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Starting School at Pegasus Bay

....a guide for parents of New Entrants



Starting school is a HUGE milestone in your child's development. We've created this booklet to help you and your child prepare for school.

When does my child need to start school?

From the start of the 2024 school year, we have adopted a "Cohort Entry" process for new entrant students. This means that new entrants will join the school at the next cohort entry date after they turn 5. There will be two cohort entry points per school term in Week 1 and Week 6. Check the school calendar or Term Dates page on our school website for these dates.

The Education Review Office (ERO) has some valuable information for parents about cohort entry on the website. To find out more, visit: [ERO's website page: A guide for parents sending their child to a cohort entry school.](#)

Background Information (shared as part of our consultation)

Traditionally, children in Aotearoa (New Zealand) start school on their fifth birthday or any day after that. Recent changes to the Education Act mean schools can adopt cohort entry: enrolling children in groups on specific days across the year.

Schools are choosing cohort entry to support positive transitions, well-being, and learning.

From 1 January 2020, changes made to the Act (through the Education Amendment Act 2019) took effect so that:

- children will be able start school in cohorts but only after they have turned five;
- there will be two entry points per term, one on the first day of term, and one at a mid-point during a term.

The benefits of Cohort Entry

- Cohort entry helps children to settle easier, and have a successful transition to school.
- Starting school alongside other children helps children build relationships - benefiting their social and emotional well-being.
- Student learning benefits as teachers can plan for uninterrupted periods of time.
- There is less disruption and stress for new entrant teachers who can prepare for groups of children arriving on a specific date rather than on an individual and ad hoc basis through the year.
- Schools are able to better anticipate student numbers allowing Principals to strategically plan for transitions and welcoming events.
- It supports whānau to connect with the school and enable teachers to address parents in a group about important points around schooling and school entry.
- Cohort entry can enable new parents to meet each other and make connections.

New entrant or Year 1?

Children who join us in the first three cohort entry dates of the year, are classified as a Year 1, children who join from mid-Term 2 onwards, begin as Year 0, and will be Year 1 the following year.

My child has turned 4, what should I do?

Have a read through our enrolment information on the school website:
(<http://www.pegasusbay.school.nz/enrolments>)

What is the enrolment process?

First you need to complete our online enrolment form. Then get in touch with the office to make a time to come in to complete the enrolment process (usually each Friday). You will meet with either Jared Kelly, our Principal or Di Murphy / Rachel Robinson our Deputy Principals. They will talk you through how our school operates and will answer any questions you may have.

They will also get relevant information about your child and your family from you. This includes health information, what your child is interested in/good at, any anxieties your child or you might have about starting school, your child's preschool experience, and any particular family information that is helpful for us to have about your child/family.

We encourage you to bring your child along to this meeting, so they are fully involved in the whole process from the start, and can see what it's all about.

They will introduce you to the NE Lead Teacher, Sally Patterson. Sally will be in contact with you prior to your child's starting date to organise transition visits.

We will check your enrolment documentation prior to your child starting school. We need proof of address, to sight the Birth Certificate and Passport if your child is not born in New Zealand as well as immunisation information.

What about transition visits?

School can be daunting for a new entrant, so we aim to reduce anxiety by scheduling around 3 transition visits prior to your child starting school. The new entrant team leader organises these and will be in touch around 6 weeks before your start date - once you have completed the enrolment paperwork and met with the principal.

What happens at the transition visits?

Your child will need to bring a small snack with them. It is a good idea for you to stay with your child if they are unsure or nervous about school.

During these visits the children will become familiar with;

- Learning space routines, children and the teachers
- Where to hang their bag and coat
- Where to put their lunchbox and drink bottle
- Where to sit
- Where the toilets are
- Where to play at playtime
- Where to have a drink

Transition visits are invite-only and for tamariki who are starting school within 6 weeks' time. The purpose is to build relationships with the child so they feel secure in their new environment.

What is our New Entrant programme?

We work in Active Learning Spaces (ALS) and it works differently to the classrooms you will remember from your school days. Our teachers operate as a team, working collaboratively to best support your child's needs.

The Junior team have a literacy and numeracy focus as well as a strong emphasis on social and emotional development.

Literacy is delivered using a Structured Literacy programme focused on letters, their sounds and how to read and write these. Tamariki are supported through the different stages in small groups of 3-5 tamariki in a lesson where learning is explicitly delivered by a kaiako in ability groups.

Mathematics delivered using the Maths-No Problem programme. This programme is designed using the Maths Mastery approach to learning. It is predominantly hands on using a lot of specific equipment, math talk and sharing their understandings through experience.

Social and emotional skills are developed intentionally through intentional provocations and experiential learning pedagogy. Skills are taught during circle time, such as turn taking and asking how to join in a game, and reinforced during our Discovery Learning Programme.

What happens on the first day of school?

Enjoy packing their school bag with them - be sure to include lunch box, water bottle and spare underwear. It is essential you name everything, and that your child can recognise their own belongings.

You should arrive with your child before the first bell at 8.55am so there is plenty of time for them to get ready. (Teachers are in the ALS from 8:30am).

If you have not been able to attend school visits prior to starting, then please be at school just after 8:30 so your child can meet the teacher and be shown the morning routines and become familiar with where everything is.

Bring along all the items from the stationery list. You can name all books but do not name pencils, scissors, whiteboards, whiteboard pens, highlighters etc. as these are shared between the children.

Encourage your child to carry their school bag themselves, and to show you that they remember the morning routine they learned on their visits by doing as much as they can by themselves. This helps them to realise how much they can do by themselves and create a sense of belonging and independence.

When your child looks settled, we recommend that you say goodbye and let them know that you'll be back to get them at the end of the day – don't leave this until bell time, try to give them some time to settle without you before the bell goes. Some children become upset at the thought of their primary caregiver leaving, but quickly settle down once you've gone.

How can I help prepare my child for school?

- Read a wide range of stories to your child (repetition is important);
- Teach your child to recognise and write their name (capital for first letter, then lower case);
- Any other interest that your child shows in writing, insist on writing lower case letters;
- Count to 10 both forwards and backwards;
- Sing and say nursery rhymes together;
- Make sure they can go to the toilet by themselves;
- Teach them to get their footwear on and off by themselves.
- Teach them how to apply their sunscreen.
- Teach them how to say please, thank you and sorry, and share toys and other special things.



What if my child is not “ready” for school?

School readiness is not about being able to read, write, know colours or counting – these skills will be taught at school so please don't worry if your child is not a master of these just yet!

Readiness is about emotional and social maturity – aspects of development that we cannot fast track. We cannot make a child who lacks the necessary maturity become mature.

If your child is not “ready” for school, again, don't worry! If they are unable to manage themselves then we will talk to you about this and will put in place a plan to help them be successful at school. This may include attending for shorter periods of time, rather than whole school days or you coming in and supporting your child with their learning.

Who do I contact.....

....for enrolment information:

Visit our website(<http://www.pegasusbay.school.nz/>), click the green 'enrolments' button at the bottom of the home page and you will find the contents of the enrolment pack there.

....for an appointment to enrol:

phone us – 03 9207000

email us – admin@pegasusbay.school.nz or micky@pegasusbay.school.nz

How do I find out more information?

Website (see link above): has all our contact information, enrolment information, parent handbook, newsletters, calendar, term dates and lots more!

Parent Handbook: Available on our website, this document contains information about our learning spaces and how we do things here. It also includes information on communication, uniform, school bus and lots more.

Phone App: It's free, easy to install and is the one-stop shop for everything you need to stay connected to our school. You can download it via this link, then just follow the prompts to select our school <https://pegasusbay.apps.school.nz/install/>

Facebook – Pegasus Bay School News Feed: This is a closed group for parents with children currently attending our school only, and staff will post notices and photos here.

Most importantly – once you've joined our community - keep in touch with us! If you have any questions, concerns or suggestions, then talk to your child's home group teacher first, or email them.

