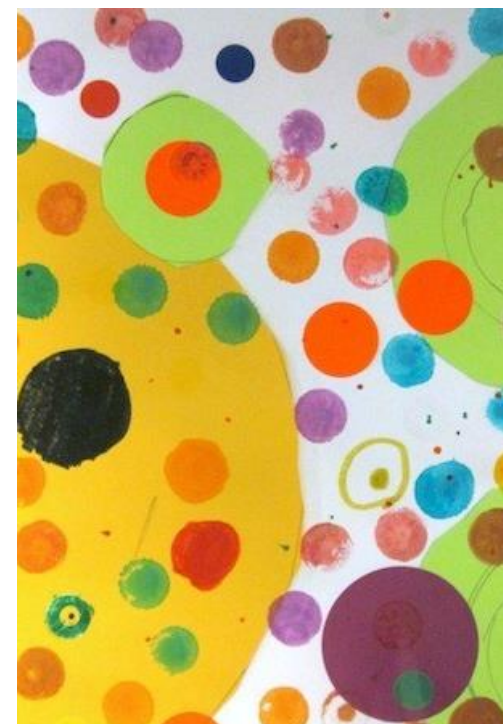


Getting ready for school

Family guide to starting Kindergarten





Willmot Public School

Willmot Public School is a small school with a vibrant culture that reflects the many backgrounds of our students, teachers and our community. Our students, families, and community are firmly at the centre of all we do.

We continue to work closely with local community partners like Willmot Hub, The Smith Family and many others to bring the best possible services and support that enable our students to learn and achieve to their full potential.

Every year provides us with many opportunities to work together to achieve the best results possible for our children and our families. The way our community engages with Willmot PS really sets us apart.

Creative and responsive teaching and learning programs are delivered daily by our wonderful teachers, providing opportunities for our students to be taught much more than 'the basics'. The parents visiting our learning environments over the years, have found a very strong focus on teaching (and empowering) our students to be safe, respectful learners who take responsibility in their progress.

The results of the annual statewide 'Tell Them from Me' survey, routinely inform us that our students consistently rate their teachers as caring, friendly and fair. They express more happiness with their school life than half of all that take the survey, and have more positive and optimistic hopes for their futures.

Our door is always open. We're here to teach your children well, and to help you do the same.

School Readiness

There are no specific academic skills that a child needs to have before starting Kindergarten. We don't expect them to know how to read or write. The main thing that we feel is most important to a child starting Kindergarten is their social skills and that both you and your child feel confident about starting school.

There are a few ways in which you can help develop your child's social skills.

Help them play well with others

Play is vital for children to learn to negotiate, problem solve, take turns, share and experiment.

Help them problem solve

Invite your child to take part in the problem solving process. Ask "what can you do about that?" Support them in trying to solve a problem that they might have.

Help them recognise feelings

When your child can recognise what they are feeling they are better able to get along with others. Help your child recognise their feelings by giving them a name and by using stories about emotions.

Help them be helpful

Being helpful requires children to look beyond themselves and recognise that others have needs. You can provide your child with simple opportunities to help within the family and be generous with your gratitude afterwards.

Help them control their impulses

We don't really develop full control until early adulthood, but some of the most rapid development happens in early childhood. Children need opportunities to practice this important skill. Movement games like Simon Says, Red Light Green Light, help control their impulses to move. Pretend Play is another great way, taking on new characters, talking about a plan and making rules to follow.



Play based activities to try with your child

These activities are suggestions of things to do with children before they start school to make school a little easier for them.

Language skills

- sing songs together
- tell each other jokes and rhymes
- give your child simple instructions to follow, e.g. how to pack a bag
- use books for enjoyment, e.g. looking at pictures
- identify pictures in books, magazines, on television or the Internet
- encourage your child to join in conversations.

Writing skills

- give your child pencils, markers, crayons, paintbrushes and sticks in the sand to draw, scribble or write
- write numbers and letters
- encourage your child to use a capital letter to start their name, e.g. Jack.

Mathematics skills

- encourage your child to recognise numbers using words such as many, a lot, more, less
- help your child to find things in a group that are different, such as differences in shapes
- talk about opposites – up and down, under and over, in front and behind, day and night.

Personal/social skills

- organise times for your child to play with other children so that they can learn to share and take turns
- encourage your child to tidy up after playing
- help your child to learn to say their full name and their address
- make your child aware of rules and the reasons for having them.

Physical skills

- provide practice using scissors
- provide opportunities to play with building blocks and other puzzles
- play hopping and skipping games.

Keep playing

Play is one of the most important needs children have and this does not change once children enter Kindergarten. Playing enhances all aspects of their healthy development.

Children play because it is fun, but as they play they are actually learning. When children play they are using their bodies, their imagination, and learning how to communicate and cooperate. They learn how things work and how to manage feelings. Please allow some unstructured time after each school day for your child to relax and play.



Ready for school checklist

Tick each item when it has been done

Things to do this year

- Attend the Willmot Wizards (Transition to School) Program run in Term 3 and 4.
- Find your child's birth certificate. If you cannot locate one, a form is available at Willmot Public School to order a new birth certificate.
- Ensure your child's immunisations are up to date and ask your Doctor about having your child's hearing and eyesight checked.
- Pick up an Enrolment Pack from Willmot Public School, fill this out and return it to the school.
- Read the Willmot Public School Handbook
- Connect with Willmot Public School on Facebook.
- If your child will require Before and/or After School Care, contact Willmot Public School to ask about available organisations servicing the school and local area.
- Practice safely walking or travelling to and from school.
- Read 'A Special Place' and 'Daisy's First Day' to your child.

Some things you will need to buy for school

- School uniform
- Hat
- School shoes (try Velcro if they can't tie laces)
- Back pack
- Lunch box (make sure you choose one that your child can open by themselves)
- Drink bottle

Please ensure that your child's name is on all of their belongings.





Preparing your child for school

Your child is about to start the first day of a new and exciting experience. You may be wondering where to begin in getting your child prepared.

We recognise that it's a big step for everybody. Developing a positive relationship with you to support your child's learning is vital to us. Our team of highly qualified teachers and support staff is here to give your child the best possible start.

Your first contact with the school may be with the school administrative staff. They are the friendly faces at the school office. They help by giving you guidance on general information you may need. They also make appointments for you with the principal, teachers or other school staff, if you need to speak with one of them.

Getting prepared at home before school starts will help you and your child feel confident and excited.

The night before

- Lay out your child's clothes, shoes and socks.
- Make your child's morning tea and lunch and pop it in the fridge. Make sure your child has fruit and water for sip and crunch.
- Help your child pack their school bag.
- Pack a spare pair of underpants, socks and a change of clothes. Let your child know these are there in case they have any toilet accidents at school.

On the day

- Be confident with your child and let them dress themselves as much as possible.
- Tie back or plait long hair.
- Apply sunscreen and make sure their hat is in their bag.
- Ensure you turn up to school before the bell.
- Don't forget to take photos.
- Pick up your child on time.



Life at school

Going to school every day is important, and Kindergarten sets children up for the rest of their schooling.

At Willmot Public School, our school day starts at 8:55am and finishes at 2:55pm. Students have a break at recess and lunch to eat and play.

What your child learns each day builds on what they learnt the day before. When children miss school they miss out on vital information, their learning routine is broken and they can lose confidence. They also miss out on building their friendships. All of these factors can affect their attitude towards school and their achievement.

You have a legal responsibility to send your child to school every day.

If your child is late or away

If your child arrives late you will have to sign them into school in the office; this is the same process if you are taking your child out of school early for any reason.

If your child has been away from school you will need to provide an explanation for the absence. This is usually done by writing a note explaining why they were away from school and your child can give this to their teacher or the Office when they return to school. It may also be done by telephoning the school.

Did You Know?

If your child misses as few as eight (8) days each school term, by the end of primary school they will have missed a year of education.



A Kindergarten Classroom

Kindergarten classrooms are happy and exciting places. Children might do puzzles with friends on the floor, play games, listen to their teacher read a book or sit at a desk to write and draw. They will learn about numbers, shapes, patterns and science, sing, visit the library, visit the kitchen and garden, use computers and be involved in many other activities.

What your child will learn at school

Most time in Kindergarten is spent developing children's literacy and numeracy skills. There are six subjects known as Key Learning Areas studied throughout primary school.

These are:

- English
- Mathematics
- Science and Technology
- Creative Arts
- Human Society and Its Environment
- Personal Development, Health and Physical Education.





Eating at school

Your child needs healthy food for energy and concentration at school.

Eating at school will be a different experience for your child compared with eating at home or at preschool. There are no places to keep food hot or cold. Children often sit on the ground and balance their food on their knees or eat directly from their lunchbox. They will also need to be able to open everything that their food is wrapped in.

At Willmot Public School we have Sip and Crunch between the morning bell and recess and we encourage all students to have a piece of fruit and a drink of water. At the start of both recess and lunch, we have an eating period to help ensure all kids eat their food and still have plenty of time to play with friends.

Tips to help your child

- Pack food that is easy to open, easy to eat and not messy.
- Write their name on their lunch box, water bottle and any other containers.
- Include a frozen drink bottle to keep food cold.
- Pack a water bottle for your child each day and remind them that they can also get water from the taps or bubblers throughout the day.
- If you make lunches the night before, store them in the fridge until school time.
- Remind your child to wash their hands before eating and to use the toilet at recess and lunch.
- Recess and lunch can be ordered from the canteen and if your child forgets their lunch, tell them to go to the Office where a limited number of donated sandwiches are available.

Caring for students

It is important that you and your child know that there is always someone at school to help them. We have also developed successful programs that support students and keep them safe.

We will tell you when the school grounds are supervised, procedures for pick-ups and other ways that ensure children are looked after at all times.

Teachers

Teachers in NSW public schools are tertiary trained and professional. They are sensitive to the needs of young children and will be there to help and guide them. Your child's teacher will let you know the best way to keep in touch with them and find out about your child's progress. Keep your child's teacher informed of any changes in your child's life that may impact on their work or enjoyment of school.

School Counsellors

School counsellors are experienced teachers who are also qualified psychologists with post-graduate qualifications in school counselling. They can help students who are having difficulties at school or home.

Community Liaison Officer

Our Community Liaison Officer can also help families to access services outside of school if needed.

Anti-bullying environment

All public schools actively prevent bullying by having programs such as peer support that encourage appropriate behaviour, build self-esteem and respect for others. Schools also have plans in place to deal with bullying or harassment and school staff are trained to deal with these situations.

Additional care

We also provide other support staff where these are needed. These positions include:

- support teachers for students with learning difficulties
- Community information and liaison officers
- Aboriginal education officers.



If you notice a major change in your child's behaviour or you have any worries about your child and their schooling you can speak to your child's teacher, school counsellor or principal. It is always best to raise any concerns as early as possible.

Health and Wellbeing

What happens if your child is sick?

At school

If your child gets sick or is injured at school, the school will contact you and seek the necessary medical attention. If your child is mildly ill they will go to sick bay, usually near the school office, where they can lie down and be monitored. You will be called to come and collect your child from school if they are too sick to go back to the classroom. For this reason you should always keep your current contact details with the school.

At home

Keep your child away from school and see your doctor if your child has:

- a fever of 38°C or above
- vomiting or diarrhoea
- severe cold or flu symptoms
- rashes of an unknown origin.

Head lice

It is common for school children to get head lice at some time and it has nothing to do with being clean or dirty.

Head lice can spread when children are in close contact, but head lice do not cause any harm to your child's health.

To prevent your child getting head lice:

- check your child's hair regularly
- keep long hair tied back.

If your child has head lice:

- remove tangles with a large comb, then comb hair with a thick, white hair conditioner using a fine-tooth comb to get rid of head lice and their eggs (nits) daily until there are no more eggs.
- continue to send your child to school.

- inform the school so they can inform others to check their children's hair; your child does not have to be identified.
- schools sometimes hold a "nit busting" day to quickly put an end to nits in the school.

Medical issues

If your child has any medical conditions, allergies, is at risk of anaphylaxis or requires the administration of prescribed medications, the school must be informed. This information will usually be provided as part of the enrolment process, however it is also important that you inform the school of any changes to your child's health.

Allergies

Anaphylaxis is a severe and sudden allergic reaction to foods such as nuts or shellfish, or insect bites. If your child is diagnosed with a severe allergy to a particular food it is important to inform the school principal as early as possible so that strategies can be put in place that help to minimise exposure to the known allergen.

Sun safety

Schools try to protect children at school from the damaging effects of the sun's rays by providing shelters where possible and having hats as part of the school uniform. Your child's hat must be worn when they are on the playground or they will have to play in the shade. Children can also wear sunglasses at school to protect their eyes from sun damage. At home, apply sunscreen each morning before your child leaves for school.



Willmot Public School
63 Discovery Avenue, Willmot NSW 2770
(02) 9628 0222
willmot-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au
<https://willmot-p.schools.nsw.gov.au>