / Voicemail - directly from next of kin	6. A telephone message from the husband of a teacher who has called in seriously sick. They have been in A&E overnight and will not be in school today. They have left you a voicemail and a text message asking for a return call ASAP.
Wednesday 11pm	Email - directly from a parent.	7. An email message from a parent who would like to arrange a meeting with you to discuss unresolved concerns with the Spanish teacher. She wants her child to move class and the Head of Department has ignored her requests.
Thursday 8.55am	Voicemail	8. A telephone message from your son asking you to call home.
Thursday 7am	Scrap piece of paper under your door.	9. A note from a member of staff who is concerned about the behaviour of a pupil. All the message says is 'Johnny. Form 8DZ. Safeguarding concern.'
Tuesday 4pm	Email request	10. The headteacher has asked you to write a 500-word article to all parents, to introduce yourself as the newly appointed senior teacher in the school. It goes to print on Friday 3pm and the headteacher wants to proofread it by Thursday 5pm. They want to see your opening paragraph in an email before Thursday 12pm.

