

# Starting School

A guide for parents and caregivers

*"Nurturing and developing our leaders of tomorrow."*

*He Manukura mō Āpōpō*

Dear Parents/Caregivers,

Starting school is an exciting and important step in your child's life – and your own!

At Pinehaven School we look forward to working with you and your child to make this important stage rewarding and positive.

Our staff are committed to meeting the needs of our children and their special attributes are valued.

We believe in the importance of learning to read, write and develop numeracy skills and this is reflected in the strong programmes that we offer. We ensure all areas of the curriculum are addressed and developed as part of our day-to-day programme.

We value the communication between home and school and see it as an integral part of your child's learning. Please feel you can approach us to ask a question or to arrange a meeting at an appropriate time.

This guide aims to give you the initial information about starting school. Please refer to the school website for further information.

[www.pinehaven.school.nz](http://www.pinehaven.school.nz)

Once again, welcome to Pinehaven School and we look forward to working with you and your child.

Your sincerely,

*Danielle Gill*  
Associate Principal  
Junior School Leader

*Sarah Cobbum*  
New Entrant Teacher

## **Contact Details**

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## Pre-School Visit

As part of the enrolment process, a time will be arranged for you and your child to have four school visits. Some children may need more visits and others may need less, this can be discussed with the new entrant teacher. The school visits will happen on a Wednesday morning at 9am until 11am. During this session your child will have the opportunity to meet the other children in their class and join in with the classroom activities. They will then join the syndicate for morning tea. Please ensure your child has something to eat and drink with them on their visits.

### Class Level & Junior School Placements

A child who starts between July and December are usually classified as Year 0. A child starting between January and June are usually Year 1. Children starting in May and June will be closely monitored, before classification as a Year 1 or Year 2 for the following year is confirmed.

Please note this if your child is classified as a Year 0, the following year is not a repeat year as children work at their instructional level. There may therefore be up to a year's difference in age at any year level. The time of year children start and the number of children turning 5 during the year, can impact on whether or not your child will stay in the same class all year during the year they start school. Children who start school early in the year sometimes move through to another class once early literacy and numeracy concepts are understood. If they start later in the year, they usually remain in their entry class until the end of that year. If your child will be moving to another class at any stage, we will inform you in plenty of time. They then progress yearly and complete school with us in Year 6.

### Prior to starting school, it would be helpful if your child:

- can recognise / write his or her own name in lower case letters
- can manage scissors and crayons
- has basic manners – please / thank you etc.
- can hold a pencil correctly
- can manage their own clothes and shoes
- has some alphabet knowledge and experience with books
- can follow simple instructions
- can handle morning tea and lunch items independently
- can pack and unpack his or her bag
- can express him or herself clearly
- can sit down for a short time and listen
- is responsible for own personal items
- can initiate some conversation e.g. 'good morning'
- can manage the toilet unassisted

## First Day Organisation

It is important to arrive at school **before 8:45am** to ensure your child is settled into the class before the first bell rings at 8.55am.

Hang your child's coat and bag together on the named peg you will find in the cloak bay and come on into the classroom to meet the teacher. On subsequent days encourage your child to hang his or her own bag up and prepare for the day.

Once the morning session has started, please use the teacher's guidance as to the best time to leave.

All children will finish school at 3pm. Please discuss fully with your child where to meet, and who will be meeting him or her at the end of the day. Please let the teacher know if arrangements change.

Could you please ensure your child has the following items ready for the first day:

- Personal articles of clothing which must be *clearly named*.
- Backpacks: if you are purchasing, please ensure the backpack is big enough to fit items comfortably i.e. lunchbox, reading folders etc., but not too big for the child's size.
- The stationery items named and placed in the reading bag ready to give to the classroom teacher. The stationery pack can be purchased from the office for \$46.

**Please ensure *everything* is named using the child's first name**

In Terms 1 and 4 a wide brimmed hat is required to be worn outside at all times (hat must cover neck and ears) and sunscreen should be clearly labelled and sent into school for daily use.

### School lunches

- We hope you would promote a healthy attitude to food by providing a 'healthy' morning tea and lunch:
  - ❖ lots of fruit, vegetables and cereals (including breads)
  - ❖ limited fats, sugars and processed foods (*please note, we do not allow sweets at school*)
- Please ensure children can cope with yoghurt containers, and are provided with a spoon from home.
- Water is the preferred drink. Drink bottles will be sent home daily to be cleaned and refilled.
- On Fridays the 'Home and School' run a sausage sizzle. The price of a sausage in bread is \$1.50 and an ice-block is \$1. Please send the money to school in an envelope with your child's name, room number and what they want written clearly on the front. This is placed in a coloured plastic box in your child's classroom. Alternatively, you can ask at the School Office to purchase prepaid vouchers.

## Pinehaven School Values

*Values we wish our students to demonstrate are:*

- A** - Accepting responsibility and being accountable
- C** - Courage
- H** - Helping and caring for others
- I** - Individual determination to succeed
- E** - Excellence
- V** - Valuing diversity and individuality
- E** - Encouraging respect



## The New Zealand Curriculum Framework

### English

- Oral Language
- Visual Language (including handwriting)
- Reading
- Writing, Spelling, Phonics

### Mathematics

### Social Sciences

### Science

### Technology

### Health & Physical Education

- PE Skills & Fitness
- Perceptual Motor Programme

### Maori

### The Arts

- Music
- Dance
- Drama
- Art

*Maori, ICT & Key Competencies are woven throughout the curriculum*

## Timetable

A typical week in a junior classroom might look like this...

|       | Monday                       | Tuesday       | Wednesday     | Thursday                               | Friday   |   |
|-------|------------------------------|---------------|---------------|--|--|---|
| 8.55  | Roll & Notices               |               |               |  |  |   |
| 9.00  | Oral Language                | Oral Language | Oral Language | Oral Language                          | Oral Language                                    |   |
| 9.10  | Mathematics                  | Mathematics   | Mathematics   | Mathematics                            | Mathematics                                      |   |
| 9.40  |                              |               |               |  |  |   |
| 9.45  |                              |               |               |  |  |   |
| 9.55  | Writing                      | Writing       | Writing       | Writing                                | Maori  |   |
| 10.00 |                              |               |               |  |  |   |
| 10.20 |                              |               |               |  | Fitness<br>Jump Jam<br>Led by Seniors            |   |
| 10.40 | MORNING TEA                  |               |               |  |  |   |
| 11.00 | Handwriting                  | Handwriting   | Handwriting   | Handwriting                            | The Arts   |   |
| 11.15 | Spelling                     | Spelling      | Spelling      | Spelling                               |  |   |
| 11.30 | Reading                      | Reading       | Reading       | Reading                                |  |   |
| 11.45 |                              |               |               |  |  |   |
| 12.00 |                              |               |               |  |  |   |
| 12.15 | SSR/Poetry                   | SSR/Poetry    | SSR/Poetry    | SSR/Poetry                             |  |   |
| 12.30 | LUNCH                        |               |               |  |  |   |
| 1.30  | Fitness/PE                   | Fitness/PE    | Fitness/PE    | Library                                | Homework   |   |
| 2.00  | Topic/Discovery (one day of) |               |               | Poetry                                 | School<br>Assembly<br>@ 2.10pm<br>(W3, 6 &<br>9) | Sport   |
| 2.10  |                              |               |               |  |  |   |
| 2.15  |                              |               |               |  |  |   |
| 2.30  |                              |               |               | Junior<br>KapaHaka/Singing<br>Rotation |  | Junior<br>Syndicate<br>Assembly<br>@ 2.30pm<br>(W1, 2, 4, 5,<br>7 & 10) |
| 2.45  |                              |               |               | Teacher Reading & Tidy Time            |  |   |

## Reading

Through a background of sharing experiences, talking and reading widely with your child, you provide the rich language background that is so important to enable a child to gain meaning from print.

Your child will be given a book to read as soon as they start school. These books will come home most week nights. Unless indicated, it will be a book the child can read independently and is to be read to you for your child to have additional practice to gain confidence. This book should never be too difficult.

Sometimes we will indicate that the book is best 'shared', with you and your child reading together, or sharing the reading if your child is tired.

***It is absolutely vital you make time to share a love of books with your child.***

***Join a library and visit it together frequently.***

Most children will enter the guided reading programme at the emergent stage. The following is a list of skills at the emergent level.

### **Children's targets:**

- To handle books confidently
- To be able to use book terminology (pages, print, lines, author, illustrator)
- To be able to demonstrate front, back and spine of book
- To have correct directional movement:
  - ❖ where to start (finding the print)
  - ❖ reading, pointing, sweeping left to right
  - ❖ using left page before right
  - ❖ return sweep to a new line
  - ❖ read, point word by word
- To be able to recognise capital & lower case letters
- To be able to show a letter in a word
- To recognise the difference between letters and words
- To write their own name
- To be able to recognise some high frequency words
- To recognise similarities in words and word beginnings
- To use letter sound cues e.g. w/went
- To say, hear and record most first and last sounds
- To recognise and respond to; full stops, commas, exclamation marks & question marks

- To be able to:
  - ❖ listen to stories
  - ❖ retell stories
  - ❖ predict the story line
  - ❖ choose reading as a leisure activity
- Use picture cues
- To reread the print when it “does not sound right”

We would like to share some positive ways in which you could help your child with reading development at this stage.

- Set aside a regular time each night to read to your child and for them to read to you. The bedtime story is the most valuable way to ensure a healthy attitude towards reading. Make this time enjoyable and free from tension.
- Listen to your child as she or he reads to you. Help him or her point to the words.
- Reread favourite books from home e.g. ‘Cat in the Hat.’ Share the reading as your child hears and repeats the language structure.
- Encourage your child to always get his or her mouth ready to form the start of the word e.g. b, bl.
- Encourage your child to gain sense from the story. Resist jumping in and correcting mistakes, but ask questions like:
  - ❖ “Does this make sense?”
  - ❖ “What can you tell me about...?”
- Initially your child will use the pictures extensively to seek meaning from the print. Don’t deprive them of the picture cues or expect them to recognise individual words.
- Encourage your child to retell a story in his or her own words.
- Use book language – title, author, pages, words, letters, illustrations etc.
- Make your own experience books ... “Our trip on the train” etc.

***Have fun and treasure the time together.***

***Your child will still:***

- be using pictures to predict text
- finger point

***Your child will start to, and gain confidence in:***

- focusing on word after word in sequence
- identifying some words
- using letter and sound links
- re-running a sentence to gain meaning
- becoming aware of capitals and full stops

***Please encourage your child to take risks with new print, and to remember that reading is ‘understanding the MEANING’ of something that has been written.***



***Reading is not sounding out words and letters.***

Please reinforce the following steps when your child comes to an unknown word while reading:

- Ask them to go back to the beginning of the sentence. Read it again. Say the first sound.
- If they get stuck again, go back to the beginning of the sentence. Read it again. Say the first sound, then read on to the end of the sentence.
- Now have a try, does it make sense? Does it look right? Does it sound right?

Please ensure the books are returned to school each day. Encourage your child to place the book in his or her own reading bag and to return it to the place specified by the classroom teacher (i.e. group box / tray) every morning. A new book will only be given out as each book is returned.

## Written Language

***Development in learning to read usually goes hand in hand with learning to write.***

Encourage your child to be interested in writing and when your child is wanting to write at home please encourage him or her to 'have a go'.

At school we encourage the children to learn through making attempts, even if some are not completely successful. With help they increase their writing skills and come closer to excellence.

***Do not spell out words;*** rather, ask the child to say the word / words slowly and think what letters they may need to represent the dominant sounds they hear, with particular emphasis on initial sound. We want children to be independent writers.

Model the correct script when the child has finished recording his or her own ideas.

Use lower case print script (John) not capital letters (JOHN).

Five year olds enter school at different stages in the writing process. Some of these stages are examined below:

- Some children entering school do not have any letter knowledge and their first attempt at writing may be what you would see as squiggles.
- If the child has some letter knowledge he or she may show that letters are important in writing, but is not relating letters and sounds yet. However, the writer is writing on his or her own, with ownership of the ideas. Pictures are very important, if the child wishes to draw also.
- The five year old begins to record some whole words and approximates letters in unknown words. He or she knows the story can be revisited and read later. Real meaning is being gained from print.
- As the child grows in confidence he or she begins to expand his or her ideas and uses several sentences. Word charts and simple dictionaries are referred to. The child has the joy of recording independently without seeking full correctness as he or she writes. The emphasis here is on recording the experience. When the writing is to be shared with a reader then the writing is corrected and published.

***Recognition of the alphabet*** is heavily emphasised in the initial stages of schooling and it is beneficial if the child does have a background of alphabet knowledge, including recognising the letters on sight, and linking letters and their sounds.

## Handwriting

The following is the cursive script we are teaching. Upper and lower case letters are taught together.

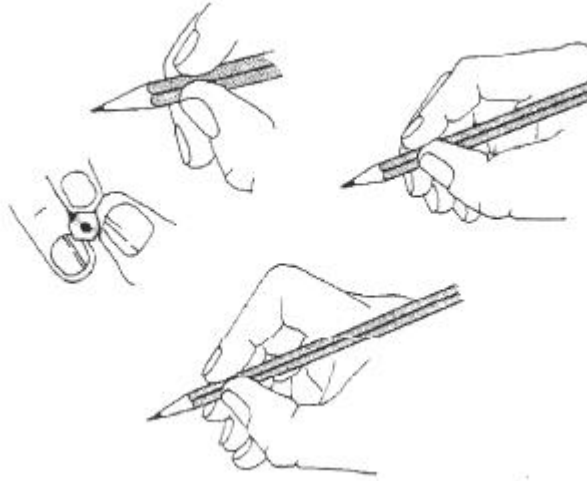
a b c d e f g

h i j k l m n

o p q r s t u

v w x y z

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0



The above image shows the correct method of holding a pen or pencil. Please ensure this is the method your child uses. If this grip is not automatic, please see Sarah Cobbum for information about where you can buy a pencil grip to assist the correction of the pencil grip.

## Mathematics

Each year your child will cover the following mathematics strands:

- Number & Algebra
- Geometry & Measurement
- Statistics

About 80% of our junior mathematics programme is in the **number** strand.

There is an emphasis on:

- Knowledge and strategy learning in number, with children expected to articulate the process used to gain their answers
- Problem solving
- Application of mathematics in everyday experiences
- Independent discovery
- Developing logic and reasoning
- Using concrete materials (including fingers) to explore mathematical ideas
- Knowing the basic facts

Each strand is divided into 8 levels and the child will move through these levels according to his or her own ability.

**All New Zealand schools including Pinehaven School are smoke free zones, no smoking is permitted anywhere on the school ground.**