

Dear Parents/Guardians

Starting school is an exciting and important step in your child's life as well as your own.

Our skilled and dedicated staff are committed to meeting the needs of all children and we plan our programmes to ensure that all children's needs are met, developed and their special attributes are valued.

OUR BUILDING BLOCKS FOR BEGINNING SCHOOL:

- Can initiate some conversation e.g. 'good morning'
- Has basic manners- please/thank you etc.
- Can put on own shoes and socks, and manage personal items
- Can go to toilet, wash hands and blow own nose independently
- Can carry own bag, hang it up, pack and unpack his/her bags
- Know and recognise their name (including the letters)
- Has some alphabet knowledge and experience with books
- Can hold a pencil
- Can manage scissors and crayons
- Can work with peers i.e. take turns, show kindness
- Can follow simple instructions i.e. 'Please get your book bag'
- Be able to eat their morning tea /lunch independently
- Can express him/herself clearly.
- Can find the cover of the book and turn the pages correctly
- Can talk about the pictures and predict what might happen next
- Can relate the story to their own experiences
- Can remember something from the story after it has been read
- Can recognise the words I, the, we, to, a, am, is etc.

Below is further information about what your child will be focusing on when he/she starts school at MCS.

As Deputy Principal with responsibility for new entrant students at Miramar Central School, I am always here for questions and answers.

Welcome to our school. We look forward to working with you and your child.

*Kind regards
Karina McKiernan
Deputy Principal*

Learning the Alphabet

When learning the alphabet, the emphasis is on recognising the lower-case letter sounds and names with examples of words that start with the letter. We also look at the relationship between lower and upper-case letters. Your child will be learning letters of the alphabet, letter sounds, spellings of words and reading and writing skills. Please encourage them to talk to you about what they are learning at school.

The following is a list of ideas to help your child learn the alphabet:

- alphabet flash cards – you can buy or make these and use them to play games such as memory or snap
- find or draw pictures of things that start with the letter sound
- make letter shapes using play dough
- using a scrapbook, compile an alphabet book and put different words or pictures on each page
- practise writing letters in the sandpit or use water and a paintbrush to paint letters on the concrete
- play 'I Spy' around the house or in the car using the alphabet sounds
- using an alphabet chart, randomly point to letters and identify them
- draw letters on the concrete with chalk and jump letter to letter
- ice biscuits with icing letters
- make whiteboard using cardboard and cover seal, write letters and make words
- cut letters out of magazines and newspapers.

Reading

Your child is now at a stage to develop foundation skills for reading. At this stage of reading there are many pre-reading skills to learn which you can reinforce at home when sharing books together.

Some of pre-reading skills are to:

- find the cover of the book and turn the pages correctly
- know where to start reading
- point and match the written word with the spoken word
- point left to right and then sweep to the next line
- talk about the pictures and predict what might happen next
- relate the story to their own experiences
- follow each word with a finger
- remember something from the story after it has been read
- recognise the words I, the, we, to, a, am, is etc



We would like to share some positive ways in which you can help your child with reading development.

- Set aside a regular time each evening to read to your child and for them to read to you. A story at bedtime is one of the most valuable ways of ensuring a healthy attitude towards reading.
- Listen to your child read to you and help point out words to them. **Pause** for your child to attempt the work on their own

- Initially your child will use pictures extensively to seek meaning from the print. Encourage this and give clues and never hide the pictures. **Prompt** by giving a clue
- Encourage your child to retell the story in their own words when they have finished reading it to you
- Use book language: title, pages, words, letters, illustrations, author etc.
- After your child has had some book experiences we will begin to focus on highlighting some individual words in the script. Through repetition we hope that your child will begin to recognise words in isolation and in its varying contexts
- **Praise** your child for trying the words and using the illustrations.

Developing Reading

As your child develops reading skills they may still:

- be using pictures to predict the text
- be finger pointing

Your child will be gaining 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 capital letters and full stops.

Homework

Once your child is at school the teacher will introduce reading homework. There is a reading log for parents to complete each night to record reading to and with your child. Reading is for enjoyment and fun, it is a good opportunity to reinforce sight words.

Early Learning at School

To help the children when they first start school we use learning intentions – this means we share with the children what we are intending to learn. These are talked about throughout the day and not only do the children come across them when starting school but we also use them in the teaching of reading, writing and maths.

These are some of the learning intentions we use when the children first start school.

I am learning to:

- Put my book bag in the box when I get to school
- To come to the mat when the teacher asks me
- To try things for myself before asking for help
- Listen to and follow instructions carefully
- Work at my table quietly
- Put things away after I have used them
- Wear my sunhat when I go outside

Perceptual Motor Programme (P.M.P)

Activities have been designed to help with memory, hand-eye coordination, listening, balance, spacial awareness, and early sporting skills like throwing and catching and kicking.

What are the National Standards?

National Standards in reading, writing and mathematics provide signposts that give teachers, children, parents, families and whānau a clear idea of where children are at in their learning and what they have to do next.

At MCS we report to parents, families and whānau in writing at least twice a year on their child's progress and achievement in these areas, in relation to the National Standards.

How will I know if my child is meeting the National Standard?

The National Standards are signposts to be achieved by the 'end of the year'.

For children in their first 3 years of schooling this means after they have been at school for:

40 weeks (1 year), 80 weeks (2 years) or 120 weeks (3 years).

Children start school at different times when they turn 5, reports are written on their anniversaries of having been at school for:

20 weeks (half way through their first year),
40 weeks (1 year),
60 weeks (half way through their 2nd year),
80 weeks (2 years),
100 weeks (half way through their 3rd year) and
120 weeks (3 years).

For children who have had their 120 week anniversaries, meaning they have been at school for a full 3 years, the reporting system switches to the school mid-year (end of term 2) and end year (end of term 4) timeline for reporting.

Mid-year reports will indicate whether your child's achievement in reading, writing and maths is:

- Causing concern
- Working below
- On track to meet the standard
- Already met the standard

End year reports will indicate whether your child's achievement in relation to the National Standard in reading, writing and maths is:

- Well below expectation
- Below expectation
- At expected level
- Above the expected level

How will the teacher work out where your child is at?

The teacher will continue to use many different ways to find out where your child is at in reading, writing and maths to make an Overall Teacher Judgement (OTJ). This includes:

- using a range of formal tests/assessments
- watching your child working in the classroom
- talking with them about their learning
- your child assessing their own and each other's work.

The expectation is that children are able to meet the standards across a range of settings. This means that a child may perform 'above' the standard on a 'written test' but not show evidence of this in their bookwork, class participation etc. Therefore, the Overall Teacher Judgment may end up showing the child performing 'at' the standard.

Some children will need more time and support to work towards the expected standard. The teacher will work together with you and your child to help them to achieve their next learning goals.