



Taha o te Rangi
On the Edge of
the Horizon

JUNIOR SCHOOL HANDBOOK

STARTING SCHOOL

Starting school is an exciting time! Our Junior School is a warm, friendly and welcoming place, which encourages children to develop the skills they need to grow socially, emotionally and academically.

Although it can feel daunting sending your child off to “big school”, there is a lot you can do to help prepare them.

SCHOOL READINESS:

All children are different, they mature and learn at different stages. There is no set list of what a child should be able to do when they start school, but supporting your child to develop social/emotional and self-management skills is one of the best things you can do to help prepare them.

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL SKILLS:

- treating themselves and others with care
- using good manners
- taking turns/sharing/waiting
- listening to others, speaking respectfully
- confidence to have a go/try something new

SELF-MANAGEMENT/PERSONAL INDEPENDENCE:

- tidying up after themselves
- taking responsibility for their belongings
- carrying their own school bag (start when they are at pre-school)
- opening lunch-boxes/food packets by themselves
- using the toilet properly, blowing own nose
- changing in and out of PE gear, putting shoes on/taking shoes off

Encourage your child to do things for themselves. It might be faster to do these things yourself, but your child will take pride in their developing skills



SKILLS FOR LEARNING:

Fostering a love of books at home is a great start for early literacy skills. Read to your child regularly and talk about the books you are reading. Visit the local library together. Link what you read to your child's own experiences.

Lots of talking! Children are naturally curious, encourage their questions and engage them in conversation about the world around them. A wide vocabulary is an important part of developing reading and writing skills.

Enjoy imaginative, free-play with your children. Sing songs and nursery rhymes, play with dress ups, build with lego or blocks, count the stairs as you walk up them together, or look for shapes in the environment. Encourage opportunities for your child to interact with other children, not just siblings.

SKILLS FOR LEARNING:

You don't have to teach your child to read and write, they will learn that at school, but it is helpful if your child can:

- recognise their own name, identify and write some of the letters in their name
- know some alphabet letters and the sounds the letters make
- use scissors, a glue-stick, pencils, felt-pens, crayons etc.
- know some shapes and colours
- know some numbers, count out loud
- know some shapes and colours





THE SCHOOL DAY

School begins at 8.50am and finishes at 2.50pm.

We advise having your child at school around 8.30am, to allow them time to hang up their bag, put away their book bag and settle into their learning space before the bell rings. If your child arrives at school after 8.50am, they must go to the main office for a late pass, before going to class.

Bell Times:

8.50 - 10.40 Block 1

10.40 - 11.10 Morning Tea

11.00 - 12.30 Block 2

12.40 - 1.25pm Lunchtime

1.20 - 2.50pm Block 3



Lunches:

All children must have a lunch box and we encourage healthy lunch options and water to drink. It is helpful if you have talked with your child about what they should eat at morning tea and then at lunchtime, so they are having food at both break times. They must sit down to eat in a designated area, supervised by duty teachers. There is a 10 minute eating time before children are allowed to go and play. Young children often need longer to eat and playground duty teachers will still keep an eye on them until they are ready to go and play.

Toilets:

There are designated toilets for junior children. Teachers make sure students know which toilets they can use during the day and at break times.

Play Areas:

The junior playground is a separate area for children up to Year 3. All other play areas, including the school field, are for all children to use. Sports equipment can be borrowed from the PE Shed and the school library is also open at lunchtimes. Teachers on duty can be easily spotted, as they wear a hi-vis vest. Teachers make sure all children know which areas of the school are “out of bounds”.





Active play is encouraged at break times and is incorporated into learning time in the junior school. There is growing research that highlights the benefits of “play” in developing oral language skills and social skills, as well as literacy and numeracy skills.

HOMEWORK:

Junior students have a “Communication Book” which is used to share messages or notices relevant to your child. Homework activities will be put into the Communication Book and your child’s home reading log will also be in this book. You can also use the Communication Book to send messages to your child’s teacher, if needed.

Homework at the Junior level will include reading - this could be a poem, a book they have read with the teacher that day, a book they have read before, a library book or some other reading material. They can read this to you, or alternatively, you can read it to them.

After reading, talk with your child about what you read, ask them some questions to help them develop their understanding. If possible, make connections between what they have read and their own life.

Homework may also include high-frequency words to memorise, or spelling words to learn. All children also require a Mathletics account, which is paid for at the office. Mathletics is a fantastic online maths resource which children use right through until Year 8.

Homework in the Junior School shouldn’t take more than 10-15 minutes each night.

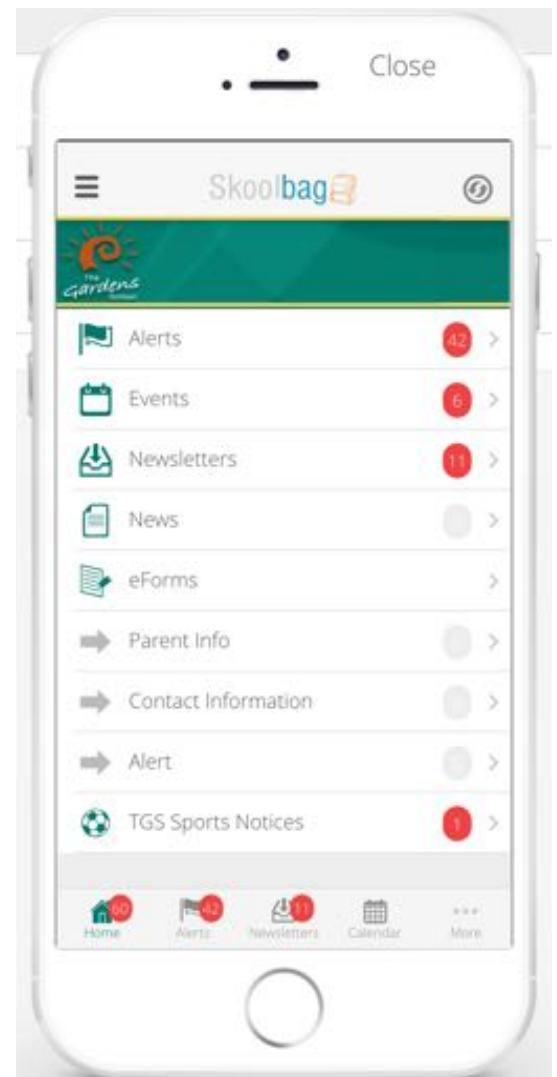


COMMUNICATION

It's important you stay up to date with what is happening at school and we communicate information home to parents in many ways.

The main tool for day to day communication is our School App, which you can download to your smartphone or access from any computer. App content is also displayed on our school website. Any alerts or important notifications are sent via our App, direct to your phone or email.

Weekly school newsletters, sports notices, permission slips etc are all sent out via our App. You can choose to read these on the App, or subscribe to have them emailed. Our office ladies can show you how to set this up. From our App you can send an absence notification and also update your contact information.



Class notices may also be sent out via Linc-Ed and you will be able to see these on your child's Linc-Ed account. When you enrol, our office staff will show you how to set up your Linc-Ed parent account.

Our school website is a useful resource for current parents as well as prospective families. There are many links to curriculum information, as well as the links to our Social Media feeds on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

SCHOOL UNIFORM



It is our expectation that all students wear our official school uniform, correctly and to a high standard, at all times.

Our school uniform is produced and sold by Argyle Uniforms. All uniform items can be ordered online through the Argyle website www.argyleonline.co.nz, there is also a link to this on our school website www.thegardens.school.nz

All students must have plain black closed toe shoes (or plain black sandals in the summer). Shoes should be hard-wearing and stay on well. We advise an appropriate school shoe - not a "fashion" shoe. Shoelaces must be black.

Hats are compulsory clothing items during the warmer times of the year. All uniform items must be named in a prominent place. Please do not name hats on the brim.

Head-scarves, hijabs and turbans worn for cultural reasons, should be in a plain fabric, in the school colours of red, black, white or brown, with no accessories.

Hair that reaches the shoulders should be tied back. This applies to both girls and boys. Any hair ties, head-bands or hair clips are to be in the school colours of black, red, white or brown. Earrings should be plain studs. No other jewellery may be worn, except for watches or items approved for cultural reasons. Nail polish may not be worn to school.

PE Gear is needed for all sports and fitness activities and should be brought to school each day.

We understand that sometimes a non-uniform item needs to be worn to school e.g. broken shoe, wet jacket, hat left in nana's car. Please send a note to school and a uniform pass will be issued by Mrs Fowler or Miss Gifford.

MEDICATION:

If your child requires any medication at school, you must advise the staff in the office, as well as your child's teachers. Any medication that needs to be kept at school e.g., asthma inhalers, antihistamine, should be named and handed in to the office, to be stored in the sick bay.

Children who have high health needs and require an Action Plan e.g., EpiPen for anaphylaxis, will meet with staff on the health team, prior to enrolment. It is the parents responsibility to ensure information and medication is up to date and the school is informed promptly of any changes.

SCHOOL RULES/BEHAVIOUR:

We encourage positive behaviour at all times. Whanau groups work together at the start of the year to develop a set of agreed upon expectations - similar to a class treaty.

Inappropriate behaviour is managed by the teachers with the learning space or, if the behaviour is ongoing, or more serious, may be managed by the team leader and/or the Principal or Deputy Principal.

HOUSE SYSTEM

We have four school "Houses" at TGS and each student is placed in a house when they start school. Siblings are placed in the same house. Houses are used for sports events, assemblies and other competitions during the year. Children can earn tokens for their house, through good behaviour, great work etc. and we will often ask students to dress in their house colours for special events such as Athletics Day or Cross Country.

Our houses are:





**WELCOME TO
THE GARDENS
SCHOOL
FAMILY!**