

PRESCHOOL 2 HANDBOOK

ACADEMIC YEAR 2023-2024



THE
ENGLISH
SCHOOL



MÄNTYTIE 14
00270 HELSINKI

1. STAFF & ADMINISTRATION

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2. INTRODUCTION TO THE ENGLISH SCHOOL

2.1 Our Vision

The English School provides an excellent learning environment rich with opportunity and innovation. We inspire a passion for learning and compassion for the world.

2.2 Our Values

At the English School we embrace the following values in our everyday work:

Integrity - We want to do the right thing. We respect others, ourselves and the environment. Our honesty and moral principles are manifested in our behaviour. We use our knowledge and understanding wisely.

Compassion - We understand others and care for them. We are kind and willing to help. We accept and respect diversity.

Excellence - We strive to achieve the best we can in all we do. We aim for excellence through intellectual curiosity and creativity. We want to fulfil our potential across academic, social and personal areas.

2.3 Our Mission

The English School is a pioneer in bilingual education providing education from preschool to high school. We are a close-knit community of students, teachers and families. At the heart of our work is mutual respect and joy of learning. We strive for excellence and foster a passion for learning and compassion for the world. Our students become open, respectful and responsible global citizens, ready for the world. Our work is based on respecting our school's tradition of Christian values.

3. PRACTICAL MATTERS

3.1 Punctuality

The children are expected to arrive at - and be picked up from - school on time. The preschool day begins sharply at 8.00 in the morning. This year we are starting with dropping off in the morning at the park called Rantapuisto. Please text your child's teacher if you are going to be late. If we change to having drop off at school and you are late, please call your child's teacher when you arrive at school and wait at the Mäntytie door and someone will fetch your child inside. If you are late when picking up your child, please call us.

3.2 Slippers

The children *required* to wear slippers in school as the floors are slippery and quite cold in the winter. The slippers also protect the children's feet in the at lunch time and are necessary in the event of needing to go outside suddenly.

3.3 Backpacks

The backpacks are important not just for slippers. The children also need to keep their dictionaries in them, rain gear, spare clothes and any informational letters for you parents.

3.4 Rain Gear

We do not have enough space for storing rain gear at school. We will stay indoors only if it storms. Please make sure your child is dressed appropriately for the weather when you drop your child at Rantapuisto.

3.5 Friends of The English School

The Friends of the English School is an organisation that plays an important role in the school community. Not the least of their responsibilities is to raise money for the school. Parents of Preschool 2 children are kindly asked to assist in this effort. While this is welcome at any time, we specifically ask that you get involved in the selling of the Vappu balloons in April. More details to follow.

4. CALENDAR FOR ACADEMIC YEAR 2023-2024

While we have taken care to be accurate with our scheduling, the dates are subject to change. In the event of this, we will inform as soon as possible.

August 2023

Wednesday 9th August	First day of school
Tuesday 22nd August (17:00-18:00)	Parents' evening at school

September

Monday 4th September	Class photo
September (TBD)	Parent-Teacher Conferences begin (online, links to be sent)

October

Monday 16 - Friday 20 October	Autumn Holiday
Thursday 31 October	Halloween Party

December

Tuesday 5 December	Independence Day Celebration (formal clothing)
Wednesday 6 December	Independence Day Holiday
Friday 15 December	Christmas Concert
Friday 22 December - Sun 7 January	Christmas Holiday

January 2024

Monday 8 January

Spring semester begins

Thursday 11 - Fri 19 January

First Grade testing

February

Wednesday 14 February

Valentine's Day Party

Monday 19 - Friday 23 February

Ski Holiday (Hiihtoloma)

March

Monday 18 - Friday 22 March

Multidisciplinary learning
week - Sustainability

April

Thursday 5 April

Easter party

Friday 29 March - Monday 1 April

Easter holiday

April - May (TBD)

Parent-teacher spring
conferences (online)

Tuesday 30 April

Vappu party

May

Monday 1 May

Vappu holiday

Thursday 9 May

Ascension Day (Helatorstai)

Friday 10 May

Extra Day Off

Wednesday 22 May

Preschool 2 visits First
Grade

May (TBD)

Spring concert & preschool
graduation

Last Week of Preschool

Trip to Korkeasaari

Friday 31st May

Last Day of Preschool

5. PEDAGOGICAL & EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

As stated in the national preschool curriculum, early childhood education and preschool learning as a part of it form a solid educational foundation upon which later learning will build.

Preschool 2 learning combines elements and methods used in Preschool 1 and on the other hand those used in the elementary program. This way Preschool 2 program forms a link between early childhood education and elementary school and creates a logical educational continuum. In regard to the content areas and main objectives, Preschool 2 corresponds to the Finnish preschool year (*esiopetus*.)

Specific objectives in Preschool 2 include the following:

1. Promote the child's personal growth in becoming an ethically responsible individual.
2. Promote the child's holistic development, learning abilities and possibilities.
3. Support and monitor the child's physical, psychological, cognitive, emotional and social development and prevent potential difficulties.
4. Reinforce the development of a healthy self-esteem by offering positive learning experiences and possibilities for interaction with others.
5. Encourage the child to learn and adopt new skills and abilities through which an understanding of the world and different fields of science will increase.

6. CURRICULUM & CONTENT AREAS

6.1 Language, Literacy and Communication

In Preschool 2 the children will further develop their English vocabulary, sentence formulation, reading comprehension and oral expression. The children will also learn basic grammatical structures and rules to make speaking more fluent and natural.

The children will further develop their pre-reading skills and phonetic awareness through the use of various games, flashcards, easy-reading books, pocket chart activities and dictionaries.

The children will be exposed to a variety of books, stories, novels, poems, rhymes and songs that will contribute to their English development.

The children will be exposed to various types of literature: fantasy, science, myth, history, drama and folktale.

The children will improve their letter and letter-sound recognition through various activities. They will also learn how to make letters out of different materials.

The children will further improve their oral expression skills through show & tell, puppet theatre and conversation groups.

6.2 Mathematics

The children use mathematical reasoning and observe various mathematical phenomena in their everyday life and within natural contexts.

The children will learn how to examine, classify, compare and measure objects found in nature as well as in the classroom.

The children will learn how to classify objects by color, shape, size, weight and volume. They will learn how to compare objects and note similarities and dissimilarities among them.

The children will work with numbers on a daily basis - counting, reciting the date, telling time - learn simple fractions and begin to understand how to read charts, graphs and tables.

The children will learn about patterns, sequences, mathematical symbols and basic addition and subtraction.

The children will develop an understanding of time and how time can be measured in seconds, minutes, hours, days, weeks, months and years.

The children will begin to recognize and count money as well as observe the mathematical skills required to do so.

The children practise writing numbers using pencils, pens, markers and chalk. They make numbers out of yarn, molding clay and sticks.

6.3 Awareness of Ethics and Religion

The children will develop an understanding of religion as a part of different cultures and societies.

The children are exposed to the names and characteristics of the main world religions.

The children will learn about some Christian holidays and hear stories that have a Christian message.

The children will understand that not all people share the same faith and that some people put less emphasis on religion in their life than others.

The children develop their sense of right and wrong and good and bad. They begin to define what these concepts mean in their own life.

The children learn how to respect individual differences and appreciate people with different ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

The children begin to recognize that people have different interests and beliefs and that what may be important to one person may be less important to another.

6.4 Environmental and Natural Science

The children will learn to understand and appreciate both natural and man-made environments and enjoy the various elements of both.

The children will become aware of the impact of their own actions on the environment, learn to protect and preserve the natural environment, enjoy its diversity and explore and observe different natural phenomena.

The children will develop an understanding of the world and natural phenomena through their own observations, experiments and explorations.

The children will work in small groups to find out about natural phenomena, complete scientific experiments and learn various ways of comparing, classifying, organizing and measuring objects.

The children are encouraged to use all of their senses while making observations which will guide their thinking and ability to form concepts. The children will develop critical thinking skills and ways of presenting and testing hypotheses.

The children will learn about various themes, such as the seasons, plant and animal kingdoms, weather, growth cycles, five senses, earth and space, living and nonliving organisms, states of matter, transportation, local environment, heat, light, energy, electricity, and historical and cultural events from around the world.

6.5 Physical and Motor Development

The children will further develop control over their body in various ways such as jumping, running, climbing and crawling.

The children will become more confident in trying out different movements with their body.

The children will continue to use gym equipment such as balls, hula hoops, mats, trampolines, ropes, hoops, bars and benches.

The children will further practice various ways of using a ball such as throwing, catching, kicking, bouncing and rolling.

The children will develop a sense of rhythm through various dances and movements.

The children will continue to play various games both indoors and outdoors, focusing on playing by the rules, following instructions and celebrating the spirit of teamwork and fair play.

The children will enjoy skating and sledding in the winter. Throughout the year, the children will participate in swimming lessons.

The children will develop accuracy of their fine motor skills by working with beads, buttons, sticks, straws, clay, cubes and building blocks.

6.6 Personal and Social Development

The children will further develop their self-confidence, take pride in their own accomplishments and enjoy their skills and abilities.

The children will be shown how to maintain a positive attitude toward learning and life in general, express appreciation for others and themselves, and treat others with kindness and respect.

The children will learn how to be responsible for the care and tidiness of their immediate environment.

The children will further improve their small and large group skills, social skills, independent working skills and concentration skills.

The children will learn how to manage tasks on their own, including getting dressed, cleaning up, completing worksheets, eating with a fork and knife, sharpening pencils and organizing classroom supplies.

The children will further develop their cooperation skills with their teachers and peers, their understanding of common rules and restrictions, and their ability to share.

The children will become more aware of their own strengths, weaknesses, abilities and skills.

The children will learn how to manage their sadness and disappointment and appreciate moments of joy and happiness in school and in life.

6.7 Health and Safety

The children will learn about healthy nutrition, eating habits and types of food that are needed for growing and staying energetic and healthy.

The children will learn the importance of a regular daily routine, rest and sleep. They will begin to understand how this routine has an impact on one's overall well-being, concentration and learning capacity.

The children are encouraged to run around and move during gym and outside play.

The children will learn how to play safely both inside and outside and become aware of risks that certain weather conditions may impose when moving outside.

The children will learn the proper way of dressing up when it is cold, wet, snowy, warm or windy.

The children will become familiar with the most common traffic signs and rules in order to move safely and properly in their local environment.

The children will learn about basic home appliances and electrical equipment and how they are operated safely.

6.8 Creative Development, Art and Culture

Music and arts and crafts are an integral part of the children's emotional, artistic and cognitive development; and they contribute to the children's creativity, imagination and self-expression.

The children are instructed and encouraged to explore their surroundings and use their own experiences and ideas as inspiration when expressing themselves through art, music and movement.

The children will draw and paint pictures in addition to a variety of other artwork. They will use clay, papier-mâché, fabric and felt to get a feel for different materials and discover how they can be used.

The children will be exposed to various types of music and instruments and learn how to use their different body parts to create music and sounds.

The children are encouraged to use drama as a way of expressing and communicating their feelings and thoughts to others. Special emphasis is placed on varying the tone of voice, stressing certain

words, and using gestures, facial expressions, posture and movement to communicate messages, feelings and thoughts.

The children will be exposed to various types of media such as magazines, newspapers, television and the Internet, and become aware of the different sources of information in the world.

The children's understanding of their own cultural heritage and cultural identity as well as the appreciation of cultural diversity will be supported.

7. LEARNING ENVIRONMENT IN PRESCHOOL 2

There are certain fundamental principles and characteristics that shape a child-centred learning environment:

1. The role of play is significant, and the children are encouraged to play different types of games, use their imagination, adopt various roles and discover something new about themselves and others through play.
2. The children's emotional, physiological, psychological and social needs are met through open communication, social activities, independent activities and challenging tasks.
3. The children feel safe and secure, cared for and assured that their teachers do their best to help, guide and support them.
4. The physical learning environment is aesthetically appealing, spacious, safe and inspiring. It offers plenty of activities and also supports the children's language development and phonetic awareness.
5. The children's own activity, participation and initiative are emphasized; the children's own views, ideas, conceptions and questions are used as the starting point for conversations, examinations and observations.

8. MONTHLY THEMES

August:	Preschool 1 Review / All About Me
September:	Local Environment
October:	Seasonal Changes
November:	Performing Arts
December:	Celebrations Around the World
January:	Countries and Continents, part 1
February:	Countries and Continents, part 2
March:	Earth, Environment & Ecology
April:	Space and the Universe
May:	Year in Review

9. Daily Schedule

8.00-8.35	Outdoor play
8.50 -09.50	Teaching and Learning activities
10.00-10.30	Lunch
10.30 - 10.50	Mini Lesson
10.50 -11.20	Indoor play time
11:20-11:45	Quiet work/story time
11.45-12.00	Dressing for pick up
12.00	Pick up

10. PARENT-TEACHER COLLABORATION

Cooperation between the parents and teachers is extensive and frequent. The parents are considered as partners who work with the teachers in order to give their child the best education possible.

Parent-Teacher conferences are held twice a year, once in the fall term and once in the spring. If the parents or teachers think there is a need for additional discussions, however, these can be arranged anytime.

Teachers communicate mainly by Wilma but in urgent matters by phone. Text messages are a better way to notify us of absences during the times we are with the children.

11. ABSENCE POLICY

Preschool follows the same holidays as the rest of the school. Regular attendance is also expected, and the parents are requested to inform the teachers if and when their child is unable to attend school.

All absences must be applied for through Wilma. Class teachers will automatically receive absence applications for three days or less. Longer ones go to the principal. The teachers will send home any work that is missed.

Family holidays and trips cannot always be timed according to the school holidays. A holiday planned for another time needs to be discussed with the teacher well in advance. The principal also has the right to decline the absence request if they think that granting it would have a negative impact on the child's learning and schoolwork.

Last but definitely not least, the preschool day begins at 8:00. Please be on time.

12. ASSESSMENT

The assessment in preschool is based on how well the general objectives and potential child-specific objectives are reached. Our assessment is an ongoing process; it happens during the interaction between the teacher and the child when the child is in action and as the child's learning progresses.

The teachers monitor the child's development and progress in all of our learning areas, and feedback is given to the parents and to the child, himself, regularly.

The teacher promotes and supports the child's ability and readiness for self-assessment, which helps the child build his self-image and perception of himself as a learner.

The assessment emphasizes the overall learning process and the child's progress, rather than the results or how well specific objectives have been reached.

In January every child undergoes an assessment of their English abilities. This is to ensure that they are ready for continuing in the bilingual educational atmosphere of our school. Prior to the assessment, it is the teachers' responsibility to alert parents if a child isn't progressing as much as necessary. If that is the case, then collaboration between school and home will be coordinated.

At the end of the school year, the children will receive a personal certificate and a progress report.

13. RULES OF THE ENGLISH SCHOOL

The goal of the English School is to offer an environment that supports a genuine growth of a student as a human being. The essential elements of this environment are a mutual respect that, instead of mere toleration means true valuing, belief, responsibility and good will towards others. A commitment to truth, justice, self-discipline, high work ethics, persistence and willingness to serve are values that correspond with the principles of the school and are in accordance with the development of a student's spiritual, moral, intellectual, aesthetic, social and physical assets. Parents are seen as the primary agents in the nurturing of a student. They have an essential role in the up-bringing of a student and without their support and co-operation the goals of the school can not be fully achieved. (Curriculum of the English School, 1.1 Values)

1 Be safe.

Positive learning outcomes are only possible in a safe environment. Following these guidelines and the school rules will help you and others feel and stay safe.

2 Be respectful.

Everyone is valuable. Treating others with respect and empathy creates a positive learning environment where kindness is expected and bullying is not accepted.

3 Be cooperative.

Listen to others and be an active group member and be attentive during school time. Follow staff members' instructions.

4 Be present and on time.

Attendance is required on all school days. Being in the right place at the right time promotes an atmosphere conducive to study.

5 Be prepared.

Being ready for class, with a mindset for studying and having all the equipment needed for the day ahead, maximises the learning potential.

6 Be industrious.

Putting in your best effort maximises the learning outcome.

7 Be responsible.

Treat personal and school property with care and keep the school tidy. Make sustainable and fair choices about resources, and value nature and the environment.

8 Be considerate.

Be thoughtful and maintain a peaceful atmosphere during the school day.

9 Be honest.

Speak the truth and act truthfully.

10 Be an ambassador.

Remember the values of The English School - integrity, compassion and excellence - and choose to act accordingly.

A student is expected to follow the rules of the school, to carry the responsibility of their own behavior and accept the consequences of their actions. If a student does not adhere to the expectations set for their behavior, he or she must face the consequences, which vary according to the infraction.

Disciplinary actions will follow the Basic Education Act, 36§. (Chapter 7, Compulsory education and the pupil's rights and duties)

