



General Gap Student Information

What is it like to be a Gap Student at Pembroke?

In the family atmosphere of Pembroke House Preparatory School, where everyone helps each other out in a strong ethos of teamwork, which in turn fosters a sense of belonging, Gap Students are a very important part of school life. We usually select eight or nine Gaps per term from the many applications we receive (getting this in early is always a good idea), often in a split in favour of girls. One of the Gaps is often a 'Super' Gap: someone who is either a new graduate or taking a year out from their university studies; we usually ask a little more from 'Super' Gaps in terms of duties, report writing, coaching and coordinating other Gaps. This position is also suited to anyone considering a career in teaching; some 'Super' Gaps have returned to Pembroke as full-time teachers. Whilst there is no one 'type' of Gap at Pembroke (we invite applications from all over the world), a lot is expected of them while they are here, helping out in many areas of school life and going beyond the call of duty when required.

The vast majority of Gaps love their stay at Pembroke, and we love the life and energy you bring! When the end of term assembly comes around, the tears and hugs on the part of pupils show what an impact you can have even over just a term as you become the big brother or sister of our Pembrokians. The best Gaps are those who approach their commitment in the right attitude: to do their job to the best of their ability, being friendly, punctual, proactive, organised, dedicated, flexible and professional, whilst making the most of the experiences the school and Kenya offers.

What type of Gap Student role is this?

The Gap Student role at Pembroke is an unpaid voluntary one, with the focus being on acting as a classroom assistant, working in the boarding houses, coaching in Games sessions, devising and running activities on weekends, helping out in trips and providing support to pupils, often on a one-to-one basis. The Gap Student role at Pembroke is therefore an immersive experience, with Gappies taking on a great deal of responsibility, allowing successful applicants to gain meaningful work experience and, potentially, a fine referee to add to your CV.

NB: As you will be aware the on-going Coronavirus situation has had a devastating impact on many businesses across the world. This is particularly true here in Kenya where a good deal of our economy is based on foreign tourism, which has been pretty much nought over the past year. This has, in turn, has a knock-on effect on Pembroke as many of our parents are connected to this sector, hence our income has been reduced. This means we have had to review what we provide as a school. Within this review we have looked at our costs in providing accommodation and all meals during term time, as well as the considerable expense (\$300) of ensuring each Gap Student has an internship pass which enables you to have residency status in Kenya for a full year. In the light of this review and when analysing what other schools, companies and organisations in Kenya charge their Gap Students, we have decided that it is necessary for us to ask Gappies to contribute financially to help cover our expenses. In order to secure your place (once you have produced the correct documentation and been offered a place), we ask for a deposit to be paid three months in advance in either our USD, GBP or Ksh bank accounts; we will send you the details. The remainder will then be paid upon your arrival.



What documentation do I need to provide to become a Gap at Pembroke?

The application process is relatively straight forward. You will need to provide the first four items when an application is first made and the last three items after a place is confirmed:

- 1) Your **CV** – please ensure all information on this is correct
- 2) A **character reference** that is from someone in a position of responsibility who knows you well at your current/ex-school/university or current place of work, e.g. housemaster/mistress at your school (and NOT from a friend or family member) or your employer. All references will need to be sent in the form of a PDF letterhead from your school/employer so that our Human Resources department can apply for your **Kenyan Internship Pass**.
- 3) A **Prospective Gap Details Form** (which will be emailed to you)
- 4) A scanned copy of your **passport photo page** and a **passport style jpeg photo**. Please check on the expiry date, as most passports require at least six months remaining in order for that person to travel.
- 5) A basic Disclosure & Barring Service Check, for UK citizens (<https://www.gov.uk/request-copy-criminal-record>). The barring service costs £23; it can be used elsewhere but is normally only valid for a year. It is a simple online application, requiring a form to be filled and photos. It is essential that we have an up-to-date criminal record check for both your Kenyan Internship Pass application (to prove you have no criminal records), but also to meet our safeguarding requirements to work with children.
- 6) A copy of your **travel (inc. medical) insurance**. This can be provided closer to your departure.
- 7) A signed **parental acknowledgement form**. This is a form which ask Gaps (once their place is confirmed) to pass onto their parents. (NB: this doesn't apply to Super Gaps). Although we very much regard Gaps adults and have the highest expectations for them to act as adult volunteers, working as assistants, coaches and mentors in a professional capacity here at Pembroke, some parents of Gaps like to have more involvement and we want to reassure them that Gap Students are coming to a safe and supportive environment. However, as Gaps are all adults we would have no desire to contact their parents directly (as we would if they were still at school), hence why we ask that you pass on a Gap Student Parental Acknowledgement Form. It asks for parents to sign it to say that they give their consent for a Gap to take up the position and that they check with you that you have travel insurance that covers medical bills, and that if there are serious breaches of the Gap Code of Conduct or Safeguarding regulations - which are also on the form, and which we will ask Gaps to sign on arrival - that Pembroke has the right to step the necessary disciplinary steps. Of course we don't anticipate the latter happening, but due to our past experiences we felt that parents would like this reassurance and a little more information about what will be required of Gaps, especially as in our experience parents often play a key role in financial support during a gap year.

NB: A place cannot be officially offered unless the first four pieces of documentation have been received.



What medical requirements are needed in Kenya?

Consult your doctor for advice about any injections or medication you require to travel to Kenya. **The Yellow Fever inoculation is a legal requirement for entering the country**, so please organise this with your local GP as well as any other recommended immunisations. Pembroke House is located at high altitude (c.6,500 ft) and is too cold for malarial mosquitos, although occasionally malaria is found slightly lower down in Gilgil town, brought in by people living at lower altitudes; most people generally sleep under nets as a precaution. No members of staff or pupils at Pembroke House take anti-malarial medication while at school. However, Kenya does have malarial areas (such as the coast and around Lake Victoria) and if you decide to travel to any of these, it is up to you to decide whether you would like to take any prophylactics. Another thing to note is you **must not drink the water from the taps**. You can get drinking water from the staffroom or buy drinking water if you are travelling.

Which Visa Should I Get?

The government of Kenya has introduced electronic visa applications. You should apply in advance of traveling for a single entry visa at: <http://evisa.go.ke/single-entry-visa.html>. This costs US\$50. This will allow you to work as a gap student and leave/re-enter Kenya without having to re-apply for another single entry visa. Your initial visa will be superseded by your Intern Pass, which will be stamped into your passport after you arrive.

When do I need to arrive?

Normally, there is a staff meeting held on the Friday/Saturday before term starts. The children normally arrive on Sunday/Monday. Gaps are expected to attend the staff meeting and the formal Gap Student induction meeting is typically held on Friday or Saturday, depending on when the staff meeting is held; this will normally involve the Gap Coordinator, the Deputy Head, and the Head of Learning Support, who will normally offer training in supporting pupils with special educational needs. Further meetings with the heads of the boarding houses and the Head of Safeguarding will take place before the start of term. Therefore, Gaps will be given an arrival time prior to the start of term, with a pick in the school bus offered from Karen in Nairobi. Time will be given to help Gaps settle in, with a guided tour of the school before the busy term begins. A place to stay in Nairobi on arrival will be suggested.

Furthermore, it is very important that you purchase a Safaricom SIM card as soon as you arrive. In the past, Gap Students have used their own phones in line with their UK contracts; however, this is incredibly expensive. With your SIM you will also be able to set up an M-PESA account, allowing you to pay for things via M-PESA payments, which in Kenya is now the norm, especially during the time of Covid when handling dirty old banknotes is not the best ideas, whilst M-PESA helps with security as it removes the need to carry cash. It is important for our Gaps to have phones in case they are involved in school matches/trips, or if they're simply away for the weekend, so please endeavour to bring with you an unlocked phone into which you can put your Kenyan SIM.

What practical preparations do I need to make before I come to Pembroke?



Gaps are volunteers at Pembroke, gaining work experience, so we do not pay our Gaps, but accommodation and food are provided during term time. Gaps are required to arrange their own return flights to Kenya and initial tourist visa. You will need some spending money to pay your Gilgil Club and school café bills (a 30,000/- (= \$300) deposit is required on arrival), the odd bit of shopping, Half Term and Exeat trips, etc. How much to bring is quite personal, but generally between 80,000/- and 100,000/- should cover your extra costs.

Having a visa/debit card is useful for emergencies, but is not a must. Recent Gap Students have recommended using **travel cards** for money rather than using debit/credit cards, as charges for these are very high, such as 'Revolut': <https://www.revolut.com/ke/help/more/revolut-for-travel> and 'Monzo' <https://monzo.com/features/travel/> travel cards. If you choose to bring cash, you are fully responsible for your own cash and larger amounts should be kept in the school safe, along with any other valuables, e.g. passports.

You must also have **travel and medical insurance** while in Kenya. This will need to cover medical insurance as although for the normal cuts, headaches, 'flu type stuff, you can use our San, more complicated problems and doctors' appointments will need to be dealt with in hospitals in Nakuru or Nairobi, and medical bills can be very high in Kenya, which the school cannot be expected to cover. Most medical insurance will not cover Covid-19 treatments, so don't stress if you can't get cover for this; as you are all low risk in the case of coronavirus, we more want medical insurance to cover accidents, breaks, etc.

What does Pembroke offer Gap Students?

Beyond the basics of an Internship Pass (which lasts for a year, allowing you to travel around Kenya), accommodation, meals and temporary membership of the Gilgil Country Club, Pembroke offers Gap Students a very full term's worth of experience in a busy boarding school. So, what will you be doing?

- **What class will I be allocated to?**

Each Gap student is allocated a class in which they assist during lessons (c.8.15am – 4.00pm). In the first week Gaps should go to all their class' lessons and find out from the teacher if they are required. If you are not needed by the teacher, you have a free period and some down time. However, at Pembroke, we help out when needed and the Gaps are expected to help teachers if asked, even outside their daily duty, but go and see the Gap Coordinator if you are feeling overwhelmed or being pulled in different directions by teachers. We do try to place Gaps in classes where they feel comfortable, but this is not always possible and Junior classes are allocated Gaps first, as the younger children need more help with reading, times tables, general classwork and basic organisation. However, some of you will be placed with Middles and Seniors classes (Year 5-8), normally with lower ability groups where you will act as a classroom assistants, fulfilling a variety of roles such as admin tasks, working with smaller groups in a full range of subjects or working one-to-one; patience is essential with all tasks involving children!

- **What Sports will I help coach at Pembroke?**

Sport is an essential part of life at Pembroke; we encourage all children to be sporty and to take advantage of our facilities and coaching, as well as the climate which supports year-round outdoor



Games sessions several times a week for all year groups. Therefore, we expect all Gap Students to be able to play a range of sports to a decent level and to, hopefully, have some experience in coaching. There will also be to opportunity to play in some staff teams, as well as social sports, often on a Friday afternoon.

- **Michaelmas term:** Major sports – Cricket & Rounders. Minor sport – Athletics
- **Lent term:** Major sport – Hockey. Minor sports – Swimming & Squash
- **Trinity term:** Major sports – Rugby & Netball. Minor sports – Cross-country, Football & Tennis

In addition to these sports, pupils also have paid Extras such as Riding, Golf (we have a nine hole course next to the school), Karate and Tae-Kwon Do, as well as playing table tennis, table football and chess in their free time, to name but a few.

- **What will be my general responsibilities & daily routine?**

Whilst Gaps do many duties around school, the main three areas they are involved in are:

- 1) The Classroom
- 2) The Boarding Houses
- 3) During Games

General Duties: a general day may run like this: inspection in Boarding Houses; morning lessons in class until lunch; serving at lunch (each table has to have an adult attached to it); afternoon lessons until 4.00pm; Games in the afternoon on certain days; showers in Boarding Houses; Beds in Boarding Houses. Gaps may also from time-to-time be asked to assist with marketing activities or the website, whilst Open Days (there is one each term) will require gaps to help sell school magazines, oversee activities and supervise children whilst teaching staff see parents. Gaps also accompany teaching staff on Form trips, help run weekend camping trips on school site, as well having the opportunity to join some of the post-CE Year 8 trips, alongside acting as a member of staff on away sports fixtures (many of which are in Nairobi) on weekdays or weekends. As you can see, being adaptable and flexible (as well as hard-working) are essential attributes at Pembroke; you may well be asked to also do one-off duties such as registration or accompanying pupils to doctors/dentists or reading and scribing for learning support pupils for their exams. Every day will be different, hence why we need to have people who are used to being busy, proactive and adaptable.

- **What will be my weekend duties?**

On weekends (on top of any duties in the Boarding Houses), you are expected to assist the Weekend Activities Team and Activities Staff with Activities on Saturday (2.00–4.00pm) and Sunday (10.45–12.15pm & 2.15–4.00pm). Throughout the term, there will be a gap rota organised, so that TWO Gap Students are allocated for every weekend to assist with these Activities, as well as undertaking duties in the boarding houses: Rest, phones and showers. The weekend rota is organised by the Gap Coordinator, but if there is a big school event on a weekend, ALL gaps and staff are all expected to help out. All Gaps are on duty for the Closed Weekends at the beginning and end of each term.

If you are not down for duty that weekend, **your weekend break does not start until 12pm on Saturday**. On Saturday mornings, Gaps are expected to assist supervise Hymn Practice (8:00-8:30am), Middles and Seniors Games (8:30-10:00am) and then be available to help with Clubs (10:30-12:00pm). Once you're free, you do not need to return until your duties restart on Monday morning.



- **What about time off and Half Days?**

In a 'normal' week, in addition to any free periods, Gaps get a Half Day either on a Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday (**except in the final week of each term when no one has Half Days**), which begins after Break (10.45am). On your Half Day you do not have any duties and you can just relax at school or go and visit Gilgil, Naivasha, Nakuru or even Nairobi, as long as you are back in good time for your duties the following morning.

- **What about sports fixtures & school trips:**

If the team you are helping to coach goes on an away match, you are sometimes asked to go along to assist, depending on space on the bus and duties at school.

School trips are a good way to get to see Kenya and we are lucky to have some amazing places to go and visit. If there is a school trip, gaps do go along to help out. Which gaps go depends on the Year group and the type of trip, but we do try and give everyone a chance where possible.

You will also be asked on occasion to help out by accompanying a child to a medical or dental appointment in Nairobi or Nakuru; as all children must be accompanied, this is an essential Gap Student task.

- **Will I be fed well?**

Yes, food at Pembroke is wholesome and plentiful; classic school meals three times a day, plus break and tea; Gaps rarely lose weight at Pembroke! Breakfast, Break, Tea and Supper are normally in the Staffroom, although Gaps are requested not to overindulge as the teaching staff get very ratty if Gaps have hovered up the food before they arrive! During the week, Lunch is in the Dining Room and you are expected to help serve, although not on your Half Day; you can take your Lunch in the staffroom on Half Days and for all other meals when you're not on duty. On the weekends, Lunch is in the Staffroom. All your meals during term time are catered for and free. However, meals are not available during exeats or Half Term breaks; you will need to factor this into your budgeting.

- **Dress Code & Conduct:**

Always be punctual to your duties; you are an important part of the smooth running of the school and by being late you put unwanted stress on staff, especially in the Boarding Houses! Set an example to the children, e.g. no inappropriate stories, language or behaviour.

Dress smartly for class (men: trousers, shirt & tie; ladies: shoes, blouse/top, trousers/skirt – no jeans or bare midriffs) and sportswear to games (polo shirts & trainers). Bring a blazer; boys use these most days. A suit or dress for important functions is not essential, but at the end of the Trinity Term there is a formal school ball, which most Gaps attend at a reduced cost. **NO** flip-flops (men), phones, iPods, chewing gum, hoodies up, hats indoors, etc. around school, when at work.

Smart phones are essential in the running of the school and the relay of information (via WhatsApp), but please avoid using your phone during a lesson or when you are meant to be supervising a duty or activity. There will be a Gaps WhatsApp group set up each term, through which important information is sent.



- **What should I bring with me to Pembroke?**

Aside from lots of energy, patience and a sense of humour, please see the separate Packing List for a detailed run down of what to bring.

- **Points of Contact:**

Headmistress: Mrs Debs Boyd-Moss
Director of Studies: Ms Ali Omell
Head of Pastoral Care: Mr Paul Odera
Estates Manager: Mr Ben Cork
Head of Seniors: Mrs Laelia Surtees
Head of Juniors: Mrs Gatheru

Deputy Headmaster: Mr Mike Aung
Head of Girls' House & Head of Safeguarding: Mrs
Evonne Wheeler
Head of HR: Mr Michael Amaru
Head of Middles: Miss Jess Horner
Director of Sport: Mr Ben Hudson



The Gilgil Country Club:

Across the road from Pembroke House is the Gilgil Country Club. This is the main place where staff, parents and the community go to socialise. There are tennis courts, a snooker room, a bowling green and the golf course which, as temporary members, you are allowed to use. There is also the bar, where Thursday and Friday nights are usually the busiest. The bar is run on an honour system which is taken **VERY** seriously. This means that no money is used in the bar, but you sign for drinks and food on chit books. Bills from these are then passed through to the school at the end of each month, with your account being settled before the end of term, being set against your deposit of **30,000/-**. Any money not used will be returned at the end of term, after other school accounts have been settled, e.g. any café or medical bills. The Club is a fun place to go and relax, but as a staff we must be respectful to the community, who are permanent residents – **introducing yourself to members at the beginning goes a long way**. Please read the Gilgil Country Club rules below so you get a feel of what is expected when in the club.

GILGIL COUNTRY CLUB - RULES and Guidelines/Code of Conduct

Parents and Gaps of Pembroke House are welcome to use the Club, but you are doing so as guests and we request that you respect our Rules.

1. There will be a Daily Membership charged to all who use the Club and sign chits. Gaps will be charged Temporary Membership.
2. NO one under the age of 18 shall be served alcohol, nor be allowed in the bar.
3. The barman on duty has the right to refuse to serve a Member or their guest for drunken or disorderly behaviour.
4. The barman on duty has a right to close the bar at **any time**. Thursday is deemed to be mid-week and barmen are working volunteers and are expected to be at work on Friday. They therefore have the right to close the bar from 10.30 p.m.
5. Children under 18 shall be accompanied by a parent or guardian, and such parent or guardian shall be responsible for the behaviour of such children.
6. NO MOBILE PHONES at the bar – penalty to buy one round of drinks.
7. NO DOGS – fine.
8. No drinking from a bottle – fine.
9. No Hats on in the bar – penalty to buy one round of drinks.
10. Shoes to be worn at all times.
11. Children under the age of 18 years are not allowed to use the Billiard/Snooker table without the supervision of a parent or responsible adult.
12. It is your responsibility to ensure that you write out a chit for all drinks.
13. Barmen – please do not serve anyone unless a chit has been written and signed.
14. Use of tennis courts and / or the golf course is allowed, but you must sign a chit and pay a court or greens fee.
15. Do remember that this Club is a Member's Club. It is run by the Members and respect should be shown to all who volunteer. This is not the local PUB!

We would like you to enjoy the club and its facilities. These few rules do help towards this.