

Transition to School Booklet



FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Thank you for taking the time to read this booklet. As a school we believe in the importance of trying to help out wherever possible to make the transition from pre-school to school a smooth one.

As a staff, we believe that Oropi School is an ideal environment for children to start their schooling because we are a rural school with a caring, inclusive atmosphere. Our Play-Based Learning programmes provide an environment for your child that is similar to their pre-school, which helps your child settle quickly into school.



If you are interested in enrolling your child at Oropi School, please do not hesitate to make a time to meet with myself or Adam (deputy principal).

Regards

Andrew King

SCHOOL VISITS



Children transitioning into Oropi School usually benefit from 2-3 visits prior to their start date. Amanda King (Junior Team Leader) will send a letter to your child approximately six weeks before they are due to start, inviting the child and an adult to come and spend time in Kiwi Class. School visits are usually on a Thursday morning 9-11am. A caregiver must stay with your child during school visits.

During school visits, your child will participate in the daily class programme: they will play alongside their new classmates, participate in mat time, and spend some time getting to know their new teachers.

KIWI CLASS

New Entrant children at Oropi School start their schooling journey in Kiwi Class. This is a collaborative space with three full-time teachers: Amanda King, Jordan Williams, and Emma Robinson. Your child will be assigned a Key Teacher. Your child's Key Teacher will teach them during the majority of formal learning lessons (eg writing, maths) and be your key point of contact as a parent. Zarna Allen is Kiwi's release teacher, and she teaches in Kiwi approximately two days per week. Although we work as three classes in one shared space, your child will be taught in small groups for academic learning.

HOW CAN I HELP MY CHILD BE 'SCHOOL READY'?

There are many activities that parents undertake with young children that have a positive effect on their development and promote school readiness. These include:

- reading with your child
- teaching them songs and nursery rhymes
- playing with letters and numbers
- talking with your child about the world around them and what is happening in their day
- creating regular opportunities for them to play with their friends and other children

Your child does not need to be able to read or write before they start school. It is helpful if they are able to:

- Pack their own school bag
- Dress and undress themselves
- Take responsibility for their own hat/shoes/clothing/belongings
- Enjoy listening to stories
- Know some nursery rhymes by heart
- Recognise their own name



ACADEMIC LEARNING IN THE FIRST YEAR OF SCHOOL

Initially the focus for your child is that they are happy and settled when coming to school. We will start formal literacy teaching when we feel your child is developmentally ready. For some children this is as soon as they start at school. For other children it may take them several weeks: this is fine! All children make huge progress in their early years at school.

Maths learning in the early years of primary school is predominantly through games and hands on activities. We spend time daily working together to find mathematical solutions to real-life problems.

Oropi School's Early Literacy Progressions



I am happy when I am at school



I enjoy drawing, cutting and talking about my play.
I can focus on my play for a sustained period of time.
I know some poems by heart.
I like listening to stories.
I can read and write my name.



I know some pink words and some letter sounds.
I know there are letters, words and pictures in stories.



I am now ready for instructional reading and writing groups!

OROPHI SCHOOL'S PLAY-BASED LEARNING PHILOSOPHY

Oropi School has a deeply embedded philosophy of Play-Based Learning across all year levels. We believe that through focussed, teacher-supported play, children are able to develop the Key Competencies of the NZ Curriculum:

- Thinking
- Relating to others
- Managing Self
- Understanding language, symbols and text
- Participating and contributing

The Junior School classes start each day with play. This provides an environment similar to their preschool years, which helps with a smooth transition into school. Teachers provide a range of rich learning experiences during play, based on the children's interests.

Pack lots of spare clothes - we love messy play! At Oropi School we encourage exploration in our play-based environment. This means children are frequently dirty and wet. If you **name their clothes** we can make sure they head home to you!



TIPS FOR THE FIRST FEW DAYS...

- The person doing the drop off needs to be brave! 'Fake it until you make it'.... If you are upset, your child will feed off you. Be strong (then cry in the car - it is normal to be emotional about your child starting school). Have a busy day planned on that first day! "Wobbles" at drop of may go on for a few weeks-this is normal.
- Make a plan for drop offs, then stick to it. Tell your child what the plan will be beforehand - then follow through! Eg "I am going to take you into the class, read you a story, then kiss you goodbye and leave you with your teacher". Consistency is the key if your child is finding drop-offs an emotional time. Don't delay your goodbye by hanging around the class longer than necessary.
- Buses: if possible (and we acknowledge that sometimes this is not possible), don't start your child on the bus until they are well settled into school. From experience, using the school bus in the early days of school is just one too many "new" thing to get used to, and children can then be unhappy to come to school.
- It is normal for the adjustment to school to take some time. Initially they love school, but after a few weeks they may decide that actually kindy/daycare is their preferred option. Refer to the first couple of bullet points if this happens!
- Attendance and routines are really important. In the first 3-4 weeks your child may be so tired that they need a day off. Long term, however, attending school regularly is important to establish good learning routines.

