

Foundation Phase Information Booklet 2022

Dear Parents/Guardians/Caregivers

A warm welcome to you and your child; we look forward to a long and happy relationship with you.

The following basic information applies specifically to this phase, Grade 1 to Grade 3, and is intended to answer frequently asked questions as far as possible. Please read this in conjunction with the main PEPPS Preparatory Information Booklet for more general and detailed points about our school. The Preparatory Information Booklet is available on the PEPPS School website.

Your child's class teacher will also be happy to answer any further queries you may have. Kind regards

Mrs Melissa Venter

Head of Preparatory School

1. Communication with the school and teacher

- **Grades 1-3** use a 'message book'. This comes home daily and should be returned to school each day. Please check for any notes/letters from the school and sign to acknowledge receiving them. You may also use this book to write notes to the teacher; we check the books each morning.

This book is used for small personal notes and any letters with tear-off slips. For general information, we send out newsletters.

Please check in the book bag for any notes/letters from the teacher and ask your child to give any notes which you write to his/her teacher.

Teachers are happy to meet with parents should there be a problem. If it involves a lengthy chat, however, please make an appointment so that teaching time is not disrupted. This can be arranged via the contact book, by phone via the school secretary or directly to the teacher's school email address.

- **Please note** that it is school policy **not** to give out teachers' personal phone numbers and **not** to have class WhatsApp groups.
- **The majority of the communication from the school is administered digitally via emails** from the Head. The school will issue reminders through SMSs. The primary tool of communication from the teacher is the myHomework App.
- You will be provided with your child's teacher's email address, as well as details and instructions on how to download and use the **myHomework App**. This is a school communication system for phones, tablets or laptops. It is essential to use this app to stay up to date with both general school announcements as well as class information.

Please let the teacher know if home circumstances change as this often affects your child's behaviour at school, e.g. if mom goes away for some time, etc.

2. General Information

- **School Times**
School **starts** promptly at 08h00 each morning for all pupils in the school.

Grade 1 pupils go directly to their classrooms on the first day and thereafter meet at the Foundation Phase line-up area with Grade 2 and 3 pupils. You will be directed to the classrooms on the first day and your child will be shown where to line up for the next day. Before the bell rings, the pupils play in the playground under supervision (from 07h30).

➤ **After School**

School ends at 14h00 Mondays to Thursdays and at 12h30 on Fridays. We encourage you to arrange prompt collection of your child at these times. Pupils wait in the playground until collected but may not play on any equipment, jungle gyms, swings etc. for safety reasons.

Any Foundation Phase pupils who have not been collected 30 minutes after the daily finishing time, i.e. by 14h30 Monday to Thursday and by 13h00 on a Friday, and who are not enrolled at the on-site aftercare, will be gathered by the teacher on duty. Children's names and grades will be recorded and you will need to sign them out after 14h30 (13h00 on Friday). You will be charged R100 per 15 minutes or part thereof that your child stays after time.

We **strongly discourage** you from leaving your child at school after these times. Not only will it be expensive for you, but it is also unfair to your child after a busy morning at school. If it is difficult to arrange for pick-up on time, please enrol your child in the aftercare programme.

Children do not stay for activities in the afternoons as our extra-curricular programme is built into our school day. See integrated day below.

➤ **PEPPS “6-Day Cycle”/Timetable/Integrated Day**

There is a **6-day cycle** at PEPPS rather than a weekly one and this applies from Grade 1 to Grade 7. This means lessons are now timetabled according to the number of the school day, days 1 – 6, rather than the day of the week. It is important therefore that you keep track, on the school calendar, of which school day it is. You will be informed which day/s your child has physical education and sports hour.

Since 2019, the Foundation Phase has been running our extra-curricular activities as an integrated part of the school day. This means that your child will take part in sport and cultural activities during school hours rather than having to stay in the afternoons.

Grade 1-3

All pupils take part in all the sporting activities. Cultural activities are varied.

All pupils from Grade 1–3 may try out for the Junior Choir and attend on Tuesday mornings if selected. It is expected that a child then commits to being in the choir for the whole year so that our choir becomes well established.

➤ **Mini Breaks**

From Grade 1, the school runs 50-minute periods with a 10-minute break after each one. A longer break of 20 minutes mid-morning is a ‘snack break’, whereas the rest is for pupils to get outside and move, refreshing them for the next period of learning.

➤ New subjects from 2020 for Grades 1-3 are *Philosophy & Axiology* and *Genius Hour*. Details to follow in due course.

➤ **Breakfast/School Lunch/Tuck-shop**

We have a **Healthy Eating Policy** in the Foundation Phase. Our aim is to maximise concentration and learning in the short time that your child is with us each day. We want to avoid the negative effects caused by ‘sugars’ in whatever form. To this end, we ask that your child eats a nutritious breakfast before leaving home. The main break is only at 10h20 and this is a long time to wait for the first ‘fuel’ of the day.

Please pack a nutritious lunch. No sugary foods should be brought to school, e.g. cakes, biscuits, muffins, sweets or chocolates. No chips, fast food or flavoured yoghurts are allowed. (Although they appear healthy, they are packed with sugar!)

Drinks – Please, no cool drinks, flavoured water or fruit juices are to be brought to school. Your child should bring a water bottle daily. (Children get used to drinking water very quickly if encouraged to. We also have a problem with cool drinks attracting bees to the playground.)

The internet is also full of ideas for easy, healthy lunchbox fillers.

➤ **Stationery**

Grade R-Grade 3 parents do not need to purchase stationery for school. The school will provide your child with the stationery that he/she will need at school. The school stationery issued **MUST** stay at school and may not be taken home for homework. Parents are to supply stationery for any work done at home, i.e. pencil, colour pencils, scissors and glue.

You will have received a short list of other items, e.g. tissues and soap, that will need to be provided by you within the first two weeks of school.

➤ **Backpacks**

Your child will need a backpack to carry his/her things to and from school each day. The backpacks will be hung on hooks outside each classroom. We allow you to purchase a backpack of your choice, providing it is not smaller than approximately 45 x 35 cm. It needs to be big enough to carry the book bag (see below), lunchbox and jersey. We have found that a bag with two compartments is best.

Please make sure all belongings are clearly marked with your child's name and surname.

NB No wheelies or caddies are allowed in the Foundation Phase. We do not have space for them, they do not easily hang on a hook and they are unnecessary at this level. Please do not waste your money on a caddie. They are only suitable from Grade 4 upwards.

➤ **Fabric Book Bag**

Each new child at PEPPS receives a fabric book bag at the start of the year. Pupils moving up within PEPPS should continue to use the book bag from the previous year. If looked after, they are sturdy and should last at least two years. The school book bag must be used for ALL books and letters to be carried between home and school. Please encourage your child to be organised with his/her belongings and to look after this bag.

➤ **Sport and Cultural Activities**

These activities are integrated into the school day as mentioned above and all children will take part.

➤ **Money**

We discourage pupils from bringing money to school generally as there is no need for it. Any money brought to school **MUST** be in a purse, bank bag or sealed envelope **labelled with your child's name**. It is too easily lost if placed loosely in pockets and school bags.

➤ **Uniform**

Please see PEPPS Uniform Policy for details. The uniform shop (at the Polokwane campus) will also help you with what is required. Most uniform items are available there apart from shoes.

Summer
<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Red golf shirt○ Navy sports shorts○ White/navy socks○ Black takkies or blue/grey sandals (as specified by PEPPS)○ Tracksuit top on cold days
Please familiarise yourself with the type of sandals. Takkies, and not sandals, must be worn on the days your child has Physical Education (PE) lessons or sport.
Winter
<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Red golf shirt○ Navy sports shorts○ Tracksuit○ White/navy socks○ Black takkies
The jersey and pullover may also be worn under the tracksuit top.

3. External Developmental Support

We aim to develop the ‘whole child’ and not just the academic side. Child development is complex and no system develops in isolation; each is dependent on others to ensure ‘normal’ all-round development. Teachers are trained to notice when a child may be struggling in a certain area of development. Delays in some areas of development are common in children but, if caught early, are usually easily rectified with certain therapy.

To this end, we may refer children to a **speech therapist** or an **occupational therapist** or simply to have **eyes or ears tested**. This is common practice, particularly with Grade R and Grade 1 pupils as this is the age where therapy is the most effective. We mention it here, as we have found parents get extremely worried at the mention of a therapist and often refuse to take their child or leave it so long that the child does not get the help he/she needs, which negatively affects his/her progress at school.

We appeal to you from the start to work hand in hand with your child’s teacher and to give your child the opportunity to be assessed by a therapist if the teacher is concerned and recommends this.

4. General Home Support

➤ Homework

The PEPPS Homework Policy aims to reflect current international trends. We scaled down the amount and intensity of homework given. This allows children time to play and families to enjoy time with each other without the stress caused by ‘homework battles’.

Although formal homework is kept to a minimum from Grade 1-3, reading/phonics work and some Maths activities will be given as ‘drill’ or practice, so please ensure that your child has the following items at home to work with as needed:

Pencil, pencil sharpener, ruler, wax crayons or screw crayons, pencil crayons, scissors, glue (Pritt type) and old magazines to cut pictures and letters from.

Grade 1 to 3 teachers will notify you of homework that should be done as and when necessary on the myHomework App. Occasionally, your child may be asked to find out something or to collect things for a project that will be done at school.

➤ ADAM

ADAM is a digital platform that you as a parent can access to view your child’s academic progress and performance. ADAM is the school’s database and has a parent interface and can be used to view marks in all subjects across the curriculum. This measure has been taken to ensure for optimal parent-teacher support of a child’s learning journey. Each parent will be provided with the means of joining ADAM.

➤ Language Development

You are encouraged to speak to your child about anything and everything! This is particularly important in Grade R and 1 but applies to all ages. Enrich your child’s vocabulary. Speak about what is going to happen next/where you are going and what you may see or do. A simple example for Grade 1 – We are going to the shop to buy apples, bananas, bread and milk. Ask your child to try and remember the list.

Encourage your child to think and to question. Let him/her express his/her opinion about something and get him/her to explain why he/she thinks that way.

Go on outings and get your child interested in the outside world. Read a book together; watch interesting TV programmes and discuss as you watch. The opportunities are endless if you become aware of this.

➤ Reading

New research shows that children require a minimum of 1000 hours ‘lap time’ sharing picture books with an adult before they are ready to read. The less time they have, the more they will struggle to read.

If this is not already in your daily routine, do not wait – start your ‘lap time’ now! Before formal reading begins, let your child tell you the story from the pictures in a picture book – this is early reading. You can help your child develop a love of books and reading by taking an interest in books yourself and by **reading stories to your child**. We also encourage you to join a library.

Once your child starts bringing home a reader (from Grade 1), please listen to your child read and sign the reading card. If it is unsigned, we will assume no reading has been done. To make good progress, your child must read at home every day. Do not stop reading stories to your child once he/she starts to read by himself/herself. It is important for your child to hear and see good reading practice from adults.

➤ **Bedtime, Television and Home Routine**

Please make sure that your child gets enough sleep. Bedtime should be no later than 8 o'clock. Your child should be getting 8 hours of sleep each night.

TV watching should be limited and monitored so that your child only watches suitable programmes. No more than **an hour of screen time** per day. This includes all screens! (TV, laptop, phone, games...limit exposure to all these.) Too much screen time adversely affects development.

Help your child's gross motor development by encouraging outdoor play - running, skipping, ball play, swimming, etc.

Get your child interested in puzzle building, construction, creative activities, reading, etc. Establish a consistent routine within which your child can develop responsibility for certain tasks.

➤ **Discipline**

A child needs rules, boundaries and a set routine at home in order to feel secure. If your child is not used to this at home, it is difficult for him/her to conform to school rules and to respect authority at school.

Discipline problems **always** affect a child's academic progress. We rely on you to do your part at home to ensure your child is able to take full advantage of all that the school has to offer.

5. Contact Information

Head of Preparatory School	Melissa Venter	venterm@pepps.co.za
Grade 1A Teacher	Evelyn Lerutla	lerutlae@pepps.co.za
Grade 1B Teacher	Iris Kajakto	kajakotoi@pepps.co.za
Grade 2A Teacher	Sandra Phiri	phiris@pepps.co.za
Grade 2B Teacher	Christinah Jamare	jamarec@pepps.co.za
Grade 3A Teacher	Yolandi Craucamp	craucampy@pepps.co.za
Grade 3B Teacher	Elvy Nkhawana	nkhawanae@pepps.co.za
Sepedi Teacher	Lindiwe Makgoka	makgokal@pepps.co.za
PE Teacher	Kagiso Mokoena	mokoena@pepps.co.za

Please take an interest in what your child is doing at school. Keep in touch with activities, come to meetings and be part of the bigger PEPPS Family. Better progress is always made with parental support.

We endeavour to help support you as parents. We know it is a tough job sometimes! We try our best to work hand in hand with you to help your child.

Welcome to the PEPPS PREPARATORY School Family!