



Giffnock Primary School



STARTING SCHOOL: GIFFNOCK GUIDE FOR FAMILIES

Session: 2026 - 2027

Working hard having fun, that's the way we get things done

How you can help at home

Starting school is a wonderfully exciting time for all of our children and families. The next steps in your child's education are of great importance and we aim to support our children's confidence, self-esteem and positive attitude towards their education. We hope that the information herein will support the move into Primary 1 and beyond in simple, useful ways.

Talking and Listening

- ✓ Talk to your child about their experiences and themselves
- ✓ Invite questions and curiosity
- ✓ Encourage them to listen carefully and respond to instructions
- ✓ Encourage imagination, listen to and retell stories and rhymes together

Mathematics

- ✓ Play counting games through everyday life, for example when setting the table. Count the plates, cups, knives, forks and spoons
- ✓ Play card games, dominoes and board games with dice and counters
- ✓ Recite number rhymes
- ✓ Talk about the time: days of the week; today, tomorrow, yesterday
- ✓ Look at shapes in the kitchen or wider environment
- ✓ Encourage your child to recognise, sort and count coins
- ✓ Use vocabulary of maths; count backwards; **half** the apple; **share** sweets; **odd** and **even**; **more** or **less**; **taller** or **shorter**, **heavier** or **lighter**

Writing

- ✓ Provide a variety of materials for your child to practise drawing/ writing – chalk, crayons, pens, pencils etc.
- ✓ Make suggestions to help your child add more details to their drawings
- ✓ Encourage your child to role-play; pretend they are writing a letter or making a shopping list

Reading

- ✓ Read regularly to your child
- ✓ Take your child to the library
- ✓ Let your child choose their own reading materials
- ✓ Look at and read signs when you are out and about
- ✓ Listen to children's story audiobooks
- ✓ Encourage reading for fun – a wide range of genres
- ✓ Play word games like 'I spy'
- ✓ Say and sing rhymes and songs
- ✓ Set a good example by letting your child see you reading – talk and ask questions about the story, newspaper or website. Be a 'home that reads'

Useful Skills

Some suggestions on activities to help develop skills to aid learning, including fine motor skills:

- ✓ Using scissors to cut things out
- ✓ Drawing
- ✓ Colouring in
- ✓ Dot to dot books using numbers or letters
- ✓ Tracing
- ✓ Jigsaw Puzzles
- ✓ Setting the table
- ✓ Playing games – matching/ sorting
- ✓ Practise taking turns
- ✓ Play-dough
- ✓ Gluing and sticking
- ✓ Modelling and construction

Useful Information for Starting School

We have put together a list of helpful information to aid the beginning of your child's learning journey at Giffnock Primary:

Our Pre-loved 'Eco-Uniform' stall will be available at Induction Day 2

Our Uniform

Grey trousers or shorts, grey skirt, or pinafore, grey socks, white socks or grey tights

Red polo shirt

White school shirt or blouse

Grey jumper/ cardigan

School Tie

Black Shoes

School Bag and lunchbox as required

Blazer (optional)

For P.E

Dark shorts, leggings or trousers

House colour gym t-shirt x1

Trainers

First Day: Wednesday 12th August 2026

Staff Inservice days:

Monday 10th Aug and Tuesday 11th Aug

Wednesday 12th August:

Bring your Primary 1 child(ren) to school at **9.15am** at which time our teachers will welcome them into their class. Our teaching staff and members of the Senior Leadership Team will be on hand to support any first day nerves or issues (for adults and children alike!)

Children will be dismissed by their teachers at 3pm from their classroom exits at the front of the school, so that they can get used to the routines of school life from the outset.

Other Helpful Hints

Snack

We would encourage that a healthy snack should be put into your child's schoolbag.

Lunches

All Primary 1-5 children will receive a free school lunch. Our lunch hall cannot accommodate all of our children at once so a rota system of first and second lunch is used. However, Primary 1 children will always be first sitting whether having school lunch or bringing a packed lunch. See our website for school lunch menus.

PE Days

Your child's teacher will give you a note of gym days once timetables are set in the first few days of school. **Your child should come dressed in their gym clothes on P.E days.** This will include sweatshirt/ trousers/ leggings depending on the time of year.

Should you be late at the end of the day...

Your child will remain with the class teacher for a few minutes before being taken to the office to await your arrival. We would appreciate a phone call if you are delayed as we will then be able to reassure your child; please give as much notice as possible. If you are late in the morning please ensure your child reports to the school office.

Homework

Your child's teacher will inform you of the homework and handing in procedures for the class. Across the school an element of this is always on Google Classroom.

Website

Our school website has a wealth of information about school life, including a range of images, links and our newsletters. We would encourage all of our families to spend a little time investigating school life there and this may be helpful to share some of with your child too.

Partners in Reading: A Parent's Guide

Children need to have reading skills to enable them to access all areas of learning and life.

What do we teach?

At Giffnock, our teaching of Literacy takes a skills-based approach which incorporates Listening and Talking, Reading and Writing across the curriculum.

The first steps

When children arrive at school, they are involved in activities which assess their readiness for reading and prepare them for formal reading. These activities include:

- ✓ Looking at environmental print e.g. food wrappers, shop names, road signs etc.
- ✓ Functional print e.g. labelling around the classroom and school
- ✓ Concepts of print, e.g. left to right, how to hold a book, turning pages etc.

As children gain in confidence, the teacher starts to introduce sight vocabulary. These 'look and say' words are based on the most common reading words, for example, the, of, and, a, to, etc. The words associated with the early stages of their class reading texts are gradually introduced at this stage too.

Our children are involved in lots of reading activities to support this learning. They play word recognition games such as snap, pelmanism, lotto, writing and posting words, dominoes, etc.

The teaching of phonics is also introduced at this stage as the children start to learn the 'sounds' which make up words in the English Language. See the next page for information on phonics.

Partners in Reading: A Parent's Guide (continued)

What next?

When children are equipped with early reading skills and can confidently and independently read a range of texts we begin to encourage the children to 'think' about what they are reading and interact with and interrogate the text.

It is of course possible for our children to read the words in a text without understanding what they mean. To equip children for deeper understanding of texts, we teach Higher Order Reading Skills or Reading Comprehension Skills. These include skills such as: literal comprehension, character analysis, main idea, prediction, sequence, cause and effect, inference, skimming, scanning, awareness of genre, writer's ideas and craft and knowledge about language.

Reading lessons often take the form of three stages:

Before reading – What is this about?

- ✓ What is my learning intention – what skill am I learning and how will I know that I have been successful?
- ✓ Look at the picture/ title
- ✓ Skim the first few lines
- ✓ Think about what you know already
- ✓ Think of good questions

During reading – Stop... Check... Do I understand what I am reading?

- ✓ Read back, read on
- ✓ Check new words in a dictionary
- ✓ What do I know already?
- ✓ Look for clues in text/ pictures
- ✓ Discuss with a partner/ teacher the text, focusing on the taught skill

After reading – Activities alongside the text to develop the skill, for example:

- ✓ Literal comprehension – True, false, can't tell
- ✓ Main idea – Create a new front cover illustration and title
- ✓ Sequencing – use the interactive whiteboard to drag and drop the pictures and text into the correct order

Partners in Reading: A Parent's Guide (continued)

At Giffnock, teachers teach the skill of reading without reliance on a specific resource. The school has a broad range of texts which help motivate children and facilitate the teaching of both early reading skills and higher order skills. Reading text in a paper-based and electronic form is an important part of learning. They create a reading culture where children are taught to recognise words and sentences, search for meaning and interact with texts, conscious of the author's use of language. Children are read to and encouraged to read independently and authors are highlighted with an emphasis on particular skills and aspects of reading, but also reading for enjoyment. Reading aloud and reading to extract information are also taught.

- ✓ Encourage your child to read as much as possible and to take an interest in language, sounds, rhyme and print
- ✓ Read to your child and make regular visits to the library / book shop. Make language a shared experience in your family
- ✓ Reading homework may come in a variety of ways, not necessarily simply reading aloud. If your child is unsure of an answer or skill, make a note to the teacher who will explain the answer in class the next day
- ✓ Listen to your child read aloud, discuss the text, ask questions which encourage the child to interrogate the text and offer an opinion. Where you can, take opportunities to find out more about the subject from either other books or appropriate online sources
- ✓ Most importantly, have fun with children so as not to make reading a laborious task which makes the children switch off. Make reading relevant, engaging and meaningful



Reading Phonics

Why teach phonics?

The aim of our phonics teaching is to equip children with the core skills necessary for reading and writing. These are delivered through a structured and systematic approach.

What do we teach?

The children are taught the main 42 sounds of English – not just the 26 letter sounds e.g. 'a' 'b', 'c' but also 'ai', 'oy', 'sh' etc. With this knowledge they are then taken through stages of blending sounds to form words e.g. c-a-t = cat (3 sounds), sh-o-p = shop (3 sounds), ch-ai-r = chair (3 sounds).

The English Language is not always regular, with many words not following phonetic rules. These words are introduced as 'tricky words' and are learned by sight and reinforced through displays on the classroom Literacy Wall. Letter formation is introduced at the same time as the sound/symbol and will be practised many times throughout the year.

Our children's learning is multi-sensory to accommodate the diversity of children's learning styles and preferences.

The letter sound, symbol and movements are introduced collectively e.g. the first sound we teach is 's', so the children learn to listen for 's' in words, look for the symbol (letter 's') in words and to make a sign which represents 's'. By doing this, the relationship between sound and symbol/symbol and sound is made clear... reading and writing! The children learn to listen and look for the sound/symbol at the beginning, in the middle and at the end of words to focus on the whole word rather than just the initial letter. For example, if asked for a word with the sound 's' in it, your child might reply 'fast' or 'sun' or 'pass'.

Reading Phonics (continued)

How can you help?

- ✓ You can help your child with homework – phonics plays an especially important part in Primary 1 homework
- ✓ You can use the information given above to practise looking and listening for sounds
- ✓ Reading stories and sharing the text with your child will help to reinforce understanding of the bond between words and sounds/sounds and words
- ✓ Enjoy rhymes and song to promote an interest in words and sounds
- ✓ Let your children see you and your family as purposeful readers

Phonological Awareness

Phonological awareness is a person's understanding of the structure of sound. Children learn to read not just by acquiring the building blocks for words (phonics) but by also understanding the sounds and patterns that help us to 'fit' language together and make sense of it, including parts of words, the sounds at the beginning and end of words, rhyming words and syllables.

Phonological awareness is taught in conjunction with phonics, often in fun and simple ways such as through nursery and other rhyming songs and stories. Your reading at home with your child will support the development of these aspects of language development.

“Reading and Writing float on a sea of Talking and Listening”

[Reading strategies and tips: Parent Guide](#)

Mathematics and Numeracy

Mathematical skills help us to function in everyday life and contribute effectively to society. They are a vital aspect of being successful learners and a key element of the curriculum.

How do we teach and learn about it?

- ✓ Learning through purposeful play is a daily aspect of our Primary 1 learning
- ✓ Active learning is planned to provide opportunities, investigation, discussion and reflection e.g. sorting and matching the items in 'The Three Bears'' house
- ✓ Relevant contexts and experiences are used to make learning meaningful e.g. buying and selling items in a pretend shop
- ✓ Discussion, communication and explanation of thinking are encouraged e.g. how do you know that $2+1$ is the same as $1+2$?
- ✓ Mental agility is developed through daily practise e.g. displaying the answer to a mathematical problem on a number fan
- ✓ Links are made across the curriculum to show how mathematical skills are applied in a variety of contexts and in everyday life e.g. make a graph showing the number of different types of birds in the playground
- ✓ Technology is used where appropriate to support and enhance learning, including apps/tablets, coding devices and programmable toys, such as Beebots and Spheros



Mathematics and Numeracy (continued)

Suggestions for parents / carers

- ✓ Make maths important by showing your child how you use it each day
- ✓ Include your child in daily conversations using maths... about time, about money and about organisation of your day
- ✓ Look for and talk about maths in everyday life e.g. look at house numbers, birthdays, car registration plates, 2D and 3D shapes in the environment, etc.
- ✓ Play games with numbers e.g. snakes and ladders, puzzles, dominoes
- ✓ Count everything!: toys, household items, items of clothing...
- ✓ Help your child count by pointing to and moving the objects as you say each number out loud. This allows children to connect the physical objects to the 'abstract' of maths
- ✓ Count forwards and backwards from different starting places

The following two links will take you to useful parental guides for core numeracy support and for mental agility:

[Numeracy & Mathematics Parent Guide](#)

[Mental Maths and Number Talks Parent Guide](#)

These documents are available on our website, via the electronic links, through which you can access these documents.

Working hard having fun, that's the way we get things done



<https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/er/Giffnock/>

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