



# PREPARING FOR J1

Welcome to the J1-J3 Department at Hamilton College. It is our aim to offer, within a caring, disciplined environment, a first class education not only for your child's academic needs, but also for his/her social, moral, religious and personal development. We hope your child will settle quickly, happily, and confidently into our department.

## YOUR CHILD'S NAME

If your child uses an abbreviated form of his/her name, or is perhaps known by a middle name, please let us know before the start of term, so that name cards can be prepared accurately.

## MAKING A GOOD START

The following suggestions will help children to begin school happily and with confidence.

- **Share story times with your child.** Talk about the pictures and discuss what will happen next. Nursery rhymes and number rhymes are of prime importance and should be enjoyed together on a regular basis!
- **Talk with and listen to your child.** Many everyday activities, which occur at home, when out shopping, going for a walk or travelling etc., provide ideal opportunities for this.
- **Encourage good speech.** "Baby talk" and lazy speech are bad habits which are more difficult to correct the longer they are established.
- **Help your child to recognise colours,** if he/she is not already familiar with them.
- **Play games with your child.** Snap, dominoes or other matching games are particularly good.
- **Allow time for hand/eye co-ordination activities.** Cutting and sticking; painting; modelling with plasticine or play dough; drawing with chalks, crayons or felt-tip pens; building with bricks or Lego - all exercise finger muscles and help to develop manipulative skills.

We know that children will have been writing some letters and numbers in their pre-school year, but it is not necessary to practise this, as we will begin to teach formal writing and correct letter routes within a fortnight of starting school. Capital letters are not encouraged in J1 apart from at the beginning of your child's name. Lower case letters will be used throughout J1. Capital letters will be formally introduced and taught in J2.

## INTRODUCTORY EVENING

An informal meeting is held within the first 2 weeks of Term One, for parents of children who have just been admitted to Junior 1. This gives the opportunity for the class teachers to meet parents and gives parents an insight into the routine and work covered in the first year. It also informs parents of ways in which help can be given at home. For those children entering at J2 and J3 level, similar evenings are arranged.

## HELP YOUR CHILD TO BECOME INDEPENDENT

This is one of the most important things children learn during their early months at school. It is appreciated, therefore, if your child is able to carry out these social skills before starting school.

- \* Put on and take off his/her own blazer and coat and be able to hang them up*
- \* Fasten buttons, buckles and zips.*
- \* Use the toilet properly, flush it after use then wash hands.*
- \* Use a knife and fork correctly.*
- \* Tidy toys by himself/herself.*
- \* Use a handkerchief properly.*
- \* Share and be prepared to take turns.*
- \* Carry out a simple instruction.*

## A CALM QUIET START

Changes in routine and different surroundings can be unsettling for young children, but this can be helped by establishing a calm relaxed beginning to the school day.

Please ensure your child arrives at school in time for a 9.00 a.m. start. Ideally J1 children should arrive for school around 8.50 a.m. although there is supervision from 8.30 a.m.

## ARRIVING AT SCHOOL

On the first morning, please bring your child to reception at 9.15am where he/she will be met by a member of staff. For the first few weeks you may bring your child into the Infant Assembly Hall to change, but please encourage your child to change by him/herself as we like to encourage independence as early as possible. The children quickly learn to make their own way to peg areas.

## GOING HOME

Junior 1 will be dismissed after lunch at **12.30pm** for the first two weeks. From week 3 to the October holiday break, J1 classes will be dismissed at **2pm**. After the October break school finishes at **3.30pm** for J1 along with J2 & J3.

J2 & J3 children who travel by bus are supervised until it is time for them to be taken to the buses at approximately 3.50pm. Those who travel by car are escorted to the side door where their departure is supervised by members of staff. Please arrive promptly at 3.30pm, as staff members have other duties to attend thereafter. If however, on a rare occasion you are delayed, your child will be taken to Aftercare to wait for you there.

The After School Care Service functions between 3.45 and 6.00pm. Should you require this service please contact the Junior School Secretary. To ensure the safety of our pupils we do insist that all Junior 1, 2 and 3 children travelling by car are met by an adult, so please do not make arrangements for your child to wait and be met by an older brother or sister. If someone other than a parent is collecting your child, please inform the class teacher beforehand. If at any time a child who normally travels home by bus is to be met at the school please notify his/her class teacher.

## UNIFORM

This can be purchased by contacting Mrs Arneil at the office. It is very important that ALL items of clothing and shoes are clearly marked with your child's name. If this is done with ink markings, please renew names frequently, as they either wash out or are rubbed out very quickly. Ideally, names should be sewn on to tapes e.g. "Cash's" name tapes, wherever possible. Please include all items in PE kit.

All children in Junior 1-3 participate in formal PE lessons in the gym and need to have the full gym kit for this. Please would you provide white gym shoes or trainers **without laces**, and ensure that they are brought each week with their full kit. You will be advised which day this will be at the beginning of the first term.

## SNACKS AND DRINKS

Junior 1, 2 and 3 children are given a mid - morning snack of a biscuit & a drink of water. In the afternoon, if they wish, they are able to bring a snack of their own to have with their drink. We do ask however, that you do not give your child either (a) the hard boiling type of sweets or (b) fruit which could be squashed in a school bag or which your child would expect to have peeled or (c) any snack which contains nuts. *It is important that your child always has a nut-free snack.*

Please bear in mind that snacks are eaten only in the classroom and in a short 5-10 minute period. Please do not send more than **one** snack each day.

Anything which is not finished in the appropriate time will either be discarded or returned home.

At lunchtime Junior 1-3 children are allowed to bring a small carton of juice or a small disposable bottle of water to have with their lunch - but for obvious reasons, **no fizzy drinks, glass bottles, flasks or bottles which need to be returned home at the end of the day.** Water is available for those children not bringing their own drink.

## EQUIPMENT

During the first few months at school it is better if children do **not** have pencils, rubbers, rulers, jotters, etc. in their school bags. These often cause distraction and can cause distress if lost or mixed up with another child's belongings. All pencils and crayons will be supplied.

## BREAKS

Children have a 15 minute break mid-morning and mid-afternoon. Lunch is served in the dining hall from 11.50 - until 12.20pm. All Junior 1, 2 & 3 children are taken to the dining hall together, and are taken outside from 12.20 - 1pm. All breaks have adult supervision.

If weather is inclement, children will be kept indoors, again with adult supervision.

When the weather is cold or windy, please make sure that your child has sufficient outdoor wear with him/her to keep him/her warm enough, especially during the lunchtime break (40 minutes).

We request that you do not allow your child to bring toys to school. Experience has shown that breakages and loss cause too many problems and disruption in teaching time.

## MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS

We have an arrangement with South Lanarkshire Health Board to monitor the health of pupils throughout their career, which will begin with a medical examination in Junior 1. It includes assessment of vision, hearing, growth and general health. These examinations begin during the first term, and you will receive further details nearer the time.

**MEDICINE**

We regret that school policy does not allow any member of staff to administer medicines to pupils unless special arrangements have been agreed for children suffering from asthma, epilepsy, anaphylaxis, diabetes or migraine. If it is essential for your child to receive medication during the school day, please arrange a time with the class teacher when you may come to school to administer this. We regret that no exceptions can be made to this policy.

Following advice from the Public Health Board the school’s policy is that any person who has experienced vomiting or diarrhoea should not return to school for 48 hours. This is to minimise the spread of infection.

**ATTENDANCES, LATE-COMING AND REQUESTS FOR ABSENCE**

By law the school must seek to have every absence explained. It helps us greatly if a parent telephones the school office as near to 9.00a.m on the first day of a child’s absence. Class teachers must notify the office if a child has not arrived by 9.30 a.m. and office staff will follow this up to ensure the child is safe.

If a pupil arrives after registration at 9.00 a.m. he/she will be sent to the office to have the register adjusted. This can be unsettling for the pupil who is late and also for the rest of the class. All late-comings are recorded on a pupil’s attendance record.

If absence from school is required for a medical or dental appointment, a written request should be made to the class teacher, giving at least one day’s notice. If for any reason you are uplifting your child during the day, please do not go directly to the classroom, but report to the office when you arrive. A member of staff will arrange to have your child brought to the reception area.

Requests for absence for any reason other than medical appointments should be made to the Head of Junior School. Please do not arrange family holidays in term time, as this is very disruptive for young pupils, and, we believe, Hamilton College holidays are already very generous.

**PARENTS’ CONSULTATION EVENINGS**

During the first term you will be invited to attend the Junior School Parents’ Consultation Evening, at which you will have a personal interview with the class teacher, regarding your child’s progress. There will be a second Consultation Evening during term two.

If you require to speak to the class teacher outwith the consultation evenings, this can be arranged by phoning the Junior School Office (01698 286830). While we welcome discussion with parents at any time, we do ask that you allow class teachers to attend to their many and various duties at the start and end of the school day.

**REPORTS**

An interim report by the class teacher is sent home in December and a comprehensive report for the year towards the end of June. Both will include comments on your child’s behaviour and progress.

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We hope that you have found this guide informative and helpful and that it will be a useful source of information for you. Most children settle quickly and happily. If, however, you are at all concerned about your child, please notify the class teacher, or Mrs Stobo, Head of J1-3 or the Head of Junior School. We will be happy to help with any concerns you may have to ensure that your child has the best possible start to his/her school career.

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