

Welcome to Balmoral School

Te Kura o Te Roto a Rangi

“ To value diversity and to develop curious, confident and connected learners.”

Tena Koutou Malo e Lelei Talofa Lava Bula Vinaka Kia Orana

Fakaalofa Lahi Atu Ciao Namaste Al Salaam a' alaykum

Ni hao Annyong ha shimnikka Greetings

We are looking forward to getting to know your child and their family. It is an exciting time as your child starts school. We hope you find the information in this booklet useful and that it helps make the transition to school as smooth as possible.



Some fantastic sketches by some of our New Entrants

Our School Day

Our school day starts at 9am, although the children can arrive from 8:30am onwards. If you take your child out for an appointment you need to sign them out at the school office.

We find that the children settle much better when they have time to get themselves ready for learning, e.g. unpacking their school bags, having a play and having time to make that first connection with the teacher. Aim to arrive before 9am to give your child time to do this. The bell that you may hear at 8:30am and then again at 8:35am is the Intermediate School bell. The Primary School Bell goes at 9am to signal the start of our day. Our day is split into 3 learning blocks: 9am to 10:40am; 11am to 12:30pm; 1:30pm to 3pm.

Morning tea is from 10:40 to 11am. Our lunch eating is from 12:30 to 12:40pm, which is a supervised eating time where the teacher will supervise the children eating. When the 'moving bell' goes at 12:40 the children are free to go and play. They can remain eating if they choose but the teacher may not supervise them at this time.

From Monday to Thursday your child will bring home a reading book. This book is one they have read at school (called a 'familiar book') and the purpose is for them to practise their reading and to share their learning with you. They need to return the reading book each day in their book bag.

Once a week, their class will visit the school library. They will bring a library book home and it should be returned in time for the next class library visit otherwise they will not be able to take a book out.

Please make sure that your child wears appropriate clothing – we do many different things during our day from PE to art as well as learning to read! They need to be able to run around and not worry about getting clothes dirty.

The Independent Child

One of our goals in the new entrant team is to foster a child's independence. We call it 'managing self'. You can help with this. Here are a few suggestions:

- Give your child food they can manage themselves - if there are packets in their lunch box, can they open them? Put a small slit in the package when you pack their food so they can just rip the packets open.
- Can they peel their fruit? – you might want to put peeled and chopped fruit all ready in a small container for them to eat, or put a slit in the top of a banana. In general children do not want to spend any more time eating than necessary so as soon as the moving bell goes they are off to play.
- Footwear – encourage them to wear footwear that they can manage: velcro shoes and sandals are much quicker and easier than laces and buckles. During winter time in the classrooms the children are sometimes required to remove their shoes.
- School bags – the children are encouraged to pack their own bags and take care of possessions. Is their bag big enough? The bigger the better to fit their lunch boxes and book bags.
- Getting changed - at times the children need to change themselves, especially in the winter when they get wet and muddy. During term 1 and term 4 we swim so children need to be able to change in and out of swimming togs. Can they manage their zips, belts and buckles? We do encourage you to provide a change of clothes for your child in their school bag.

Each week, your child will have the opportunity to participate in Developmental Play, we call this tākarō. This is a time when children get to play with children from other New Entrant and Year One classes and learn alongside them. It is a continuation of the Te Whariki Early Childhood Curriculum. The following photos are of the children during tākarō.



Exploring mathematical concepts through spontaneous play.



Developing our imaginations. Thinking about "what if?", "what will happen?".



Mixing, Making and Pouring. Developing mathematical concepts about volume and scientific concepts about the properties of materials.



Pumping and Problem Solving. Developing concepts about cause and effect.



Developing our sensory skills!

Get Ready for School: The Foundation Skills for Formal Learning

The Formal Learning Skills

Reading

Writing

Maths

The Foundation Skills

Vision Perception

Visual Association

Visual Memory

Visual Sequential Memory

Visual figure ground

Visual Discrimination

Visual Pattern

Visual Consistency

Visual Completion

Visual Completion

Auditory Perception

Auditory association

Auditory sequential memory

Auditory figure ground

Auditory comprehension

Auditory discrimination

Auditory pattern

Auditory synthesis & analysis

Auditory completion

Oral Language

Concept & Directional Language

Motor Development

Fine Motor

Spatial Awareness

Directionality

Midline

Integration L & R Brain Hemispheres

Gross Motor

Body Awareness, Image

Eye/hand & eye/foot coordination

Laterality

Dominance

Sensory Development

Vestibular (Balance)

Vision

Hearing

Smell, Touch, Taste, Feel

Kinesthetic Sense Proprioception

Reflex Development

Infant Reflexes Involuntary movement

Postural reflex Voluntary movement

Getting ready for school: The foundation skills for formal learning

Children need to be developmentally ready before formal learning should begin. Once a child has been exposed to a wide range of movement patterns, sensory experiences and language they will be more ready for formal learning. It is recommended all children take part in movement and sensory activities every day. These movement activities can improve the way the brain functions to help prepare a child for learning success.

A child's sensory and physical development affects their ability to remember what they see, hear and do. Therefore, it affects their ability to learn and achieve. Time needs to be taken to develop auditory and visual processing and memory skills. The ability to remember what we see, hear and do are learned skills.

Gross and Fine Motor Skill Development

Gross and fine motor coordination are the control of large and fine muscle movements. Control of large muscle movements develops before fine motor.

Gross Motor Skills - *Children develop their large movement skills, control, coordination and strength as they explore physical play.*

Physical play includes running, climbing, balancing, jumping, hopping, skipping, kicking, throwing and catching.

There are many ways to encourage your child to develop their physical skills. Encourage your child to try a range of physical activities including:

- moving the body — in different ways, in different directions, move different body parts
- swings — leaning forwards and backwards, stretching legs, pushing legs out, swinging from ropes or bars using arms
- riding — bikes, scooters and other wheeled toys
- rope play — crawling under, walking on, skipping, jumping over a rope, while the rope is still or being moved

- balance and control — walk on edges of tyres, garden edges or a hose, step into middle of tyres or hoops, step over mat, brick or hose
- push, pull and lift — push a box or wheelbarrow forwards, pull self along a rope or pull self up on a pole, lift a bucket of sand or water.

Fine Motor Skills - *Children who have strong fine motor development find it easier to write.*

Fine motor skills are the ability to use our fingers, thumb and palm effectively.

Some ways to continue to support the development of your child's fine motor skills:

- doing puzzles
- cutting with scissors
- finger painting
- drawing with pencils/crayons/felts/chalk
- painting
- using finger puppets
- squeezing clothes pegs
- playing with blocks
- throwing/rolling small balls
- threading

Supporting auditory perception

- Play around with rhyming words (e.g. “The fat cat sat on the mat patting the rat with the hat”).
- Play around with popular nursery rhymes or songs, substituting as many of the rhyming words with similar sounding words. E.g. “Little miss puppet sat on a crumpet, eating her birds of prey ... Have a competition to see who can come up with the silliest sounding rhyme or put together a book of your own nursery rhymes.
- Play “Simon says”.
- Play the following guessing game: Give children the first few syllables of a word and ask them to “guess” which word you are trying to say. Aero ... (plane); Dino ... (saur); Rhinoce ... (ros); Hippopot ... (amus); etc.

- Play the clapping game, in which you ask children to “clap the different parts of the words”.
- Play “Marco, Polo” with a group of friends. This game does not necessarily have to be played in the pool, but can be played in the garden or in the house – just remember to clear the room of furniture so as to avoid injuries from children bumping into furniture or tripping on loose rugs.
- Play “I spy”, for instance “I spy with my little eye something that begins with a P” remember, when playing this game with your pre-school child, to use the phonetic sounds of the initial letters and not the actual letter names thus, P = PUH and not PEE; K = KUH and not KAY; I = IE and not EYE, and so on. You can also adapt this game to focus on different parts of words, for instance: “I spy with my little eye something that ends with oat (e.g. boat / goat / coat) – this version of the game, if used with simple words, might be easier for very young children and acts as an easy introduction to rhyme.
- Clap different sequences with your hands, asking the child to copy you. Use longer sequences as children get older.
- Play “Mum went to the shop”. In this game children (or any willing family members) sit in a circle and one person begins the game by saying, for instance: “Mum went to the shop and bought flour”. The person to the left repeats this sentence and then adds another item, for example “Mum went to the shop and bought flour and apples”. The game goes round and round the circle with each person adding another item to the list until somebody finally forgets to name one of the items on the list. It might be difficult for young children to remember the items in the correct sequence, but older children should be encouraged to name the items in the correct sequence. You can also change the context of the game, for instance: “We went to the zoo/circus/aquarium/park/farm and saw ...” – this will also help children with their categorization skills later on.

Supporting Visual Perception

Activities that can help improve visual perception include:

- **Hidden pictures games** in books such as "Where's Wally".
- **Picture drawing:** Practice completing partially drawn pictures.

- **Dot-to-dot** worksheets or puzzles.
- **Memory games:** Playing games such as Memory.
- **Sensory activities:** Use bendable things such as pipe cleaners to form letters and shapes (because feeling a shape can help them visualize the shape). The letters can then be glued onto index cards, and later the child can touch them to "feel" the shape of the letter.
- **Construction-type activities** such as Duplo, Lego or other building blocks.
- **Word search puzzles** that require you to look for a series of letters.
- **Copy 3-D block designs**
- **Identify objects by touch:** Place plastic letters into a bag, and have the child identify the letter by "feel".

Formal learning: Learning to Read and Write

When children begin school, they bring with them a wide range of early reading experiences. Each child will begin a reading programme that suits their individual needs and which builds on their prior reading experiences.

At home, make reading fun by:

- setting aside a time every day that you can read with your child.
- make sure the place is quiet without interruption.
- keep the reading session short and enjoyable.
- remember to have additional picture books at home to read with them each night

Reading Material

Your child may bring home an independent reader; this should be a familiar book in order to encourage fluency. Home reading could include a poem, a song or a rhyme. This gives children the opportunity to read a wide range of reading material. A guided reader is one which has been introduced by the teacher in an individual or group situation. This is at your child's instructional level.

When you listen to your child read, please talk about the book, discuss the pictures and any language which needs further explanation. If they make an error, pause and give them time to fix it up themselves. Do not cover the pictures. This is your child's main source of information to help them solve unknown words, like a clue.

We encourage children to go back to the beginning of the sentence - (say "try that again") - this gathers up the meaning of the story. We also look at what sound the word starts with and what word fits.

- If your child is still having difficulty, tell them the word
- Give praise for their attempts - correcting every error will stop the flow of the story.
- At the beginning of learning to read the child will be encouraged to point to each word. Once they can reliably do this then we encourage them to remove their finger and develop their fluency so that their reading 'sounds like talking'.

Reading Approaches

Teachers use a range of approaches to teach reading, these include shared books, enlarged or big books, poems, songs, children's own writing and guided reading.

If you have any concerns regarding your child's reading progress, please see your child's teacher.

Learning to Write

Learning to write is a complex process. As beginner writers we celebrate the children's ideas which they show in their oral language and pictures drawn before writing. You can help in this process by talking to them about what they have done at home, during the weekend or what they have seen on the way to school. This gives children a bank of ideas that they could perhaps write about.

Assembly

Primary School Assembly takes place every two weeks on a Friday and you are most welcome to come along. Your child's teacher will advise you of when it is your child's class assembly. The assembly days are also on the school website calendar.

Communication

Please feel free to talk to your child's teacher before or after school. One of the advantages of teaching in this area of the school is that we are able to not only get to know the children but their families too. If you have a concern that may take more than a few minutes then we would prefer that you make a set time with the teacher where they can give you their full attention. Before school we are usually getting ready for our day and some days after school we have meetings. If you do have any concerns then you should address these with your child's teacher in the first instance.

Another good place to check what is happening at school is the school website: www.balmoral.school.nz and the Koru Blog (<http://korusharingspace.blogspot.co.nz>) also accessible via the school website. You child's teacher will also email you from time to time. If you do not have access to email then please advise your child's teacher. School newsletters go home electronically. If you require a paper copy they are available from the school office. These are also downloadable from the school website.

Parent Help

We welcome parent help in our classrooms. However we do request that you wait until your child is settled as sometimes seeing their parent in the classroom upsets them and distracts them from their learning.

New Parent Morning Tea

We hold a new parent morning tea once a term. This is a chance for families to meet other new parents and also Malcolm, Principal, and Katy Sparkes, Associate principal. We will inform you about when the next morning tea will be held. You are more than welcome to bring pre schoolers.

***Wishing you and your family a great start to school life at Balmoral.
Noho ora mai ra
The Whānau Koru Teachers***



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