

early learning centre

2023 Handbook



Guildford Grammar School

FOUNDED 1896



welcome

to the **Early Learning Centre**

The early years of a child's education are unique, exciting and important. At Guildford Grammar School, we focus on providing every child with exceptional support in their wellbeing, learning and development at every opportunity. We value the importance of constructing the right environment and have created an Early Learning Centre that complements and supports our shared vision of educating children in the early years.

We recognise that creativity and cognitive action, positive relationships and movement support the developing brain, and we ensure these processes are evident throughout the Early Learning Centre. Our staff are caring and experienced professionals who are committed to best practice and work collaboratively to create a nurturing environment for all.



our values

- **Excellence** – being the best we can be
- **Respect** – showing appreciation and consideration for those around us
- **Integrity** – sticking to moral and ethical principles even when others are not looking
- **Spirituality** – a personal way of loving, accepting and sharing with people and the world
- **Teamwork** – working cooperatively to achieve our common goals
- **Compassion** – showing sympathy and empathy for others



the early years

– how and why

Our learning program is guided by the Western Australian Curriculum and Kindergarten Guidelines. Alongside the principles and practices of the Early Years Learning Framework, we aim to spark curiosity and encourage children to ask “why?” We have a strong play and inquiry-based approach to learning which encourages and supports children to explore materials and learning environments, ask questions, share ideas and discover.

Our impressive outdoor environment plays a major role in our learning program. We take part in weekly outdoor adventures for all classes to explore our beautiful campus and natural surroundings. This promotes wellbeing and offers a rich learning experience, allowing a natural transition from indoors to outdoors.

We place an emphasis on the explicit and intentional teaching of fundamental early literacy and numeracy

skills, delivered to students in a developmentally appropriate way.

Disciplinary knowledge, skills and understandings are developed in the learning areas of the Western Australian Curriculum: English, Mathematics and Integrated Inquiry. Our Integrated Inquiry approach includes the learning areas of Humanities and Social Sciences, Science, Health and Physical Education, the Arts and Technologies.

We aim to combine our practices in a balanced way, to support the growth of valuable learning assets and enable each child to become strong, capable learners, who know what to do ... when they don't know!

Our pedagogies and practices create pathways to personal excellence and empower students to find their own individual strengths and passions on their journey of discovery.



Practices and principles

Purposeful learning experiences are designed and delivered through the following learning principles and practices.

Learning principles:

- Identity
- Connecting and contributing
- Wellbeing
- Learning and thinking
- Connecting and contributing

Learning practices:

- Child-initiated investigations
- Explicit teaching
- Intentional teaching
- Interactive learning centres
- Outdoor learning
- Collaborative projects
- Individual and small group explorations
- Play





a day in the life

of an early learner

Kindergarten

Kindergarten is the most wonderful time in your child's school journey. It is an exciting doorway into a world of play, exploration, imagination and inquiry. It is a time to explore, connect and communicate with one another and to learn and grow together. Friendships are established, relationships built, and confidence and independence nurtured in a warm, safe and secure environment.

Starting the day

Our day begins with students being greeted at the door and welcomed into our classroom. We encourage students to unpack their belongings independently, engage with staff and their peers, while exploring the vibrant spaces that are set up in response to their interests.

We hold a morning meeting each day to check in with everyone and share information. Our students spend quality time in the outdoor environment after our meeting. Having opportunity to move, communicate, explore, converse and interact with their peers, whilst taking risks in a safe and secure environment is important. Fundamental movement skills are incorporated into our daily program and support a specific set of skills that are required for functioning competently in day-to-day life. Purposefully planned experiences are provided to develop their fine motor and gross motor skills.

Morning tea and lunch times are perfect opportunities to build relationships and share stories. With staff and students joining together, communication and social interactions are modelled and encouraged.

Teaching and learning

We spend time each morning introducing and consolidating essential early literacy and numeracy

concepts through explicit teaching, and then provide opportunity to practice and consolidate these skills through play. The students are involved in a variety of opportunities to learn through whole group, small group and individual experiences.

Staff design and deliver a responsive curriculum that supports and differentiates learning for each child. Through observation, reflection and informed collaborative planning, provocations and invitations to explore are created. These purposely planned learning centres generate curiosity and wonder, and help students to make sense of their world.

We support the development of the 'whole child' and recognise the importance of moments of stillness and calm, reflection and mindfulness for young children. The opportunity to rest after lunch each day is offered.

Opportunities

The day is rich with opportunities for students to be curious, wonder and learn through stories, shared language sessions, sensory play, technology, music and movement. They also construct, design, explore the natural environment, garden, interact with friends, inquire, ask questions and investigate.

The weekly Outdoor Adventure Walk, provides opportunities for students to become confident risk takers, inquire, wonder and explore whilst respecting and valuing the environment.

Opportunities to visit the library to exchange books, and participate in specialist Music lessons are on offer each week.

We look forward to working together with you throughout the Kindergarten year, supporting the development of your child and fostering within them, a love of learning.

Pre-Primary

Pre-Primary is a year of big learning. The curriculum requirements are big and the development and growth your child makes will be big! We recognise and acknowledge the importance of creating learning environments across the Early Learning Centre that look and feel similar in practice and philosophy. The content across the years will differ, but the approach and environments will remain familiar and developmentally appropriate.

Starting the day

We aim to create reciprocal, friendly and collaborative relationships with families and the opportunity to do so begins at the start of each day when children and families are greeted at the door and welcomed into the classroom. Students are encouraged to follow the morning routine independently, and this includes hanging up bags on allocated hooks, washing hands and organising their belongings for the day in their special places. Time is spent for meeting and greeting each other and exchanging stories while children read books, complete puzzles, play board games and participate in pre-writing, fine motor and sensory experiences informally. A bell signals the start of formal teaching and learning sessions together.

Learning and teaching

Language underpins all learning in the early years of education. The classrooms are a hive of activity each morning, with children participating in whole group language sessions several times across the day. These sessions include the explicit teaching of and exposure to essential literacy and numeracy skills and concepts. The children are provided plenty of opportunity to develop and consolidate these skills and concepts, through exploration of learning centres and small group and individual instruction.

Morning tea and lunch times are opportunities for the cohort to spend time together. Rich dialogue is encouraged and modelled, and friendships and social interactions are developed.

Afternoon sessions lend themselves to ongoing inquiry-based investigations that are triggered by students' curiosity, questions and wonderings. We spend time researching, experimenting and documenting our thoughts and ideas using a variety of mediums.

Opportunities

To ensure the development of the 'whole child,' daily learning opportunities include music and movement, stories, modelled and shared reading and writing, technology, sensory and fine motor exploration, physical movement and outdoor activities. Language development and social and emotional wellbeing are prioritised and integrated across all learning areas and experiences. Our play and inquiry learning philosophy ensures that children are invited to explore their ideas and develop their understanding in meaningful ways. Students are offered the opportunity to make choices and follow their interests, in an intentionally designed environment, that reflects this.

Outdoor play

It is important that Pre-Primary students spend quality and extended periods outdoors for personal health and wellbeing and developing gross motor skills. We make the most of our natural and inspiring outdoor environment around the School campus and spend valuable time each day participating in a balance of scaffolded, teacher designed experiences and student-led play. Student's knowledge and understanding of their world, and the connections they make, are supported through their interactions, environment and the experiences on offer.



preparing

for the **Early Learning Centre**

Transitioning

Transitioning to full time learning in a Kindergarten and Pre-Primary school environment is an important time for a child. We have implemented a schedule that will ensure each child begins their journey in the most appropriate and successful way by allowing each family the opportunity to meet and speak with staff one on one to help students settle into their new class environment on the first day of school. We appreciate your co-operation with the schedule to ensure a smooth beginning to the school year for our early learners.

The transition schedule for Kindergarten and Pre-Primary, with personalised start times, teacher's details and class allocation will be communicated to you through email correspondence.

Communication

Building trust and developing positive relationships between all stakeholders is an important part of the early learning journey. Communication is key. The beginning and the end of each school day provides the opportunity to meet and greet families informally.

Seesaw, our student engagement platform, is our main communication tool for families. We use it to provide information on special events, weekly content overviews, and a snapshot of what goes on in the classroom weekly through photographs and work samples, as well as a platform to contact teachers.

what to bring to kindergarten

What to bring on the first day

- One box of tissues and one pack of wet wipes
- A small beach towel and small cushion for resting (storage is limited)
- A library bag (does not need to be GGS issue)
- School hat (stays at school)
- GGS backpack
- Sunscreen applied (we can re-apply as needed)
- Spare set of named clothing to be kept in your child's school bag.

What to bring on regular days - 8.15am – 3.00pm

- A piece of fresh fruit or vegetable (cut up) for Crunch & Sip
- A piece of fresh fruit or vegetable (cut up) and a small snack for morning tea
- Lunch (we ask that it is a healthy option your child can open independently and eat)
- Drink bottle (water only)
- GGS backpack.

what to bring to pre-primary

What to bring on the first day

- One box of tissues and one pack of wet wipes
- A small cushion in a cloth bag for rest time
- A library bag (does not need to be GGS issue)
- School hat (to stay at school)
- GGS backpack
- Sunscreen applied (we can re-apply as needed)
- Spare set of named clothing to be kept in your child's school bag.

What to bring on regular days - 8.15am – 3.00pm

- A piece of fresh fruit or vegetable (brain food)
- Lunchbox with morning tea and lunch (we ask that it is a healthy option your child can open independently and eat)
- Drink bottle (water only)
- GGS backpack



general information

Classroom Opening Times

The classroom doors open at 8.15am and parents are asked to wait outside the Early Learning Centre playground gates until this time.

At the end of the School day, parents can wait in the same area as before school and move to the classroom at 3.00pm to collect children when the doors are open.

Clothing

To assist with clothing management and belongings, we request that every item of clothing is named, including underwear, shoes and socks. We support play-based learning and your child may get wet, dirty or messy! For messy play and accidents that are common in the early learning environment, please ensure your child has a change of clothes in their bag (including underwear).

Uniform

Early Learners wear the Guildford Grammar School blue polo shirt and shorts or dress each day. When the weather cools, the Guildford Grammar School tracksuit can be worn. Shoes are to be plain sneakers with velcro fastenings for independent dressing. Navy blue sandals can also be worn if preferred.

Food and Drink

We encourage a healthy diet and recommend nutritional snacks and water. Crunch & Sip and morning tea is a piece of fruit or pre-cut vegetables and an added snack. Please pack your child a healthy lunch in wrapping and containers they can easily open and eat on their own. Self-management is an important skill that we nurture in the Early Learning Centre.



Contact information

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