



Bungendore Public School

Where students prosper, grow and succeed

Starting School

A guide for families of children starting school.



Principals Message

Dear families,

A very warm welcome to Bungendore Public School.

Just like many of you, I am relatively new to Bungendore Public School, having started here in Term 2 of 2021. During my short time at BPS, I have been impressed by the friendly, welcoming community that Bungendore is, and I am sure that you will experience the same.

Bungendore Public School is a school steeped in history, and we work hard to maintain a strong sense of community pride and comradery amongst the students, staff and families.

As you walk through the school grounds and enter the learning spaces, you will be greeted by the sound of laughter and observe the thirst and enthusiasm for learning and inquiry that each school day brings. It is this that makes each day a joy.

Bungendore PS will soon embark on an exciting new phase, with the new high school to be built just across the road and upgrades made to our own school oval and learning spaces. The children at BPS will be so fortunate to experience the fantastic facilities, resources and learning opportunities that the unique partnership between our school and the new high school will bring. We can't wait to share it with you.

I have had the pleasure of welcoming many new students and families to schools throughout my career, both as a principal and Kindergarten teacher. I am familiar with the angst and uncertainty this often brings, not just for your children, but also yourselves as parents and carers. Our aim at Bungendore PS is to make this transition as smooth and enjoyable for both you and your child as we possibly can. If at any time you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to get in touch with myself, our friendly office staff or our Early Stage 1 Assistant Principal, Mr Brendon Wright.

Nigel Trethowan | Principal

Assistant Principals Message

Dear families,

Starting 'big' school is a milestone in every child's life, filled with many feelings from being a little anxious to that wonderful feeling of excitement for both children and their families. Preparing children socially and emotionally is a pivotal step in the time leading up to this change.

For both children and families school is a new environment which comes with new surroundings, new expectations, faces, longer days, and different approaches to learning. To some children (and parents/carers) this may be overwhelming and even a little scary.

At Bungendore Public School, you will be welcomed by all. From our friendly office staff who are always happy to answer any question you may have (there are no silly questions) or point you in the right direction of someone that is more than happy to chat with you, our wonderful Principal Mr Nigel Trethowan who you will meet upon enrolment and our highly experienced, dedicated, caring and supportive Kindergarten teaching team who look forward to working in partnership with you in ensuring your child's first year of primary school is a special one to remember.

In preparation for your children transitioning to school, The Kindergarten teaching team has prepared this *Starting School Guide*, to help you and your child have the best possible start in their schooling career.

I am more than happy to chat and answer any questions you may have and look forward to meeting you and introducing you to our fabulous Kindergarten teaching team as we work together throughout your child's first year of school here at Bungendore Public School.

Brendon Wright | Assistant Principal – Early Stage 1

School Dates

2022

Term 1 – Friday 28 January to Friday 8 April

Autumn Break – Monday 11 April to Friday 22 April

Term 2 – Tuesday 26 April to Friday 1 July

Winter Break – Monday 4 July to Friday 15 July

Term 3 – Monday 18 July to Friday 23 September

Spring Break – Monday 26 September to Friday 7 October

Term 4 – Monday 10 October to Tuesday 20 December

Summer Break – Wednesday 21 December to Thursday 26 January 2023

2023

Term 1 – Friday 27 January to Thursday 6 April

Autumn Break – Monday 10 April to Friday 21 April

Term 2 – Monday 24 April to Friday 30 June

Winter Break – Monday 3 July to Friday 14 July

Term 3 – Monday 17 July to Friday 22 September

Spring Break – Monday 25 September to Friday 6 October

Term 4 – Monday 9 October to Tuesday 19 December

Summer Break – Wednesday 20 December to Monday 29 January 2024

When should my child start school?

The NSW Department of Education states -

“Children can start Kindergarten at the beginning of the school year if they turn 5 on or before 31 July that year. Some gifted or talented children may be ready to start school at an earlier age while others may benefit from being a little older. By law, all children must start school by their sixth birthday.” Starting school at the right time is important. We want to ensure that every child has the optimum opportunity to have a successful transition to formal schooling.

Deciding if your child is ready for school is an individual matter for your family to consider.

The following questions may assist you in making a decision, based on how ready your child is to start school:

- Is my child emotionally ready for the challenges of school?
- Can my child socialise well with others?
- Does my child separate from me easily?
- Does my child listen well and respond appropriately to instructions?
- Will my child flourish in a structured environment or does s/he need a more relaxed, unstructured one?
- Does my child communicate effectively?
- Do I want my child to go to school because it will be more convenient for me, or because they are ready?
- Will another year at a prior-to-school service be more beneficial for my child?
- Will my child cope with the change of routine of five days at school?

If you have concerns about your child's school readiness, speak with your centre director and staff, who can help you identify your child's needs.

School Readiness

Are you thinking of enrolling your child into primary school next year? Starting school is a big step for little kids. You might have heard the term 'school readiness' – but what does it really mean? Find out all about school readiness and how you can help your child prepare for big school.

What is 'School Readiness'?

'School readiness' is a measure of the knowledge, skills and behaviours that enable children to participate and succeed in school. Parents sometimes think that school readiness means being able to read, write and do basic maths before starting school. But this isn't the case!

School readiness is about the development of the whole child – their social and emotional skills, physical skills, communication skills and cognitive skills. Children cannot thrive at school if they haven't developed the skills to manage things like getting along with other children, following instructions, and communicating their needs.

Research shows that children who start school when developmentally ready to learn tend to do better in school – and it sets them up for further success later in life



School Readiness Activities

Help your child prepare for school by giving them opportunities to practice and develop their skills through play. Here are some of tips to incorporate into your child's everyday activities.

Pre-writing activities

Enhance your child's ability to adjust to the school routine.

- Provide plenty of opportunities for your child to recognise their name.
- Trace or copy shapes and letters, using thick pencils to start with – this helps to develop the dexterity in their little fingers.
- Encourage clapping and rhyming games and provide opportunities (such as threading and play dough) to help your child develop fine motor skills.
- Encourage your child to hold their pencil between their thumb and pointer finger, but don't worry if this is hard – children develop at different rates.
- Encourage drawing and art and craft activities to encourage creative thinking

Exercise

Enhanced gross motor skills and builds strength.

- Encourage your child to run, climb, march, jump and dance.
- Throw and catch balls, bean bags and other objects to help improve reflexes.
- Create an obstacle course and follow simple instructions around the backyard or local park.
- Go for a bike ride.

Cutting Skills

Enhance fine motor skills and help small muscles develop.

- Practice opening and closing scissors.
- Encourage correct scissor holding and safety.
- Let your child practice cutting out shapes in old magazines or newspapers.



Social Skills

Enhance your child's ability to adjust to the routine.

- Have regular conversations and encourage children to express their thoughts, opinions and needs.
- Encourage independence – getting dressed, looking after belongings, packing up toys and being respectful of others.
- Play turn taking games such as board games and ensure your child is not always the 'winner' so that they can learn about 'losing' in games and are able to better cope when this happens with their peers in a school setting.
- Role play situations where self- regulation is necessary such as managing one's emotions and behaviour appropriate for a described situation in a socially acceptable manner.
- Explain rules and how to follow instructions in a variety of situations.
- Visit public places, such as the swimming pool and the library.
- Have daily routines.
- Encourage independent toileting
- visit public toilets and allow children to use toilets and wash their hands independently.
- Practice road safety and awareness.

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Read, read, read

To enhance your child's speech and language development.

- Read to your child every day.
- Identify stories as having a beginning, middle and end.
- Point out words in everyday situations, on street signs and at the supermarket
- Visit the library for story time.
- Encourage independent reading. Your child will not be able to read yet. This is something that will develop later on - but children can learn to love books by looking at them.



Ready for School – How can you tell?

‘School readiness’ in children includes many different skills and behaviours, such as:

Social skills

Being able to get along with other children, demonstrate basic manners, assert themselves, and being able to play independently as well as with other children.

Emotional maturity

Being able to manage their emotions, cope with minimal adult contact in large groups, focus on tasks, follow directions and instructions from teachers, cope with the stress of the new school environment, and understand the rules.

Independence

Basic skills to manage their needs without adult supervision, such as going to the toilet, dressing, unwrapping their lunch and managing their belongings.

Cognitive Skills

Basic number sense, basic thinking skills, being able to wait and take turns.

Language skills

Being able to talk and listen to adults and other children, speak clearly, communicate needs, understand stories, and begin to identify some letters and sounds.

Physical health and coordination

Basic health, fine motor skills (such as being able to grip a pencil and turn pages in a book) and physical coordination (being able to run, jump, climb, and play ball).

If you are not sure whether your child is ready to start big school, talk to your child's preschool or early childhood educator – they will be able to help you with assessing your child's development and readiness for school.

Tips to transition smoothly from preschool to kindergarten

1. Promote open conversations with your child about starting primary school

Having open conversations with children about starting school allows children to ask a variety of questions and gain a better understanding of what school will be like.

2. Encourage the development of social and emotional skills

The development of positive social and emotional skills is paramount to educational success, and a smooth transition into primary school. Parents can support children by playing simple games which can help them learn to play cooperatively by taking turns, following rules and develop self-regulatory behaviours if they don't win.

3. Help your child develop self-help skills

Self-help skills underpin many school related tasks; therefore, it is imperative children are given opportunities to develop their ability to negotiate and handle everyday tasks such as getting dressed. Giving children opportunities to practice these skills before starting school can help build their confidence in their abilities.

4. Implement predictable routines

The importance of a predictable home routine cannot be underestimated. Parents can assist children in preparing for school by implementing a predictable night routine before the term starts. Some children even benefit from following a routine chart, as this encourages children to take ownership of their day.

5. Practical preparation

Parents should encourage children to wear school uniform at home before school, so it feels familiar when they have to start primary school. It is also important that all school items are labelled e.g. lunch box, bags, clothes with a familiar symbol and the child's name so they can easily recognise their own belongings.

Starting School for children with additional needs

Some children may need extra support because of difficulties with hearing, vision, language, mobility, learning or behaviour.

The NSW Department of Education and Communities may provide for your child's needs in a number of ways. Depending on your child's individual circumstances, s/he may be enrolled in mainstream classes with specialist support, in special classes within mainstream schools, or at a special school.

Schools need to know if your child has special learning needs as soon as possible before enrolment. Schools also need time to prepare for your child's needs. If your child has a physical need, you should inform the school at least 18 months prior to starting school.

The NSW Department of Education and Communities has developed transition guidelines to assist you with the enrolment of your child with special learning needs. There are special enrolment procedures for children with additional learning needs.

Speak with your School Principal and they will guide you in the process.



Best Start Kindergarten Assessment

The Best Start Kindergarten Assessment is a literacy and numeracy assessment conducted for all Kindergarten students during their first five weeks of school.

Children start school with a range of early literacy and numeracy knowledge, skills and understandings. The Best Start assessment helps teachers develop effect learning programs that build upon what students know and can do.

Remember - this is not a test, and you do not need to prepare your child in any special way. Support your child by reassuring them that there is no need to worry about this type of assessment, they only need to try their best. It's merely another part of school life.



Transition to school checklist

- If your child attends a day care centre, talk to staff about their transition to school.
- Attend your school orientation or transition to school programs.
- Take your child to your doctor for a health check and ensure that their immunisations are up to date before school starts.
- If your child takes medication, has an allergy, medical condition, or additional needs, inform the school early on and make an appointment to speak with school staff.
- Organise outside of school hours care if needed.
- Practise safely walking or travelling to and from school.
- Connect with your school and other parents.

First day of school checklist

The first day of Kindergarten is an exciting event in your child's life. To help you make the most of the day and ease your child's nerves so they can enjoy the experience, here are some helpful tips.

The night before

- Help your child lay out their clothes
- Prepare your child's morning tea and lunch and have it packed and ready in the fridge
- Help your child pack their school bag and get familiarised with what they need to bring to school every day
- Pack a spare pair of underpants, socks and a change of clothes in a plastic bag. Let your child know these are in their backpack in case they have any toilet accidents at school.

On the day

- Be confident with your child and encourage them to dress themselves.
- Make sure your child knows who is picking them up after school and where the meeting spot is.
- Apply sunscreen and ensure they have their hat.
- Tie back long hair or plait hair.
- Don't forget to take photos!
- Pick up your child on time
- At the end of the school day take time to talk to your child about what happened during the day and how they felt.

The first year of 'Big School'

Primary school routines differ greatly from early childhood education and care, in terms of structure, routine and expectations of the children.

To support your child during their first year of school, here are some helpful tips.

- Meeting new people, learning new things and adjusting to a new routine can be very tiring for children and many may find that their children become quite tired by the end of the school day. It may be worth considering fewer extracurricular activities such as sports or dance lessons until they adjust to their new routine.
- Encourage your child to talk about their new experiences at school, what they are learning in class, what they are enjoying and any difficulties they may be having. This will help you support their learning and keep up with how they are adjusting.
- Ask the teacher what might work best in terms of regular ongoing communication with you. It's important to be able to get in contact with your child's teacher. If your child is experiencing difficulty at school, we will be in contact early on in the term with our class Newsletters of how to best stay in contact with us.
- Organise time for your child to play with new school friends outside of school to assist in nurturing their relationships and their social skills.
- Plan a light, healthy afternoon snack for your child when they come home from school as they may be more tired than usual and in need of an energy boost.
- Make reading part of your daily routine. Reading to your child as they prepare for bed is a great way to wind down with your child before bed, spend some quality time together and build important skills.

