

Getting ready for primary school



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Tick off the tasks that apply to you.

Things to do this year

- If your child attends an early childhood education service, talk to staff about their transition to school.
- Attend a school orientation or transition to school program and make sure you have the school's phone number.
- Take your child to your local community health nurse or doctor for a health check and make sure their immunisations are up to date before school starts.
- If your child takes medication or has an allergy, a medical condition or additional needs, inform the school as early as possible and make an appointment to speak with school staff.
- Apply for a school Opal card if needed. Go to apps.transport.nsw.gov.au/ssts or phone 131 500.
- Organise outside of school hours care.
- Practise safely walking or travelling to and from school.
- Continue reading to your child.
- Connect with other parents and carers on social media.

Useful activities to try in the lead-up to starting Kindergarten



Don't forget

- Write down the date your child will start school:
- Make sure your child can use the toilet independently – including urinals for boys – and practise good hand-washing techniques.
- Write your child's name on all their school things and involve your child in organising them and recognising their name. Make sure your child's name is not visible on the outside of anything they'll be wearing to and from school.
- If you live close to school, practise crossing roads safely as you walk the route with your child.



Try this

- Set up a play date for your child to play with a friend.
- Check out the local library and let your child choose books to borrow.
- Take a ball to a park to throw, catch and kick together.
- Organise a picnic with a packed lunch and encourage your child to open it and eat the food by themselves.
- Read Daisy's First Day together.



Practise

- Help your child put on their school shoes and walk in them.
- Let them try dressing in their school uniform.
- Encourage them to write the letters of the alphabet.
- Let them practise drinking from the bubbler.
- Guide them to cut and paste pictures from a magazine and draw pictures.



Enrolment

Schools can help with enrolment questions throughout the year. You may need to attend an interview with the principal. There you can discuss any medical conditions or other special circumstances before your child starts school. The school may complete a risk assessment.

Attending school

Going to school every day is important, and Kindergarten sets children up for the rest of their schooling.

What your child learns each day builds on what they learned the day before. If your child misses school, their learning routine is broken, so they can lose confidence and miss out on building their friendships.

You have a legal responsibility to send your children to school every school day.

If your child misses school due to illness, religious reasons or family circumstances, talk to your child's teacher and remember to send a signed note explaining the reason for their absence.

If your child arrives at school late or needs to leave early, you will need to go to the office to sign your child in or out.

If you're having difficulty getting your child to school every day and on time, talk to the teacher or principal.

Before you start

There are a number of things to plan and organise before school starts.

Budgeting for new costs

Schools usually provide most things Kindergarten students will use in the classroom, but starting school may require new items such as uniforms and school shoes. It may be helpful to check with your school so you can budget for the items your child will need.

Uniforms

Your child's school will tell you about the school uniform items and where to buy them. There is usually a summer, a winter and a sports uniform. The school can tell you which shops supply the uniform or the material to make it, and many schools run a clothing pool where uniform items are donated after children have outgrown them.

Voluntary school contributions

Schools can request contributions to enhance educational and sporting programs including elective subjects. School contributions help provide additional educational resources for the benefit of students. Payment is voluntary.

Financial assistance

If you are unable to pay school contributions because of financial hardship, you may be eligible for assistance from the school.

The principal will ensure no student or family suffers any discrimination or embarrassment over the inability to pay school contributions.

The big day

The first day of Kindergarten is a big event in your child's life – and that of your entire family. To help you make the most of the day and enjoy the experience, here are some helpful tips.

The night before

- Lay out your child's clothes, shoes and socks.
- Make your child's morning tea and lunch and put it in the fridge.
- Help your child pack their school bag.
- Pack a spare pair of underpants, socks and a change of clothes. Let your child know these are there in case they have any toilet accidents at school.

On the day

- Be confident with your child and let them dress themselves as much as possible.
- Tie back or plait long hair.
- Apply sunscreen and get your child to wear their hat on the way to school.
- Don't forget to take photos.

Saying goodbye

At first, you might like to stay for a while until your child feels secure at school. When your child has settled into school, a short and reassuring goodbye encourages independence. Let them know who will pick them up at the end of the day, and make sure you or that person picks your child up on time.

Did you know?

If your child misses as few as eight days each school term, by the end of primary school they will have missed a year of education.



School routines

Kindergarten children can get very tired at night because they are doing so many new and exciting things. For this reason, it helps if you keep routines like bath time, meals and reading routines as regular as possible.

Getting to and from school safely

How you choose to get your child to and from school is your responsibility. Your child's school wants this to happen safely every day.

Pick the safest way to school and practise travelling the route with your child. Talk about how to be a safe road user.

Keep our school community safe by:

- modelling safe road use to your child
- always holding your child's hand when walking on the footpath, through carparks and across the road
- using the safest spot to cross the road
- never calling your child from across the road
- parking legally even if it means being further away and walking the rest of the way to school.

Share this information with your child's carers such as grandparents, nannies and friends who may be taking your child to or from school.

education.nsw.gov.au/road-safe-parents

Picking up children at the end of the day

When school finishes each day, your child's class will gather at a regular place. Your child's teacher will wait with the children. Make sure your child and their teacher know who will be collecting them each afternoon. This could be a parent, a carer or an after school care worker. Children can get upset if the person picking them up comes late. Check with their teacher about the best time to arrive in the afternoon and where to stand.

Outside of school hours care

Services that care for children outside of school hours and vacation care are often run from schools or near schools. Your school can give you information about these services in your area. The Child Care Subsidy helps eligible families with the cost of childcare for outside of school hours.

humanservices.gov.au



Health and wellbeing



If your child is sick at school

If your child gets sick or injured at school, the school will contact you. If your child is ill, they will go to an area where they can lie down and be monitored. You will be called to come and collect your child if they are too sick to go back to the classroom. For this reason, it is important to keep your contact details up to date with the school, including an alternative contact – such as a relative or neighbour – the school can call should you be unavailable.

If your child is sick at home

From time to time your child may get sick and display any number of symptoms that mean it's best to keep them away from school and see your doctor.

Some of these symptoms include:

- a fever of 38°C or above
- vomiting or diarrhoea
- severe cold or flu symptoms
- rashes of an unknown origin.



Head lice

Don't be alarmed if an outbreak occurs. Head lice can be very annoying, but thankfully they will not harm your child's health and have no bearing on a child's personal hygiene.

Preventing head lice

- Regularly check your child's hair.
- Keep long hair tied back or braided.
- Keep a fine-toothed comb in the bathroom and encourage your family to use it when they wash their hair.

Treating head lice

Daily combing with a white hair conditioner using a fine-toothed comb will help get rid of head lice and their eggs (nits).

health.nsw.gov.au/environment/headlice



Allergies and asthma

It is important for you to inform the principal and the school if your child has asthma or allergies – not just those diagnosed as severe or food allergies.

Anaphylaxis is a severe and sudden allergic reaction to allergens such as nuts or shellfish, or insect bites. If your child is diagnosed with asthma or at risk of an anaphylactic reaction, you must provide the school with information from your child's doctor, including an Action Plan for Anaphylaxis in accordance with the Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy (ASCIA).

The school will develop an individual health care plan to describe your child's needs and how the school plans to meet these needs during the school day, on excursions and in other school activities such as sport.

Schools and parents work together to put arrangements in place for health care support. Information from the child's doctor that you provide will inform the planning process.

allergyfacts.org.au



Sun safety

Schools promote sun-smart behaviour by encouraging students and staff to Slip, Slop, Slap, Seek and Slide.

Sun-safe uniform items – including hats that protect the head, neck and ears – are included in school uniforms. School staff encourage students to play in the natural and built shade environments around the school. Most schools have a no hat, no play policy so your child will need their hat to play with their friends at recess and lunch.

You can protect your child from the damaging effects of UV radiation by applying sunscreen each morning before they leave for school and ensuring they are wearing a sun-safe hat. Children can also wear sunglasses at school to protect their eyes from sun damage.

cancercouncil.com.au/cancer-prevention/sun-protection
education.nsw.gov.au/health-care-procedures

Did you know?

It's important to keep the school informed of any changes to your child's health.



Food at school

Eating at school will be a different experience for your child compared with eating at home or at preschool.

At primary school, there are no places to keep food hot or cold. Children often sit on the grass or on benches and balance their food on their knees. They will also need to be able to open everything their food is wrapped in and they won't want to spend so much time eating that they miss out on playing.

Tips to help your child

- Pack food that is easy to open, easy to eat and not messy.
- Write your child's name on their lunch box, water bottle and any other containers.
- Include a frozen drink bottle to keep food cold. Wrap it in a tea towel in case it leaks.
- Use insulated lunch boxes or cooler bags.
- Avoid using plastic wrap because children find it hard to pull apart. Paper bags are better for the environment too.
- Pack tissues or paper around fruit so it won't bruise.
- Remind your child to wash their hands before eating and to use the toilet at recess and lunch.
- Pack a water bottle for your child each day and remind them that they can also get water from the taps or bubblers throughout the day.
- If your child can order food from their school canteen, help them identify healthy food and drink choices.

Recess and lunch ideas

- Cut fruit into pieces and put them in a small container. Squeeze some lemon juice on apples or pears to stop them from going brown.
- Cut up vegetables such as carrots, celery and cucumber and put them in a resealable plastic bag. Put dips or yoghurt in a separate container.
- Make wholemeal muffins and freeze them.
- Try different breads, such as rolls, pita, wholegrain or tortilla wraps.
- If using tomato in a sandwich, slice it thinly and place the slices between other fillings to stop the sandwich from going soggy.
- Cook a little extra dinner and save some for lunch the next day. You could make quiche, homemade pizza slices, salmon patties, roast vegetables, noodle salads or sausages. A freezer brick or frozen drink can help keep this food fresh.

healthyschoolcanteens.nsw.gov.au



Learning and activities

Most time in Kindergarten is spent developing children's literacy and numeracy skills.

There are six key learning areas studied throughout primary school:

Creative arts

English

Human society and its environment (HSIE)

Mathematics

Personal development, health and physical education (PDHPE)

Science and technology

NAPLAN

Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 students in Australian schools sit the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN).

NAPLAN is held in May and involves four different tests:

- language conventions (spelling, punctuation and grammar)
- writing
- reading
- numeracy.

These are neither English nor maths tests. Rather, NAPLAN assesses students' general literacy and numeracy skills, which are required in all subject areas. Texts used in NAPLAN come from a variety of key learning areas.

Students with disability or additional learning and support needs may qualify for some adjustments. Contact your school to discuss further.



You can find more information about what your child will study on the NSW Education Standards Authority website.

educationstandards.nsw.edu.au



Keeping children safe and happy

School counselling

All NSW public schools have access to psychological expertise through the school counselling service. School counselling staff can help students who are having difficulties at school or home. They can also help families to access services outside of school if needed. You usually need to make an appointment with the school counsellor or school psychologist by phoning the school.

Anti-bullying environment

All public schools actively prevent student bullying and encourage appropriate behaviour by helping students build social skills and respect for others.

Schools also have plans in place to deal with bullying or harassment, and school staff are trained to deal with these situations. You can get a copy of your school's anti-bullying plan from the school office.

antibullying.nsw.gov.au
esafety.gov.au

Additional care

Public schools provide a range of other staff who contribute to personalised learning and support for students where needed.

These positions include:

- learning and support teachers
- English as an additional language or dialect teachers
- community information and liaison officers
- home school liaison officers
- Aboriginal education officers and teams.

Contact your school office if you think your child would benefit from these support services or you would like to know more.

High potential and gifted

High potential and gifted children are those whose potential is more advanced compared to their peers in one or more domains: intellectual, creative, social-emotional or physical. Opportunities exist in all NSW public schools for high potential and gifted children. Contact your school to talk with the principal about the programs offered.

Students with disability and additional learning and support needs

The NSW Government's Every Student, Every School initiative is strengthening the provision of personalised learning and support for students with diverse additional needs. It has a strong focus on professional learning for teachers and support in our public schools.

If your child has any additional learning needs, inform the principal. The NSW Department of Education provides a range of specialist services to support students with additional learning and support needs. This includes support for students' diverse needs in learning or behaviour, students with disability, students with additional health and wellbeing needs, as well as students from diverse cultural and language backgrounds.

Every regular NSW public school has a learning and support teacher who works directly in the school to support students with additional learning and support needs and their classroom teachers.

education.nsw.gov.au/eses

How to find the right person if you have a question or issue

The best education happens when families and schools work together.

If you have questions about your child starting Kindergarten, our website has information on the enrolment process and finding your local school. Contact your local school if you want to talk to someone before term starts.

Once your child has started school, you may have questions or concerns. Your child's teacher is often the best place to start if you would like to talk about your child's progress. If you aren't sure who to talk to, your child's teacher or school office staff can give you the right contact details.

education.nsw.gov.au/your-feedback

Engaging with your child's education

Your school is committed to working with you to ensure you have all the information and support you need to help your child get the most out of school. You have the right to feel welcome in school, to be treated fairly and to be able to actively participate in your child's schooling.

We ask that in return you commit to making your interactions with teachers, school staff, parents and other children positive. We are all partners in our children's education. Every child has the right to expect their best interests will shape our decision-making and actions.

School staff have the right to feel safe in their workplace and be free of intimidating actions or language, as well as inappropriate or unhelpful communications. All our interactions and communications – including those about difficult or complex issues – should be timely, respectful, transparent and focused on solutions.

All public schools in NSW have a School Community Charter which provides the framework for school-based behaviour and interactions. The charter creates clear expectations by which we can all be held to account. If at any time you think a communication or interaction has not been handled in accordance with the charter, please raise this with your school or the department.

education.nsw.gov.au/school-community-charter

2020 term dates for NSW public schools

Starting and finishing dates may vary between schools. Check these dates with your school and write the date your child starts each term in the space below.

Term 1

Tuesday 28 January to Thursday 9 April
for Eastern division

Tuesday 4 February to Thursday 9 April
for Western division

Term 2

Monday 27 April to Friday 3 July

Term 3

Monday 20 July to Friday 25 September

Term 4

Monday 12 October to Friday 18 December

education.nsw.gov.au/calendars

Useful websites

Quick guide for parents and carers – everything
you need to know

education.nsw.gov.au/parent-guide

Practical help with homework, school transitions
and supporting students

education.nsw.gov.au/back-to-school

For complaints, compliments and suggestions

education.nsw.gov.au/your-feedback

Disability, learning and support

[education.nsw.gov.au/
disability-learning-and-support](http://education.nsw.gov.au/disability-learning-and-support)

School information

We acknowledge the homelands of all Aboriginal people and pay our respect to Country.

Say hello

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education.nsw.gov.au

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