Houston Primary School

Getting Ready for School

If you have a little one starting Houston Primary School in August, you might have a lot of questions: “What does my child need to know?” “What can I do to prepare them?” “Is my child ready for school?” This is all perfectly normal. The purpose of this booklet is to answer some of these questions and help you feel better prepared for sending your little one to school.

Research has shown that preparing children for school in a positive manner has a significant impact, not only on their happiness through their time in their new setting but also on how they view transitions in the future. Our Nursery to Primary One Transition Programme will also afford children opportunities to visit the school, spend time playing in their new surroundings and meet some of the people who will support them on their journey.

What should children know before starting school?

Please use this as a guideline only. It is important to remember that all children are different and will develop at

Promote self-care skills and independence

How we can encourage children's independence...

Talk to your child about the importance of good hygiene in relation to a variety of scenarios (e.g. using the toilet or blowing their nose). Create opportunities for independence (e.g. letting them use the bathroom by themselves). Encourage independent efforts (e.g. opening and closing their bag) and be there to support as and when needed, but try not to take over (e.g when a child holds their arm out for you to put their coat on, encourage them to try themselves). Implement a structured routine at home for both morning and night.

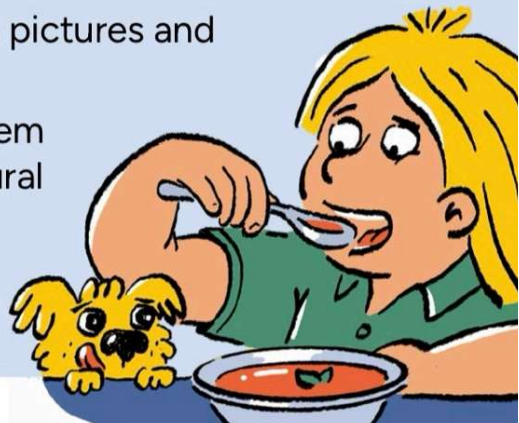
Growing independence

Taking care of themselves

- Putting on/taking off their coat and shoes
- Using the toilet and washing their hands
- Getting dressed with little help, e.g. after using the toilet or doing PE
- Using cutlery (e.g. fork and spoon, chopsticks) and drinking from an open cup
- Spending time away from you, learning they can be looked after by caring adults

Play, creativity and curiosity

- Taking part in imaginative play (e.g. role play)
- Drawing, painting, colouring and sticking
- Sharing story books, looking at pictures and talking about the characters
- Exploring the world around them (e.g. looking closely at the natural world, playing safely with objects at home)



Develop confidence in physical capabilities and routines

How we can support physical wellbeing...

Enjoying time together outdoors (e.g. visiting the park, going swimming, walking to a friend's house) develops a sense of wellbeing, as well as providing exercise.

Fine motor control can be developed through arts and crafts activities. Model how to hold a pen and how to use scissors to cut paper.

Establishing routines helps children feel secure. Praise efforts for following simple routines (e.g getting dressed, cutting up their own food, brushing their own teeth). Little things like these provide children with a sense of responsibility, and help

Physical development

Getting moving for at least three hours a day

- Walking up and down steps (one foot at a time, using the wall for support)
- Climbing, running, jumping and playing
- Catching a large ball (most of the time)
- Doing simple puzzles and craft activities, strengthening their grip with cutting and sticking

Healthy routines

- Going to bed around the same time each night, waking up in time to get ready for school
- Limiting screen time to the recommended daily amounts (see advice)
- Eating a healthy diet and trying new foods
- Brushing their teeth with fluoride toothpaste twice a day (you'll need to supervise this until they are at least 7)

Nurture emotional literacy and social skills

How we can develop children's understanding of their emotions and progress their social skills...

Provide activities that promote turn taking (e.g. board games). Where possible, accommodate opportunities for playing with other children of a similar age.

Encourage your child to talk about their feelings in different scenarios (e.g. I feel excited/annoyed because...). Choose toys and books that will encourage your child to express their feelings. Question them on the feelings of other people, characters in a story or movie. Explain why it is

Building relationships and communicating

Being with others

- Practising sharing and taking turns with toys
- Talking to them about **how** they are feeling and **why**
- Looking at story books together and speaking about what characters are feeling is a good way to do this
- Beginning to recognise what others are feeling, e.g. understanding if a friend is sad
- Encouraging them to set boundaries for themselves and others (e.g. knowing how to say 'no')

Promote interest in early literacy skills

How we can support communication, language and literacy…

Notice and encourage the marks your child makes when drawing or painting. Provide play opportunities such as playdough and the manipulation of small objects like Lego, to help strengthen muscles and improve co-ordination. Model writing for a purpose (e.g. writing a shopping list). Draw attention to meaningful text such as your child's name or environmental print (e.g. shop signs). Read stories that children already know and pause frequently to give them the opportunity to read and associate the words they know with the text.

Early reading and mark making

- ☑ Experiments with different shaped scribbles
- ☑ Practises holding a pencil correctly and makes marks to represent ideas
- ☑ Looks at picture books, turning the pages and engaging with stories
- ☑ Recognises own name when written down

Communication and language

- ☑ Singing along with songs and nursery rhymes
- ☑ Talking happily to others about activities, experiences and the world around them
- ☑ Showing they need help by speaking clearly (in basic English or sign language)
- ☑ Recognising the pattern of their name (so they can find it on their coat peg or jacket)

Listening and engaging

- ☑ Paying attention for short periods of time
- ☑ Listening to and following simple instructions
- ☑ Carrying on with a task even when it's difficult and bouncing back if things go wrong

Raise awareness of early maths skills

How we can encourage early maths skills…

Use number language in a variety of situations (e.g. setting the table, when cooking/baking). Model and encourage use of mathematical language (e.g. ask children questions like, “How many toys do you think will fit in this box?”)

When your child is drawing pictures, talk to them about the shapes and colours they are using.

Early maths skills

- ☑ Can sort everyday items or toys (e.g. big or small, by type, by colour)
- ☑ Recognises basic 2D shapes
- ☑ Touch counts everyday objects with one to one correspondence
- ☑ Recognises some numbers

What will my child learn in Primary One?

Teachers will plan for learning using the Scottish Curriculum for Excellence guidelines. The level of challenge or support will be adapted to suit the needs of individual children in the class. There will be lots of play based learning experiences whereby children will develop mastery of new skills through various activities. In school, all learners will also participate in direct teaching time with their teacher. They will also complete designated tasks independently. Learning will take place in classrooms, the Early Years Open Area, Library, Gym Hall, General Practice Room and, of course, outdoors. Here are some things children will learn in Primary One....

Literacy

- developing listening and turn taking skills through both teacher directed group times and play based learning experiences. Children will begin storytelling through role play, use of puppets and visual resources. Through multi-sensory activities (songs and action rhymes, manipulating tactile materials, mark making using various drawing utensils) children will develop their fine motor skills and learn how to form numbers and letters correctly. They will learn which letters represent different sounds and how to blend them to sound out, read and write words.

Numeracy & Mathematics

- primary focus on learning about numbers and how to apply counting skills in different scenarios. They will also learn about shape, time and measure.

Health & Wellbeing

- focus on supporting children's emotional wellbeing, building positive relationships and resilience. Learners will also learn about the importance of healthy eating and exercise through physical education and food technology activities.

Sciences and Social Studies

-children will use multimedia presentations, books, iPads and educational visits to learn about the world. They will learn to listen, observe, discuss, record and share their interests, and learning with others.

Technologies

- through problem solving challenges, children will learn to design and create drawings and models. They will use QR codes to take them to designated websites which allow them to practise skills. Furthermore, they will begin to learn about coding using programmable toys.

Expressive Arts

- learners will have ample opportunity to be creative through art and design, music and

Whilst this booklet outlines lots of areas in which you can help prepare your child for school, it is important to note:

- Your child does NOT need to be able to read, write or do sums before starting school.
- The most important thing is to relish the time before school by having fun! Try not to stress your little one out with lots of talk about school and equally, don't over hype it.
- Try walking or driving past the school often to give your child some context and allow it to become a familiar building and play space.

Additional Needs

If your child needs additional support to settle into school, make sure you share as much information as possible with staff. They will work with you to find strategies to support your child.

Younger children or those speaking English as an additional language (EAL) may need more support.

If you know or suspect your child has additional educational needs, developmental differences or delays, some of these skills may not be achievable for them at this point.

Early intervention makes a big difference – ask your child's nursery, school or health visitor