

Helensburgh Public School Kindergarten Handbook 2017





Welcome to Kindergarten at Helensburgh Public School

Kindergarten is a most important stage in the life of a child. It is in Kindergarten that students develop concepts about themselves as learners and form attitudes to school. A successful year will create a good basis for all future schooling.

The emphasis at Helensburgh Public School is to provide each child a wide variety of appropriately planned and structured learning experiences in a caring environment.

This booklet is to assist children and their parents in preparing for that first big step in a child's school career - starting school. You will find our school has a relaxed and happy atmosphere, geared to making your child's first year at school a happy, successful and memorable one. This booklet is to be read in conjunction with the Parent Information Booklet. Should you have any queries, we would be happy to speak to you either in person or by telephone.

Early in Term 1 there will be a "meet the teacher night". You will receive information about class routines and timetables, how to help your child with Home Reading and have an opportunity to ask more questions. The Assessment and Reporting Policy, Child Protection program and the Student Welfare Policy will be explained in detail.

We hope that you and your child will be very happy over the next 7 years as part of the Helensburgh Public School community.

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First Day is Friday 3rd February 2017

This will be an exciting day! Children will have met their teacher and have visited the classroom as part of our Kindergarten Orientation program, and will be 'counting down the sleeps' until the big day.

On their first day, children will come to their classrooms at different times. (You will receive a letter notifying you of their starting time.) The teachers will have time to greet children individually and show them around. At the classroom both parent and child will be given time to say their farewells.

If your child shows signs of becoming upset, it is best that when you leave, you do so with a minimum of fuss. Most importantly, try to remain calm and happy and relaxed, as these feelings are so easily transmitted to your child.

Teachers will gently separate parents and children if parting appears difficult and please feel confident that we have dealt successfully with this on many occasions. It is surprising just how quickly the children recover from these episodes, and begin to join in and enjoy the classroom atmosphere. You should let your child know that you will be back to collect them outside the building at the end of the day.

What are our beliefs?

At Helensburgh Public School:

- Students are valued.
- Each student's social, cultural and language background is important.
- Each student's first and second language learning experiences are recognised.
- Teachers expect all students can and will learn.
- Partnerships between parents and teachers are developed and nurtured.
- Teachers will build upon student's prior knowledge and experiences.
- The curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant.
- Students are given the essential foundation for future learning.
- Quality literacy and numeracy programs are taught.
- Classrooms support and stimulate each student's development as a learner.
- Teachers plan teaching and learning programs to meet the needs of each child.
- There is a balance of child-initiated and teacher-initiated experiences.
- Teachers will support and guide student's learning.

We will provide the learning environment to meet the particular social, emotional, physical, intellectual and language needs of students.

Developing the numeracy and literacy skills of each student is our priority, and our school has well-balanced and planned programs beginning in Kindergarten.

Starting School

Starting school brings significant changes to the lives of most children and they need time to get the feel of school. They are moving from the less restricted life of home, day-care or preschool and children need time to adapt to this. During the early weeks much time is taken by learning about school, such as:

- Learning to be a part of a large group.
- Learning to share the teacher's time and attention with the other children.
- Learning to mix with many other children.
- Learning about basic routines of when and how we eat and play outside, how we move from our room to other places, how we attract the teachers attention, where equipment belongs in our room and how to care for it.
- Learning about other places in the school, eg. the library, the hall etc.
- Learning to care for our personal belongings.

Where do we start?

It is vital in planning our teaching and learning programs, that we have an understanding of what each child knows and can do. We use the *Best Start Kindergarten Assessment*.

Teachers have always taken time at the beginning of the year to see how each child works with books, letters, and numbers. However, in *Best Start*, all Kindergarten teachers will use the same set of observation tasks across NSW public schools. Your child's teacher will observe all of the children in her class do a range of tasks, to assess where to start teaching literacy and numeracy.

It is not a test, but identifies the literacy and numeracy knowledge and skills that each child brings to school as they enter Kindergarten. This information is plotted onto a continuum that is consistent with the English and Mathematics syllabus for the early years of schooling. We use the information to plan the quality teaching and learning programs that schools implement in the early years of schooling.

The Literacy Continuum can be viewed in the classrooms.

You will get feedback from your child's teacher later in Term 1.

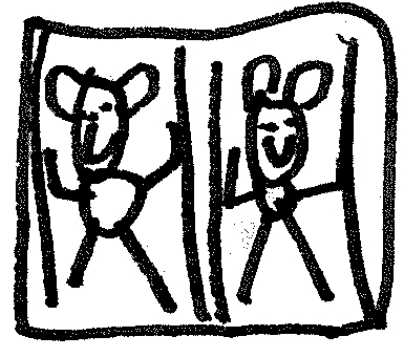


What do we teach?

The children will have a balance of experiences in the six key learning areas, commonly referred to as KLAS. The NSW curriculum has change to include the Australian National Curriculum.

<http://syllabus.bos.nsw.edu.au>

Approximately 50% of our time is spent teaching English and Mathematics.



The Six Key Learning Areas

English: Students learn to use language effectively for a range of purposes and learn about how language works. Students will be talking, listening, reading, viewing and writing.

Mathematics: Students learn mathematical language. They learn about shapes, investigate numbers and learn to work mathematically.

History and Geography: Students learn about people and their social and physical environments.

Science: Students learn about the natural and man-made environment by investigating, by designing and making and by using technology.

Creative and Practical Arts: This includes visual arts, music, dance and drama and gives opportunities for personal expression, creativity, appreciation and enjoyment.

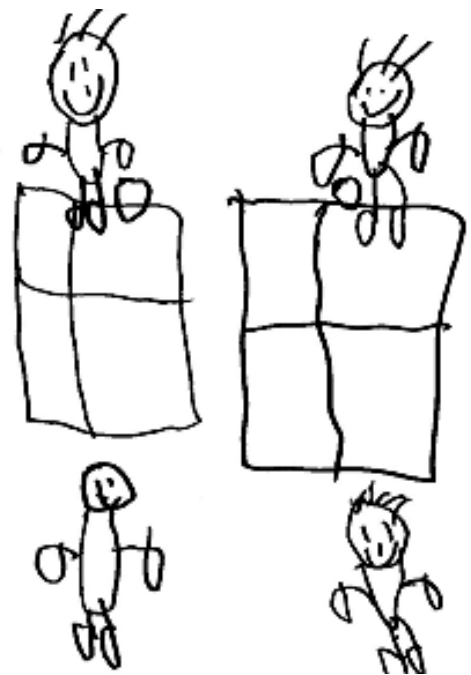
Personal Development, Health and Physical Education: This gives students skills for life. The focus is on students making informed decisions about health and physical activity. Students' fundamental movement skills are developed through a sport program. The children develop skills such as balancing, throwing, catching, jumping and running.

What teaching and learning strategies are used?

We use a variety of teaching strategies to support the students and throughout the day they may work as a whole-class, in small groups, pairs or individually. We use a balance of modelled and guided activities with opportunities for students to work independently of the teacher and as well have opportunities to play.

Modelled activities: Teachers 'model' or show students the how and what to learn. For example in English as the teachers read books, write labels etc they talk about and explain exactly what they are doing - this is where to start, this is the text, this is a word etc.

Guided activities: Guided activities give students specific instruction at their level. In smaller groups, students have the teacher's support and guidance as they practise what was shown in the modelled lessons. A group of children with similar needs work together and the teacher guides their learning.



Independent activities: Time is given for the students to work independently of the teacher and practise and refine skills they have learnt. Very early in the year children enjoy playing 'being the teacher' and reading the book or writing words just like the teacher. Teachers observe students and build on these signs that the children are becoming readers and writers.

Play is still an important teaching strategy in Kindergarten. Children understand play and respond to it. Through play, they learn about getting on with others and making choices about what to do and what not to do. They try different language patterns; they use their hands and eyes; they explore and experiment with their environment and practise new skills. Many of the experiences and activities structured by the teacher will seem like play to the children.

What do we expect of you?

We encourage you to be involved in your child's school life. Make time every day to talk about school and to listen to your child. Show pleasure in the things he or she brings home. Display them. Sometimes take or send them to relatives. It is vital that parents give this feedback to the child.

You can take an active part at school, too. You may be able to help at sport, or on excursions, or in the canteen. It is especially important for you to visit your child's school on special days if at all possible. Every time you visit the school you give an unspoken message that school is important.

We run programs where parent can help. These include sport and excursions. Individual teachers may also need parents at specific times in various curriculum areas. Please feel free to come along. The teachers always appreciate the help parents give and your children enjoy seeing you at school. Whenever you visit the school to help during the day, please sign in at the office first to collect a *Visitors Badge* to wear while in the school.

Please read the Highlights and make note of important events.

What do you expect of us?

We believe that you expect us to be caring and kind; to be firm but friendly and fair, and to guide your child through a program designed to provide him or her with the best possible start to a successful and happy education.

Children begin school with widely varying experiences, skills and attitudes. Some will make faster progress than others will. **School is not a competition.** What counts is whether your child is happy at school, making progress and is developing positive concepts about him or herself as a learner.



Preparing your child for the first days at school

It is easier for children to adjust to school if they have had practice in:

- talking with children and adults and communicating their needs to them
- playing, sharing and taking turns with other children the same age and older
- staying with others - family, friends or other carers
- following simple instructions
- going to the toilet and washing their hands afterwards
- putting on and taking off their clothes, including shoes & socks without help
- recognising and looking after their own belongings
- opening and closing lunch boxes, drink bottles and school back packs
- unpacking their lunch
- recognising their name
- using pencils and scissors

Formal requirements before your child starts school

- Complete an enrolment form.
- Present an Immunisation Certificate.
- Provide a copy of any custody papers that may apply.
- Notify the school in writing of any specific problems or support your child may need eg. speech, medical conditions, and/or medication.

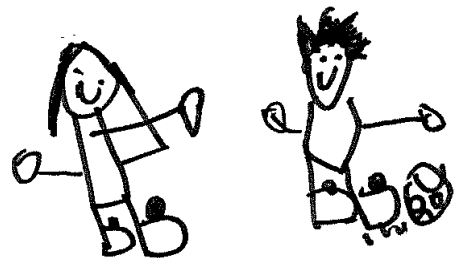
Toilet Independence

Please let the class teacher know of any problems that exist. Please provide a spare pair of underpants in your child's school bag each day. If children have an accident at school and change into the school supply of pants or clothes, these clothes should be washed and returned to school within 2 days.

We see toilet independence as being able to:

- Take down and pull up pants.
- Wipe themselves clean after going to the toilet.
- Dress themselves (if clothes need to be changed).
- Flush the toilet.
- Wash their hands after using the toilet.

It is not part of our School Assistants' duties to change or clean children who have soiled. If a child has an accident at school, we will endeavour to contact parents or the contact person to come to the school to change the child.



Leaving your child

At sometime most children are reluctant to leave their parent. Here are some suggestions:

- help your child find a friend before you leave
- listen to your child's concerns and discuss them together
- reassure your child that he or she is safe at school
- make sure your child and the teacher knows who will be picking up your child
- you can always ring the school later to check

The first weeks

Be interested and understanding: There are many new routines to learn and new people to meet so the children may be tired and possibly irritable at the end of the day. They may even be tearful in the second or third week.

Always be positive: Allow them time to unwind, to relax. After all, they have now been concentrating and learning from 8.55am to 2.55pm and may feel just as tired as any hard working parent may feel at the end of the day.

Name Tags: Your child will be given a nametag to wear for the first few days.

Arrival in the morning

School begins for all children, Kindergarten to Year 6, at 8.55am. Your child should arrive sometime between 8.25 and 8.55am. There is no playground supervision before 8.25am so your child must not arrive before then.

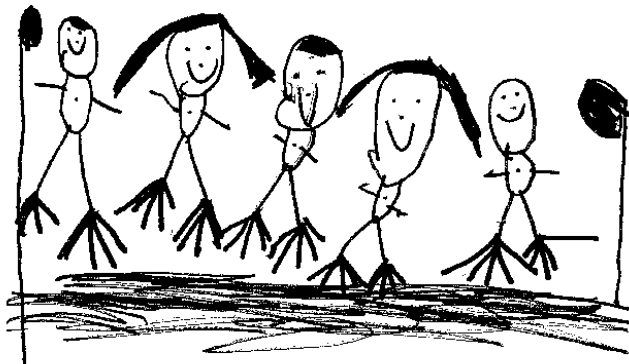
After your child has been coming to school for a few weeks we recommend that you say goodbye shortly after arriving and leave your child playing with the other children.

We will have the morning routine displayed in the window.

Leaving in the afternoon

Kindergarten children are dismissed from the Kindergarten rooms. Those catching the bus line up and a teacher takes them to the bus lines. The teacher stays with the children until the teachers on bus duty arrive. An adult or a sibling should collect all other Kindergarten children. A teacher will remain with the children until they are collected.

If there is a change of plan for the way your child will go home, please send a note to the teacher, as children easily become confused and can get upset. If you are unavoidably late, please phone the school well before finishing time, so we can let your child know.



Lunch and Recess

Your child will need to have something to eat and drink each day for both lunch and recess. We also have a fruit break in the morning session. Only fruit or vegetables are to be eaten and please send fruit ready to eat in a separate container.

Please explain to your child that at this school we eat lunch first and then have an afternoon recess. Train your child to identify which food is to be eaten at lunch and which eaten at recess. Lunch boxes are recommended but please remember to label the lid **and** the bottom of the box.

Some children are given far too much food with strict instructions that it must be eaten and some children eat both lunch and recess at lunchtime. Please monitor your child's food needs regularly. It is reasonable to expect that the food you provide will be eaten but please be flexible about this. Some days your child may not be hungry. Some children eat little at school. Encourage your child to take home leftover food rather than waste it by throwing it in the bin.

As part of our health program children are encouraged to eat healthy foods. You are asked to supply healthy food your child enjoys. Please note: No peanut products as we have children with allergies.

School requirements

What does your child need to bring to school?

- A suitable sized back pack - big enough for home reader, raincoat, lunch box etc.
- Painting shirt or an adult T-shirt to protect your child's uniform during all activities. One of mum or dad's old T-shirts is ideal, as it will cover the complete uniform and does not need buttoning. Please label with your child's name.
- A waterproof Library Bag for borrowing books from the school library. These are available from the school
- School hat
- A separate note will be given out next year, outlining other specific class requirements.

Weekly events

During each week your child will participate in the following activities.

Library: The children visit the school library weekly to learn library routines and to borrow a book.

Sport: Sport lessons will be held at least once a week. Friday is Kindergarten sport day.

Scripture: Scripture teachers visit the school to take weekly Scripture lessons. Ethics classes are also available.



Your role as parents

If you are concerned about your child's progress, please contact the teacher directly. Appointments can be made through the office at a time convenient to you and your child's teacher. This also applies if you have any information (eg a medical condition, changed family circumstances etc) that the teachers need to be aware of.

Remember that all children mature at different rates and at different stages. Early or late, it makes no difference to how well your child does things once they are learnt. Faster is not better. What makes the difference is whether or not your child retains confidence in his/her ability to learn. Linger on the positive, share in the joy of their achievements, no matter how big or small and, above all, give PRAISE constantly.

Helping with reading and writing

- Children value reading through watching their family use reading and writing everyday.
- Encourage your child to read by sharing such activities as:
 - finding brands in shops
 - reading signs and posters
 - choosing a DVD or library book
- Identify words and letters as your child shows an interest.
- Read stories to and with your child every day.
- Discuss the pictures and when he/she becomes interested in words and writing (keep in mind, this varies greatly from child to child), point to words as you read, so the child can learn that the spoken words match written words.
- Visit the local library with your child. The library has a wide range of suitable books.
- When your child draws or paints, write on it what he/she tells you it is about. Reread the story with him/her.
- Encourage your child's attempts at writing - use large pieces of paper to give room for whole arm movement and thick pencils or crayons. Do not expect him/her to be able to write on or between lines at first. Take all attempts at writing seriously, even though what you might see to begin with is a series of random marks on a page. Ask what the writing says and react positively.

Most importantly, praise what your child can do. Nothing succeeds like success!!

Starting on Maths

Everyday we use number, measurement and shape in our lives. Each time we shop or go to the bank we use numbers. Our understanding of space is used to pack a lunch box or park a car. We need to understand how to measure things when we cook, build or listen to a weather report.

- Count things in your home or as you walk down the street, read house numbers, play number games using dice, sing number rhymes. Practise rote counting.
- Encourage your child to sort and classify, seeing differences and similarities. Look for patterns in the environment (eg squares in the windows).
- Encourage your child to play with construction toys and ensure he/she has plenty of materials eg playdough (these need not be commercially made)
- Mark special events on a calendar and talk about how many days until the event.

Ten Tips for Parents of Children Starting Kindergarten

(from NSW DoE website)



1. Provide information about your child's immunisation status.

Your child will be coming into contact with lots of other children and infections can spread very easily. Immunisation records need to be presented for Kindergarten enrolment. Under the Public Health (Amendment) Act 1992, children who have not been immunised may be sent home during an outbreak of a vaccine-preventable disease.

2. Learn the names of the important people at the school.

This will help you communicate with your child about what they do each day at school. It is also important that you have a relationship with your child's teacher and principal to ensure you are up to date with your child's progress.

3. Give all information about your child to the school especially medical and special needs.

You know your child best. Your child's kindergarten teacher will have many students to get to know. Help the teacher understand your child better and faster by sharing information and insights. This will also ensure that your child gets any essential attention.



4. Provide emergency contact numbers.

The school might need to contact you urgently. Provide alternative numbers and contacts in case the school is unable to contact you.

5. Make the school aware of any special family circumstances.

Any changes to your child's family situation can impact on their emotional and academic well-being. Inform your child's teacher and principal about any changed circumstances so that the child can be supported if necessary. Examples of special circumstances include the birth of a sibling, divorce or the death of a loved one.



6. Establish routines with your child and stick to them.

Prepare your child for a more structured day. Make a daily routine that includes mealtime, talking time, and reading time.

7. Make sure your child is road and travel safe.

Children should know to cross the road only at marked crossings. Please set a good example. Take particular care when you drop off and collect your child from school.

8. Become familiar with school activities - develop a relationship with the school.

Parents/caregivers set an example. If you are positive and encouraging towards school, your child will be too. Both the students and teachers will appreciate your involvement and assistance in activities ranging from sports and excursions to music and drama presentations.

9. Educate your child about 'stranger danger'.

Teach your child not to talk to strangers. They should not accept gifts or lifts from someone that they do not know.

10. Label equipment and clothing.

Replacing lost clothing and equipment is expensive and inconvenient. You should clearly mark every item with your child's name.