



# TRANSITION TO SCHOOL

*Welcome to Waterloo School.*

*Naumai, haere mai ki te kura o Waterloo*

*Starting school is an exciting time, one that is filled with both the joys and worries of any new situation. With the help of this booklet we will endeavour to make the transition from home to school as enjoyable as possible for both you and your child.*

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## **COHORT ENTRY**

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Cohort Entry refers to new entrant children starting school as a group, at the beginning or mid point of a school term, after their 5th birthday. This means they will no longer be starting school on their 5th birthday.

The Waterloo School Board has endorsed this policy for school entry for 5 year olds. It will now be school policy that the earliest children can start school will be the first day of term, or the midpoint of the term, after their 5th birthday.

### **How Cohort Entry will work at Waterloo School:**

- There will be 2 starting school entry points in each school term - Week 1 and approximately Week 6.
- All new entrant children who turn 5 before the start of a term can start school at the beginning of that term.
- If their 5th birthday falls after the start of term date, but before the mid term date, they can start on the mid term date.
- A child who turns 5 after the mid term date, will start in Week 1 of the following term.
- In total, there will be 8 dates during the year where new entrants start in the classroom.
- Dates are determined by the Ministry of Education.
- Children must be 5 years old to begin school. Whānau will continue to have the option of not starting their child in school until their 6th birthday.
- School visits will be streamlined to work with cohort entry points.

### **2026 Cohort Entry Dates**

	<b>Start of Term Date</b>	<b>Mid Term Date</b>
<b>Term 1</b>	4th February, 2026	9th March, 2026
<b>Term 2</b>	20th April, 2026	1st June, 2026
<b>Term 3</b>	20th July, 2026	24th August, 2026
<b>Term 4</b>	12 October, 2026	16th November, 2026

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## HOW YOU CAN HELP PREPARE YOUR CHILD FOR WATERLOO SCHOOL

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We have high expectations for all children at Waterloo School. If your child has these skills they will be ready to start learning from day one:

Can your child:

- Say their full name?
- Hold a pencil correctly?
- Write their name with a capital letter at the start and the rest lowercase? If they can write their surname as well that's great!
- Recognise letter sounds and corresponding names?
- Count both forwards and backwards to 10? Don't forget about zero!
- Make a group of toys and match the number to it?
- Retell a familiar story to you?
- Follow a sequence of 2 or 3 instructions?
- Take turns when playing a game and not get too upset if they lose?
- Cut around a shape with scissors?
- Draw recognisable pictures?
- Blow their own nose?
- Use the toilet independently?
- Sit down for a short time and listen to a story?



At school we operate a structured day. It has been found that children like to know what is going to happen. Does your child:

- Have a set bedtime?
- Have a task they do to help you, e.g. feed the cat, put their plate on the bench, etc?
- Have a set morning routine?
- Largely dress themselves?
- Look after their belongings, e.g. lunch boxes, drink bottles?
- Wear named clothing?

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## **ON THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL**

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- Make sure your child gets a good night's sleep. (This is an essential part of every school day).
- Ensure your child has stationery ready for the first day.
- Make sure your child has a good packed lunch and they know which food is for fruit break, morning tea and lunch. Make sure they know how to open any tricky packaging or precut the packaging for them.
- As a parent it is a good idea to leave cheerfully before the bell rings, but you are more than welcome to stay until your child is settled.

*If you have a positive attitude and look forward to the first day of school, your child will do the same.*

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## **HOW YOU CAN HELP YOUR CHILD AT SCHOOL**

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- **BE ON TIME.** School starts at 8.55am so ensure your child is ready to start the day with the rest of the class. Classrooms open at 8:30am.
- **SCHOOL FINISHES AT 3pm.** Please wait outside your child's class until the bell has rung.
- **Morning tea is at 11.00 - 11:30am and lunchtime is at 1.00 - 2.00pm.** (Friday lunchtime 12:30 - 1:30pm)
- **SUN HATS.** During Terms 1 and 4 Waterloo School your child needs their own named sun hat.
- **SPARE SET OF CLOTHES.** Please have a spare set of underwear and pants / skirt in your child's school bag just in case they are needed.
- **NAMING CLOTHES.** This avoids a lot of confusion and makes finding lost items a lot easier. If your child loses any clothing, there is a school lost property area in the office medical room
- **APPROPRIATE SHOES.** Please ensure that your child can put on and take off his/her shoes independently. We encourage children to wear comfortable shoes that they can be active in. During Winter, gumboots are welcome but they will need a change of footwear to wear inside the classroom. .
- **GATES.** Our school gates are locked between 9:30am and 2:30pm. Access to the school grounds can be made through the main pedestrian front entrance on Hardy Street.
- **FOOD & DRINK.** Please make sure that the food you give your child is healthy and manageable. Please ensure your child has a named water bottle that they are able to refill independently. We encourage nude food, ie food that has little to no packaging. We have a fruit break at 10am and only fruit is allowed.
- **SCHOOL BAG.** Your child needs a bag that a range of objects can fit into. It needs to fit a lunchbox, a drink bottle, a jacket / sweatshirt, a change of clothing and their homepack. It is useful to practice putting objects in and out of the bag as well as practicing zipping it up.

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## **SCHOOL INFORMATION**

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### **SCHOOL ENTRY ASSESSMENT**

Literacy:

In the Junior classes, children are assessed with a Literacy Foundation Skills assessment tool. This is to determine phonological awareness related to letter sounds and names.

Mathematics: Children are assessed related to Numicon milestones. Numicon is the primary resource used in Junior classes.

### **COMMUNICATION**

Please feel free to come and speak with your child's teacher if you have any queries, comments or if you have a problem concerning your child. Similarly, if there is a problem at school we will contact you to discuss it. Communication between school and home is one important key for happy, successful children.

Before or after school is the best time to talk to your child's teacher, or you can email or leave a message at the office and we will ring you back.

### **NEWSLETTERS**

These go home fortnightly on a Friday via an app called the @school app. You will be emailed an invitation to join the @school app.

### **PLAYING AREA**

Children in the junior school are allowed on the field /big adventure playground and concrete areas around the junior classrooms. The playground closest to the junior area is only for Junior children to play on. You are welcome to come and play on the playgrounds at weekends and after school.

### **LATE FOR SCHOOL**

If you are late for school, please bring your child to sign in at the office on the vistab, they will then take an orange card to their class teacher.

### **ABSENT FROM SCHOOL**

If your child is going to be away from school please inform the school. You can leave a message at the office on 9392055 plus you can notify us through the @school app. If you are away from school for a number of days please come and pick up a leave form to get the time away approved by the principal.



### **PARENT HELPERS**

You are very welcome to come into your child's classroom to help the children with their learning. Please see the teacher if you are keen to help with writing, extra reading, returning reading books, sticking in sheets or sharpening pencils.

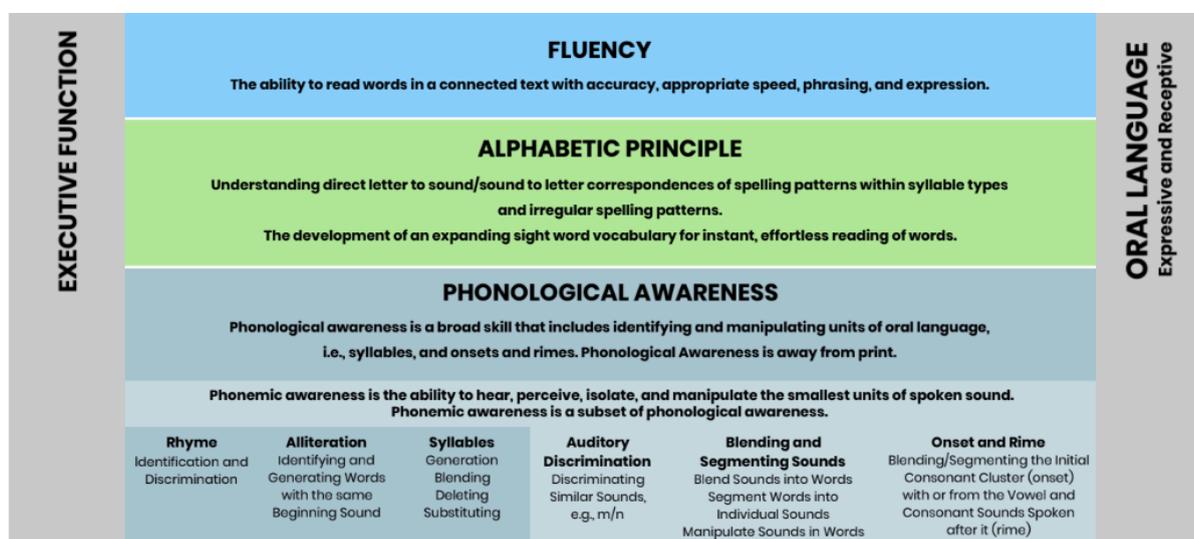
## LEARNING IN OUR NEW ENTRANT ROOMS

We value your role as your child's first teacher. Your child's teacher will build on the literacy and numeracy knowledge, skills and attitudes that they bring to school.



### LITERACY

Waterloo School uses a structured literacy approach to teaching spelling and reading across our kura. This approach is grounded in extensive research that shows the most beneficial way for children to become successful readers and writers is with a systematic and evidence-based teaching approach, which is based on the Science of Reading. This approach is based on the building blocks of reading success:



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We begin with Phonological Awareness - the ability to **hear**, isolate and manipulate sounds. Activities include: listening to stories with rhyme, poetry, playing games and having fun with sounds (first sound, last sound, saying the sounds that make up a word, e.g. c-a-t = cat). Children need to have phonological awareness skills when learning to read, to enable them to make the link between sounds and letters.

Alphabetic Principle follows where students learn about matching **sound to symbol** (written form of the letter sound). For example, a child who knows that the written letter "m" makes the /mmm/ sound is demonstrating the alphabetic principle. The first set of letters (Pre-concepts and Concept 1) students learn are: a, e, i, o, u, m, n, p, s, t. We teach the sound of each letter and start blending sounds together (reading) and segmenting sounds apart (writing/spelling). Research says that if you know 10 sounds you can read/write more than 100 three letter words.

To master the alphabetic principle, readers must have phonological awareness skills and be able to recognise individual sounds in spoken words. Learning to read and write becomes easier when sounds associated with letters are recognised automatically.

## How can you support your child at home?

Reading to your child. Read many books to your child and talk about what you just read. This is crucial for vocabulary and linguistic comprehension. Choosing a quiet time, such as bedtime, can help build an easy and fun reading routine.

Say the sounds. Say the 'pure' sounds without an 'uh' sound on the end; for example, 'lllll' rather than 'luh'. For help saying the sound with a kiwi accent, search for:

The speech sounds of New Zealand English -  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SePU-T4S-js>

## Beginning Building blocks of Writing Success

### Handwriting and Keyboarding

Handwriting is a complex perceptual and motor skill. It involves visually storing all the letters of the alphabet, and as spelling ability develops, storing many sight words in memory. It also involves motor skills where the student has to reproduce the visual forms correctly and at speed. Slow and difficult to read handwriting is linked with poor quality writing. Slow handwriting takes up mental energy which leaves less cognitive ability for high-level processes, like planning, that are needed for expressing ideas.  
*Keyboarding requires explicit instruction to develop spatial awareness of where letters sit on the keyboard. Children still require knowledge of sound to symbol relationships for accurate keyboarding.*

### Pre - Writing Skills

Pre-writing skills are essential for the child to be able to develop the ability to hold and move a pencil fluently and effectively and therefore produce legible writing, e.g.

<b>Hand and Finger Strength</b>	<b>Crossing the Mid-Line</b>	<b>Pencil Grasp</b>	<b>Hand-Eye Coordination</b>	<b>Visual Perception</b>	<b>Hand Dominance</b>
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We use Casey the Caterpillar to learn correct formation of groups of letters. This explicitly teaches the shapes of letters and where to begin writing them on the page.



### How you can help your child with writing:

- Give them pens, pencils, crayons, felt pens, chalk.
- Let them see you writing.
- Use the language of Casey Caterpillar shapes and encourage your child to form these correctly.
- Write 3 letter words using sounds they know, e.g. pin, mop, ten.
- Read and write their name.
- Encourage them to write. Write a letter, make a sign for the bedroom door, write notes, make cards, make a shopping list.
- Value and encourage efforts. Display work. Be proud of it. Share it with others.



## MATHEMATICS

In their first year of school your child is learning the foundations of mathematics – counting, sorting, comparing, ordering, patterning and problem solving. Puzzles, card games like memory and snap, patterning and shape activities, sorting games are all early maths activities we have out initially.



We teach using a structured scope and sequence based on the Numicon resource.

## The Numicon Approach

Maths is the language of relationships and patterns.

The Numicon shapes and patterns illustrate relationships and patterns of numbers and what we do with them, so clearly.



Numicon is based upon three key interconnected aspects of doing Mathematics:

**Communicating Mathematically, Exploring Relationships and Generalising.**

Problem solving is a big part of mathematical thinking. We use equipment like Numicon, cuisenaire rods and multilink cubes to show understanding of groups of numbers, leading to addition and subtraction. Geometry, Measurement, and Statistics are also part of our maths program. Children are introduced to the world of mathematics through conversation, story, song with many hands-on activities to develop:

- Playing with patterns and discovery of their relationships
- A sense of numbers and what they mean through play and discovery
- Counting to find out how many in 1-10
- Reading numerals that matches the words they are saying when they count 1-10
- Seeing and playing with patterns of numbers 1-10
- Exploring relationships with 1-10
- Joining patterns together
- Separating patterns of numbers
- Reasoning about numbers and describing them

Calendar maths is an important part of our daily maths sessions. We look at the date on the calendar, read and write the numeral, count up to and back from that number. Later on we look at odd or even numbers and make the number using materials. We also count how many days we are at school as this teaches place value. 100 days is a fun celebration!

### How you can help your child with math:

Encourage your child to count, get them to count real things and use counting to solve real problems. Count forwards and backwards with them. Here are some ideas you could try with your child:

- Play cards, board games and dominoes.
- Use the calendar. Ask: What date will it be after the 16<sup>th</sup>? How many sleeps until your birthday?
- Sequencing - time: morning, afternoon and night. Events in stories: first, next, last.
- Recognise numerals, ie. letterboxes, signs, clothing labels, price tags, number plates.
- Use mathematical language – small, long, wide, tall, between, under, etc.
- Bake with your child. This teaches quantities, capacity and measurement units.
- Encourage your child to help around the home, eg. Get five knives and five forks to set the table, get three carrots to peel.
- On a road trip count the number of white cars, red cars, blue cars, etc.
- Make repeating patterns with objects around the house: teddy, car, teddy, car...
- Name basic shapes and talk about how many sides, corners they have.
- Read books and poems. Many stories have a sequence or pattern. Books teach colours, numbers, and concepts about time, size and shape.

## OTHER LEARNING

### Learning Through Play:

Our Learning Through Play programme provides students with opportunities to develop their oral language which is a very important link in the process of student's learning and thinking development. Before students achieve proficiency in reading and writing they need to develop their language skills. Speaking and listening are the basis of literacy.

Our Learning Through Play sessions are daily hands on learning for year one students that promote:

- Self-discovery
- Self-regulation
- Acquisition of language and communication skills
- Development of our Active Learning Traits – Communicating Me, Collaborating me, Managing Me, Thinking Me
- From 8:30 - 10.00am children have the opportunity to participate in both optional outdoor and indoor activities.

## Active learner Traits

Nā tā rourou, nā taku rourou ka ora ai te iwi...  
With your food basket and my food basket the people will thrive.



### Outside Activities

Outdoor activities are planned to develop

- Large and fine motor skills
- Co-operation/sharing of equipment
- Language acquisition and communication skills
- Problem solving

### **Inquiry through Integrated Learning:**

Each term we focus on a school wide concept through an integrated curriculum learning approach – science, social sciences, technology, arts, health. We use an integrated approach, ensuring learning is authentic, relevant, challenging and fun.

### **PE:**

Initially, our main focus is on Gross Motor Skills. This includes fundamental movement skills of running, jumping, hopping and skipping. We also work on coordination and control, which includes balance, spatial awareness, crossing the midline and controlling equipment like beanbags, scarves and small balls. We have two PE sessions and one folk dance session a week with a buddy class. On Friday mornings, Year 1 classes come together to join in with Jump Jam in the hall.

### **Library:**

We have library time each week when we choose books for the class and to bring home during term time. We collect all library books at the end of each term. Your class teacher will let you know when your library time is.



### **MoE Parent Portal:**

#### [Parent Portal Curriculum Guide](#)

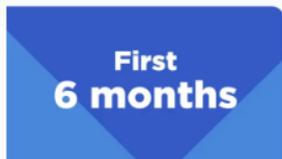
The Parent Portal is a collection of guidance and resources for parents and families.

The guide is structured by year level.

Please note that at Waterloo School, our Structured Literacy programme is based on the iDeaL scope and sequence which starts with Phonological Awareness (rhyming, syllables, etc.) and reading and spelling 2 letter words. Reading materials that come home are designed to support what is taught in class and will include decodable texts/passages from

iDeaL and other publications, moving to authentic texts which will include Junior Journals amongst other books.

Look for these icons:



### Sharing learning with whānau:



#### Seesaw

Seesaw is a digital portfolio that enables both the teacher and the students to share learning with you.

When your child starts school, you will be given a QR code to join the Seesaw page.

### English as a second language ESOL:



Please let us know if your child speaks other languages at home. We want to ensure we're giving them the best possible support and also celebrating the other languages they know. We have lots of children who speak different languages at our school.

We hope to meet you soon as you come to join the Waterloo School Whānau.

For more information visit our website <https://www.waterloo.school.nz/> or like us on Facebook [waterloo.school.nz](https://www.facebook.com/waterloo.school.nz)

Nga mihi  
Karen McMillan  
Deputy Principal