

**THE ENGLISH SCHOOL, HELSINKI  
PRESCHOOL 2 HANDBOOK  
ACADEMIC YEAR 2019-2020**



**PRESCHOOL 2  
MÄNTYTIE 14  
00270 HELSINKI**

# 1. STAFF & ADMINISTRATION

## Teachers

Karolina Witter  
karolina.witter@engs.fi  
050 337 1771

Andrea Kaufmann Saarinen  
andrea.kaufmann-saarinen@engs.fi  
045 891 63 16

## Director

Petri Vuorinen  
petri.vuorinen@engs.fi  
010 321 7920

## Principal

Päivi Lucander  
paivi.lucander@engs.fi  
040 481 8008

## Administrative Director

Minna Akkanen  
minna.akkanen@engs.fi  
050 303 0031

## Secretary

Maija Akkanen  
english.school@engs.fi  
010 321 7920

## 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 behavior. 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 fulfill 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 - preschool on time. The door will be opened at 8.00 sharp and closed as soon as all of the children in line have come inside. If you arrive late, please use the preschool door and press the buzzer so that you can be let in. If you are late when picking up your child, please call us. It may be that you then need to come and get your child from school instead of the park.

### **3.2 Slippers**

The children need 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 lunchroom and are necessary in the event of needing to go outside suddenly. The two groups have boxes for their slippers, so they can be kept at school all year long.

### **3.3 Backpacks**

The children also need to have a backpack where they can keep their dictionaries, 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 is stormy or rains too heavily. If there is only a light drizzle, we will go outside as usual. Please make sure your child is dressed appropriately for the weather.

### **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 2019-2020

*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 you as soon as possible.*

##### August 2019

Thursday 8 August	First day of school
Tuesday 20 August (17:00-18:00)	Parents' evening
Friday 27 August	Class Photo day

##### October

Monday 14 October - Friday 18 October	Autumn Holiday
Monday 28 October - Friday 8 November	Parent-Teacher Conferences
Thursday 31 October	Halloween Party

##### November

Friday 8 November	Father's Day Coffee
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##### December

Thursday 5 December	Independence Day Celebration (formal clothing)
Wednesday 18 December	Christmas Concert for the parents 8.30-9.00 (Normal pickup time at 12.00 is available.)
Friday 20 December - Monday 6 January	Christmas Holiday

## **January 2020**

Tuesday 7 January

Spring semester begins

## **February**

Friday 14 February

Valentine's Day Party

Monday 17 - Friday 21 February

Ski Holiday

## **March**

Monday 9 - Friday 20 March

Parent-teacher spring  
conferences

Monday 23 - Friday 27 March

Multidisciplinary learning  
week

## **April**

Thursday 9 April

Easter party

Friday 10 - Monday 13 April

Easter holiday

Thursday 30 April

May Day party

## **May**

Friday 1 May

Vappu Holiday

Tuesday 19 May

Spring concert & preschool  
graduation (8:30-10:00)

Thursday 21 May

Ascension Thursday (No  
school!)

Friday 29 May

Last day of preschool

Please note, we try to organize trips for the children every month. Information about their exact dates will be given out as they are booked.

## 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:	All about Me
September:	Seasonal Changes
October:	The Built Environment
November:	Performing Arts
December:	Celebrations around the World
January:	Water
February:	Friendship
March:	Our Group Animal
April:	The Natural Environment
May:	The Circus

## 9. Daily Schedule

8:00-8:30	Morning circle
8:30-9:30	Focused learning activities
9:30-10:00	Free play time
10:00-10:45	Lunch
10:45-11:00	Preschool activities
11:00-11:15	Story time
11:15-12:00	Outside play time

## **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.

If the children are absent more than a couple of days, the teachers may ask the parents to do some makeup work at home. This usually means revising dictionary words and sentences, sometimes doing worksheets.

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. If the absence from school lasts three days or fewer, the teacher can grant the request. If the absence is more than three days, the principal needs to approve it. The principal also has the right to decline the absence request if he thinks that granting it would have a negative impact on the child's learning and schoolwork.

If the children belong to an ethnic or cultural minority group and do not share the same religious holidays and celebrations as those in the Christian faith, they can be excused from those celebrations (e.g. Christmas, Easter, Halloween).

## 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 winter 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)

These rules have been set to promote the values of the curriculum.

1. Adhere to the school work days. Your presence is required on all school days (including Sports Day, class trips and other special days).
2. After each absence it is the duty of the student to contact each teacher to negotiate how missed work and tests are to be carried out.
3. Be in class on time. Be polite and tell the reason why you are late to the teacher.
4. Give others a chance to work in peace. Move quietly inside the school, do not disturb the classes in session.
5. During a school day you will only need equipment for studying. Mobile phones are switched to silent or shut down and out of sight for the whole day. Avoid bringing money to school if it is not needed.
6. The school is a student's place of work, where appropriate dress is expected. All students must have indoor shoes. For school celebrations and other festive occasions students must dress accordingly.
7. Enter the school yard at the earliest 15 minutes before the first lesson.
8. Recesses are spent in the school yard. Skate boards, other such

equipment and all electronic gadgets are not to be used during the school day.

9. Leaving the school yard during a school day is only allowed with permission from the class teacher or principal.
10. After the school day is over you are to leave the premises immediately. Those attending afternoon care will be picked up at an agreed spot.
11. Follow directions and orders given by all adults at the school.
12. Bullying is not accepted in any form.
13. Be polite and greet when you meet someone.
14. All students must take good care of school property, equipment and also maintain the building and the cleanliness of the school yard.

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)