

# Goroka Grammar School

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**Day-Care, Kindergarten & Preparatory**

## **Parent Handbook**

*"Learning through care, play and discovery."*

Academic Year: 2025

Goroka Grammar School, Eastern Highlands Province

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# Welcome from the Director of Operations

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Welcome to the Day-Care and Kindergarten Program at Goroka Grammar School. We are delighted to begin this early learning journey with you and your child. These formative years are a time of tremendous growth, wonder, and curiosity, and it is our goal to nurture each child's unique potential in a safe, caring, and joyful environment.

Our early learning philosophy is centred on:

- **Care and connection**, where every child feels seen, valued, and secure.
- **Exploration through play**, where hands-on discovery helps build language, social, and physical skills.
- **Academic excellence**, where foundational literacy, numeracy, and problem-solving skills are cultivated through age-appropriate and intentional learning experiences.
- **Positive routines**, which give children a sense of structure and confidence.
- **Collaboration with families**, because we believe learning is most powerful when school and home work together.

We view your child not only as a learner but as a whole person. Through intentional guidance, open communication, and age-appropriate activities, we aim to provide a strong foundation for lifelong learning.

Thank you for entrusting us with your little one. We are excited to build memories, routines, and relationships that will help shape their bright future.

Warm regards,

**Sinead Kelly**

Director of Operations

# Learning Approach & Curriculum

Our early learning program follows a play-based, inquiry-driven approach aligned with national learning outcomes. Key focus areas include: -

- **Early literacy and phonics:** letter recognition, name writing, rhyming, and storytelling.  
**Numeracy foundations:** counting, patterns, shape sorting, and basic problem-solving.
- **Creative expression:** music, art, drama, and hands-on exploration.
- **Social-emotional learning:** turn-taking, cooperation, identifying emotions, and self-regulation.

We use a mix of group time, structured learning, exploratory play, and outdoor movement to nurture well-rounded development.

## Daily Routine

**Drop-off Time:** From 8:00 AM onwards

**Pick-up Time:** Between 1:00 PM – 2:00 PM

Please ensure your child is brought and collected on time. If someone other than a parent is picking up your child, written notification must be provided. Below is a suggested daily schedule to help you understand your child's school day:

**8:00 – 8:30 AM** – Arrival and free indoor play

**8:30 – 9:00 AM** – Circle time: greetings, weather, calendar, and group sharing

**9:00 – 9:45 AM** – Phonics and early literacy session (letter sounds, rhymes, name writing)

**9:45 – 10:15 AM** – Morning tea break and supervised outdoor play

**10:15 – 11:00 AM** – Numeracy and cognitive activities (counting, puzzles, sorting, patterns)

**11:00 – 11:30 AM** – Creative arts, music, or themed activity (painting, singing, cutting)

**11:30 – 12:00 PM** – Story time, quiet reading, or puppet play

**12:00 – 12:30 PM** – Lunch

**12:30 – 1:00 PM** – Rest time, calming activity, or pack-up for dismissal

This schedule is flexible and may vary slightly depending on the age group or special activities planned. Play is integrated throughout the day as a key part of our learning approach.

# What to Bring Daily

To help your child feel comfortable, prepared, and ready to participate, please ensure they bring the following items each day:

- **Lunch and snacks:** A healthy lunch and morning snack packed in a labelled container. While there are no allergy restrictions, we discourage junk food such as lollies and chips. Soft drinks are not allowed.
- **Lunch money (optional):** If your child is using the school tuckshop, please send lunch money in a sealed, labelled envelope.
- **Water bottle:** Any type is acceptable, but it must be clearly labelled. No soft drinks permitted.
- **Spare clothes:** One to two full sets of spare clothing, including socks and underwear, in case of accidents or messes.
- **Sun hat:** For outdoor play and protection. This should remain in the school bag daily.
- **Hand sanitiser or wipes:** Each child should carry a small hand sanitiser or packet of wipes in their bag.
- **Sleep mat or blanket:** Required at the start of the term. These will be stored at school and sent home periodically for washing.
- **Pillows or plush toys (optional):** These are allowed for rest time but must be clearly labelled.
- **Comfort items:** If your child has a favourite toy or soother, they may bring it daily for use during quiet or rest periods.
- **Stationery/supplies:** Each child should bring a complete stationery pack including:
  - Pencils
  - Coloured pencils
  - Crayons
  - Glue stick
  - Pencil case
  - Eraser
  - Sharpener
  - Small folder or book pack

All stationery should be clearly labelled and packed in a way your child can manage independently (e.g., in a zippered pencil case or labelled container).

**Weather gear:** Please pack a school sweater or tracksuit during colder months. A lightweight raincoat may also be included during wet season.

All items must be **clearly labelled** to avoid loss or confusion. Teachers may return items that are not suitable or repeatedly cause issues in the classroom.

## Banned Items

To ensure a safe and healthy learning environment, the following items are **not permitted** in Day-Care and Kindergarten:

- Soft drinks or energy drinks
- Lollies, chewing gum, and excessive sugary snacks
- Toys that resemble weapons
- Expensive electronics or gadgets (e.g., tablets, phones)
- Sharp or dangerous objects

Teachers may confiscate banned items for parent collection. Please help us reinforce these expectations.

## Attendance & Absences

- If your child is sick, please inform their teacher or the school administration.
- Children returning after illness must provide a **medical certificate or clearance**.
- Prolonged absences should be communicated in advance.

## Toileting & Hygiene

Children are encouraged to be toilet trained before enrolment. However, we understand that many children are still learning, and accidents may occur.

- If your child is not fully toilet trained, please send them to school with diapers and baby wipes each day.
- Staff assist with wiping and changing when needed, always maintaining dignity and care.
- When your child's supply of diapers or wipes is running low, you will be notified via the weekly journal.

- All children should carry a small bottle of hand sanitiser or a pack of wipes in their school bag for general hygiene.
- Spare clothes should be packed daily.
- Soiled clothing will be bagged and sent home.

Hygiene practices are taught and reinforced daily, including handwashing and toilet hygiene.

## Behaviour & Discipline

Our classrooms are safe, caring spaces where we teach and model respectful behaviours that promote kindness, cooperation, and independence. We understand that young children are still developing emotional regulation and social awareness, and our approach is both proactive and restorative.

- **Expected Behaviours:** - Gentle hands - Kind words - Listening ears
- **Positive Reinforcement:** - Praise and encouragement - Stickers or small rewards
- **Behaviour Guidance Strategies:** - Redirection - Quiet time (Calm Corner) - Visual cues

If a behavioural concern persists or escalates, parents will be contacted to discuss support strategies collaboratively. All significant incidents will be communicated via **written note**, and if needed, followed by a conversation with the teacher or Director.

## Health & Safety

- Sick children must stay home to protect the wellbeing of all.
- Daily wellness checks are conducted. Each morning, students' temperatures will be taken on arrival. Any child found with a high temperature (above 37.5°C), a persistent cough, or a runny nose will be closely monitored.
- Parents will be contacted immediately, and children displaying these symptoms will be excluded from classes and cared for in a supervised area until they are picked up.
- These steps are in place to prevent the spread of illness and ensure the health and safety of all children and staff.
- We monitor for symptoms of illness, allergies, and head lice.
- All first aid is administered by trained staff.
- Emergency contacts must be kept up to date.

## Communication with Parents

- A **weekly journal** will be sent home every Friday with updates on your child's activities, learning experiences, and any areas where support may be needed.
- Reminders, newsletters, and other updates may also be sent via WhatsApp, written notes in your child's bag, or physical flyers.
- We encourage open dialogue—parents may request meetings with the teacher or Director at any time. Likewise, the school may request a parent meeting to discuss developmental progress, behavioural observations, or any concerns.
- If there is an accident, emotional incident, or toileting issue during the day, a written note will be sent home or parents may be contacted directly depending on the nature of the incident.

We believe strong communication between home and school builds trust and consistency and ultimately supports the emotional and academic wellbeing of your child.

## Photo & Media Consent

Parents will be asked to sign a media release form during enrolment. Children may be included in:

Class group photos  
School newsletters  
School-run social media (with consent)

## Uniform & Personal Items

- A school uniform is required for all children and should be worn daily. This includes a school-branded shirt, shorts or skirt, and comfortable, closed shoes. In colder months, children should wear the official school sweater or tracksuit.
- All uniform items must be clearly labelled with your child's full name.
- Children may bring **personal toys** for comfort or play, but they must be appropriate for a school setting (no toy weapons or loud electronic devices) and labelled. The school will not be held responsible for any lost or broken items.
- Jewellery is discouraged, except for small stud earrings or medical bracelets.
- Children should come to school with their hair neatly groomed, and long hair tied back to prevent lice or distractions during learning.



- Please ensure your child is dressed in clothes they can manage independently during toileting and play.
- All clothing, lunch boxes, bottles, and personal items **must be clearly labelled**.

## Birthday Celebrations

We love celebrating your child's special day in class! If you would like to send a treat for your child's birthday, please:

- Notify the teacher at least two days in advance.
- Send only **store-bought cupcakes or cake** (no candles or cutting needed).
- Avoid lollies, soft drinks, or items containing nuts.
- Consider including a fruit platter or non-food treat (e.g., party hats or stickers).

We encourage simple, joyful celebrations that do not disrupt class routines.

## Parent Involvement & Visits

We welcome parent engagement and believe your involvement enhances your child's learning. Parents may be invited to:

- Attend special events (e.g., Open Day, Cultural Week, Concerts)
- Participate in classroom activities (reading time, helper mornings)
- Share cultural traditions or professional skills
- Schedule one-on-one meetings with the Teacher, Teacher in Charge, Deputy Principal, Principal or Directors

Unscheduled visits during class time are discouraged, but meetings can be arranged upon request. All visitors must sign in at the school office for safety purposes.

## Enrolment, Withdrawal & Refund Policy

- If you wish to withdraw your child, please provide **3 weeks written notice**.
- Refunds are not issued for missed school days due to illness or casual absence.
- All withdrawal or refund matters should be addressed through the Bursars Office.

Thank you for entrusting us with your child's early learning journey. We are honoured to work with you and look forward to a year filled with learning, laughter, and growth!