



## Checklists for starting school and getting settled

Starting school or kura for the first time or beginning a new school is a new and exciting stage for all the family. These checklists cover some of the important things to help the first days run smoothly. They are also useful for settling your child in at the start of each new school year.

### **In your child's school bag**

- lunch and a water bottle. Get your child to help you pack their lunchbox. Talk about what is for morning tea and what is for lunch
- pencils, exercise books, and other supplies the school has asked your child to bring. Some schools and kura provide a list before school starts, others will give you a list in the first week
- in the spring and summer terms a sun hat and sunblock (it's a good idea to apply sunblock at home before they leave as well)
- in the autumn and winter terms a warm hat and some extra layers in case it gets really cold
- their name on everything particularly hats, shoes and sweatshirts. Show your child where to look for their name on their clothes.
- a change of clothes. This can be reassuring for a child starting school or kura for the first time, especially if they prone to toileting accidents

### **In the morning before you leave**

- get up early so that you have plenty of time to get ready and your child doesn't feel rushed and stressed
- have a nutritious breakfast
- if there is no school uniform, choose clothes and shoes that are easy for your child to manage by themselves
- allow plenty of time for getting to school or kura. On the way chat about what they think their day will be like and what they want to do when they get home.

### **When you get to school**

- go into the classroom and say hello or kia ora to the teacher with your child
- tell the teacher about after school arrangements if you won't be the person picking your child up - although it can help them settle in quicker if you can pick them up for the first few times
- show or remind your child where the toilets are and any other place it is important to know about, such as where they will be collected at the end of the day
- it helps children to feel they belong if they know other children. Make a point of stopping to chat with children and parents and/or carers you know as you arrive
- make goodbyes short. Teachers have a lot of experience helping children to settle in and managing an upset child.

### **After school**

- if you pick up your child ask the teacher how their day went
- expect your child to be very tired in the first few weeks. Make time when you get home to just hang out. They might need to run around outside, chill out on a bean bag with some picture books, or just collapse in front of the TV
- don't schedule in lots of afternoon activities to begin with - let them just get used to their new routines first
- offer them a nutritious afternoon tea. They will probably be very hungry!
- Let them adjust to being at home before asking too much about their day. It's a lot easier to get children of any age to talk about their day when they are doing something else with you – helping to make dinner, tidying up, or drying the dishes

- have a space where school papers goes – this is the beginning of you being inundated with newsletters, permission slips, parent help requests etc. It's useful to make the space close to a calendar so you can write in important dates
- make a time to read together. Some schools will send home a reading book to share on the first day – others may not. But get in the habit of having some shared reading every day, right from the start.

## Does my child have to go to school every day?

Yes, your child must go to school every day. Under the Education and Training Act 2020, parents and carers of school children up to 16 years old can be prosecuted if their child is away from school without a good reason.

## Why do they need to go every day?

Going to school every day really is the key to getting the best out of school because:

- it sets up good habits for going to school right from day one
- learning to read, write and do maths takes a lot of practice and is easier to master if your child goes to school regularly
- each day is a chance to learn something new
- school offers your child regular, dedicated help to master the many skills they need
- it teaches your child life skills like commitment, being reliable, having a good work ethic and sticking with things when they get hard.

## What about my five-year-old?

Even though you don't legally have to enrol your child at school until they turn six, most children in New Zealand start school when they are five.

Once your child has started school they need to attend every day. School used to be compulsory from age six, but the law changed in July 2017, and now children need to attend every day from when they first start school.

If your child is going to be away from school for any reason you should always follow the school's process to let them know. They need to know the reason that your child is away and that they are safe.

## What if my child needs to be away from school?

Your child should go to school every day. But sometimes they might need to be away from school because they are too sick to attend, have an appointment or need to be at a tangi or funeral.

If your child is going to be away from school you should let the school know as soon as possible. Check what your school's process is for letting them know about absences. You will need to let them know that your child will be away, why and for how long.

Your child's safety and wellbeing is a priority for the school. If your child doesn't turn up to school they will be concerned for their safety. If the school doesn't hear from you, they will get in touch with you to make sure your child is okay.

If your child is going to be away for several days, talk to their teacher about getting some work to do while they are away, so that they don't fall behind in class.

## **Can I take my child out of school during term time to go on holiday?**

No, a holiday is not a good enough reason to take your child out of school, so holidays should be planned outside of term time.

Events like a birthday or a special day's shopping aren't considered valid reasons for being away from school either.

## **What if my child is often off school sick?**

If your child misses a lot of school because of a serious illness you may be able to get help from a regional health school.

There are three regional health schools, based in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch. Together they service the whole country, including remote areas. The teachers can work with children both at home and in hospital.

You can contact them directly:

[Southern Regional Health School](#)

Phone 03 366 6739

## **READING, WRITING AND MATHS**

### **Year 1 reading**

In your child's first year at school you will become familiar with the reading colour wheel. The wheel is made up of 9 different colours that show your child's progress on their way to becoming a strong reader. They will begin by reading simple books at the magenta level and progress up through the colours. In their reading they will not just learn to read words but to understand, and talk about the stories they read.

After one year of learning reading at school most children will be able to:

- read books at green level on the colour wheel
- show they have understood the story and talk about what they have read

### **Year 1 writing**

In Year 1 your child will learn to write simple stories on their own. They will learn to plan their writing by talking, or by drawing pictures. Their writing will be for different

purposes that cover several areas of the curriculum. For example, they may write about caring for a pet (science) or a report on a visit to a factory (technology). They will be able to read and talk about what they have written.

After one year of learning writing at school most children will be able to:

- plan what they want to write by talking, drawing or perhaps writing word ideas
- write about their experiences and ideas and give information
- link their story to everyday experiences
- use many words they know from their reading

## **Year 1 maths**

In Year 1 your child will learn about numbers, algebra (symbols), geometry (shapes), measurement and statistics. They will learn to count on their fingers and by using objects. They may start to count in their heads and begin to recognise number patterns like  $3+2=5$ .

After one year of learning maths at school they'll likely be able to:

- solve maths problems up to 10, then up to 20
- count forwards and backwards up to 20, then up to 100.
- know the number before and after any given number
- explore patterns, shapes and measurement
- organize and share objects
- talk about position – eg “I am in front of the tree”, “I am behind you”.
- ask and answer questions – eg “How many chairs are in the classroom?”

These are only some of the skills your child will learn at school.

For more information and examples go to the [New Zealand Curriculum website](#).

This information has been extracted from the following website:

<https://parents.education.govt.nz/primary-school/schooling-in-nz/>