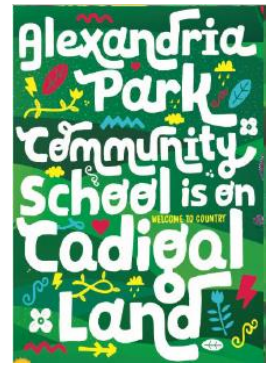


Frequently Asked Questions for Kindergarten Families



What is my child learning?

All students follow the NSW syllabus based on the Australian curriculum. At Alex Park we develop our teaching programs collaboratively to ensure consistent learning for all students in all classes. In the first few weeks of each term, you will receive a letter containing an overview of learning for that term for all students in Kindergarten. The letter will also contain a timetable for the class and important dates for the term.

How many students are in each class? How many classes are there?

There are usually about 20 students in each class. This is the target number agreed upon by the Department of Education and the NSW Teachers Federation. However, it is possible for classes to be slightly smaller or slightly larger. The number of classes depends on how many students are enrolled. Alex Park usually has 3, 4 or 5 Kindergarten classes. Each class has 1 teacher, or may have 2 part-time teachers who share the class.

What is a composite class?

A composite class has students from two different year levels. For example Kindergarten students and Year 1 students may make a K/1 class. The Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation explains that they may be formed “because of the uneven pattern of enrolment in the school, because of the small size of the school or where it’s considered that mixing students of different ages is academically and socially advantageous”. There is no disadvantage to being in a composite class. See more at <https://data.cese.nsw.gov.au/data/dataset/multi-age-or-composite-classes-in-nsw-government-schools>.

Where are the toilets?

Kindergarten have toilets right outside the classrooms. It is important to ensure your child can toilet independently, including dressing and undressing and using a toilet door lock. Teachers provide many opportunities for students to use the toilets, especially during the first few weeks of school when students are getting used to the school environment.

What is the P&C?

The P&C is our parent and citizens organisation that represents families’ voice in the organisation and management of the school. The P&C also support the school’s programs and activities through fundraising, working bees and many other activities. Please see the information flyer included in your information pack or look on the school website for more information.

What is RFF?

RFF Relief from Face to Face teaching. It is time for class teachers to be ‘off class’ to meet with colleagues to plan units of work, mark assessment tasks and organise lessons. During RFF, classes attend specialist lessons such as library, music or visual arts. Class teachers collaborate closely with RFF teachers to ensure students are supported academically, emotionally and socially when they are with different teachers.

What is SRE/SEE?

Special religious education (SRE) is education in the beliefs and practices of an approved religious persuasion. Under the Education Act 1990, government schools allow time for special religious education. It is delivered by authorised representatives of approved religious groups to students who have nominated that religion. Special education in ethics can be offered as a secular alternative to special religious education and is delivered by Primary Ethics. At Alex Park, SRE/SEE takes place on Wednesday afternoons. Families select an SRE/SEE option when they enrol their child. Students not attending SRE/SEE lessons participate in alternative meaningful activities during this time.

What is 'permission to publish'?

Teachers may take photos of learning activities throughout the year and these may be published in the school newsletter or on the school website or Facebook. If you tick 'no' for permission to publish on the school enrolment form, your child will not be included in photos taken for these purposes and their picture, name and work will not appear in any school publications.

Why don't you send photos of my child more often?

At school, the class teacher is responsible for the educational growth of each of the students in their care. This takes full concentration, energy and time each day. There is simply no time left over to send regular photo updates. The school communicates regularly with families through the school website, the Sentral Parent Portal (details distributed at the start of the year), emails and the monthly newsletter. Kindergarten teachers also periodically post some photos of their classes on the school Facebook.

How do I contact my child's teacher?

If you need to set up an appointment, advise pick up arrangements or provide additional information about your child's needs please email the school. The office will send your email to the class teacher. For urgent matters please phone the office. Your child's teacher may also provide their email address, but please be aware that teachers do not regularly check emails during the school day and may take a few days to respond.

Why doesn't my child's teacher know where their personal belongings are (hat/jumper/water bottle/book)?

Kindergarten is a time for children to develop independence and responsibility for their belongings. While we do our best to remind students to place hats and other items in their bag, our core job is teaching students. Hats and other items are often misplaced, left in the playground, accidentally taken home by other students or end up in lost property. It often takes a week or two for them to come back so please label everything and have a spare.

How do I label my child's belongings?

Please use a thick texta and write your child's **full first and last name** on EVERYTHING including hats, jumpers, bottles, socks, container bases and lids, even shoes! You do not need to purchase fancy stickers or labels but please ensure the writing is clear and legible.

When does Home Reading start?

Home reading usually starts towards the end of term one, to allow students to settle in to their school routines and to allow families time to adjust to school life. We will contact you and provide detailed information about how to set up an effective and enjoyable home reading routine with your child.

Can my child have a phone or smart watch?

No, Kindergarten students cannot bring digital devices to school. It is important for students to develop their independence and confidence in the school environment. If you need to speak to your child during the day, please contact the school office. Please be assured that we will always contact you if there are any concerns about your child. See our Technology Policy for further information.

Why is my child so tired?

Your child is learning their role as a student and processing their new environment, interactions and responsibilities. It takes a lot of energy to learn and remember all the new routines, places, people and activities they are experiencing each day. For many students, primary school is the biggest environment they have ever had to navigate. This often results in students being very tired after school. It is important to have a consistent routine with early bedtimes, good food and lots of sleep! If you can, try not to have too many extra curricular activities, especially during the first few months of Kindergarten.

When will my child make friends?

Students develop many new skills and learn many new things during Kindergarten. In particular, they learn a variety of new social skills and begin to explore many new social relationships. Some children make close friends quite early on, while others will interact with a range of peers throughout the year. This is quite normal. Teachers and school staff support all children to feel engaged and confident in their social interactions in the classroom and the playground. We are always happy to discuss your child's social development with you.

Why can't my child tell me anything about their day?

Often students are very tired at the end of the day and very glad to be home in a familiar, comfortable environment. They need time in this safe space to process the many new things that have happened to them during the day. It can be helpful to wait a little while before you ask about their day. Try not to ask general questions like "What did you learn?" or "Did you make friends?". Instead, ask for something specific, like:

- What was the best thing that happened today?
- What was something your teacher said today?
- Did you do craft or counting today?
- What book did you listen to today?

You can also use the school newsletter or Facebook to prompt discussion about events at school.

What kind of bag is best?

The best bag is one that your child can open and close by themselves. The bag should be firm enough to stand upright and stay open by itself, and should have a wide opening so it is easy to get a lunch box and reading folder in and out. It should be big enough to fit a lunch box, A4 reading folder, jumper and hat.

What kind of shoes are best?

Shoes should be black and comfortable. Students need to be able to take them on and off and do them up by themselves. It is best to avoid shoelaces – Velcro is best. Many students wear black runners. Shoes must be practical, safe and easy to play in (not sandals or ballet flats).

What kind of lunch box is best?

Students need to be able to open their lunch box and all their containers by themselves. Please make sure your child knows which food is for lunch and which food is for afternoon tea – it can be helpful to practise eating from the lunch box a few times at home before school starts. It is also helpful for you to loosen lids and cut open packets when you are packing the lunch, so that food is easy to access. Make sure all the containers fit easily and loosely in the lunch box/bag, not like a jigsaw! All containers and lids need to be clearly labelled.

What happens if my child is very anxious each morning?

It is best to say a cheerful goodbye to your child and then quickly leave. When parents stay with their child for a long time, the child's anxiety can grow and it can be harder to encourage them to come into the classroom. Teachers are very experienced in helping children feel safe and comfortable at school, and anxiety usually lessens over time. If separation anxiety persists, we have many people at school who can provide advice and support including our Learning Support Team, Student Learning Support Officers and School Counsellors.