



Easy Guide for Parents

PLAYGROUP



Dear Parents,

We would like to welcome you and your family to Al-Rayan International School, and to introduce you to the first stage of school life, known as the Early Years Foundation Stage-EYFS. This includes mainly the Playgroup year (12 to 28 months).

Children are born ready, able and eager to learn. They actively reach out to interact with other people, and in the world around them. Development is not an automatic process, however, it depends on each unique child having opportunities to interact in positive relationships and enabling environments.

Our aim throughout the Foundation Stage is to extend a child's knowledge of themselves and the world they live in by providing a supportive, caring environment. The curriculum is planned to allow each unique child to build up maximum levels of self-confidence and self-motivation, whilst playing and learning harmoniously with others.

Starting school marks a new and exciting stage of life for both children and their parents. This handbook has been put together by management to answer some of the questions that you may have. However, if there is anything else that you would like to know, please do not hesitate to contact the school.

Starting School & Visits

Parents are given the opportunity to pay informal visits to the school prior to bringing their children to the Foundation stage. We regard this as a social visit where we can meet you and your child, talk about their likes and dislikes, and show them around the school. It is also a good time to meet the team of foundation stage staff and have a look at our lovely gallery. It is also an opportunity for you to ask questions and for us to clarify anything that is not clear. We find that this time is valuable for everybody, and the children particularly remember such visits several months or even years later! We will arrange a time and date that is convenient for you.

Starting school life can be quite exhausting for some young children with new friends to make, a new environment to explore and a new structure to the day. To make the transition easier children will have a staggered start, meaning all children will not start on the same day or time. We will speak to each parent to get a better picture of their child's needs and this information will be used to group children for their start at ARIS. The time and date for your child's start will be communicated to you well in advance.



Foundation Stage Times

At the Playgroup, class begins at 8:00 am and ends at 3:20 pm. Parents can pick up their children earlier. Please contact teachers and the administration to inform them.

Please keep in mind that if you are late in the morning your child will miss an important part of the school day. It is also important that you collect your child on time every day. It can be very upsetting for them to be the only one left after all of their friends have gone home.

Children must be accompanied to their entrance in the mornings and should be handed over to the class teacher or support staff, and collected, by a responsible adult with the required identification.

It is school policy not to allow a Foundation stage child to be collected by a school age older brother or sister. If this is unavoidable you will need to inform us in writing. If another adult is collecting your child from school please let the administration know beforehand.

Food and Nutrition

Children at the foundation stage are entitled to snack (fruit time) and lunchtime breaks. This is to enable them have a balanced outdoor provision as enshrined in their curriculum. Lunchtime for Playgroup is from 11:30am to 12:00pm.

Lunchtime is an important part of the day when the children come together in their groups, allowing them to learn more about friendship and social gathering. The skills of self-feeding and care will also be an important focus. Good manners are a valued part of this time together.

At lunchtime we encourage all children to have healthy meals and packed lunches. In view of this we would entreat parents to avoid giving their children sweets, chocolates, crisps, soda, fizzy drinks or foods with additives and artificial coloring. Children have access to water for drinking at all times throughout the day although you can decide to provide them with water bottles with water from home. All left over food is sent back to give parent feedback on what your child has eaten. A refrigerator and a microwave are on the premises to ensure safe food handling. Please notify the school staff of any needed preparation.

We also have a school menu designed by our caterer who serves hot meals usually at this time. If you would like more information about our monthly Menus please ask Administration.

We promote independence therefore we advise that children should be equipped with school bags and food and beverage containers that are easy for them to handle without help. Those items need to be clearly labeled. Glass containers are not allowed. Nuts and nuts products are strictly forbidden.

Clothing

Children at Playgroup come to school in mufti (personal attire), older children have prescribed uniforms.

Medication

The administering of medicine to a child outside the doctor's office or a health institution is a parental responsibility and should not be delegated to school personnel except under unusual circumstances. Only when necessary will the school allow the administration of medication on the school premises.

Foundation Stage Activities

Throughout the Foundation stage children are expected to follow the statutory curriculum prescribed by the Department for Education and Skills. These focus on the following areas:

The Prime Areas:

1. Personal, Social and Emotional Development

This area underpins all the children's learning and needs to be secure for maximum learning to take place in the remaining seven areas. Children are encouraged to co-operate with others working in groups whilst also building their own independence and self-confidence. Children are taught how to play and work harmoniously together.

2. Communication and language

Activities are planned where children can communicate in a variety of situations and languages (English, Arabic, French and Hindi), they are taught rules for good speaking and listening e.g. using role-play and puppets, in addition to developing their vocabulary.

3. Physical development

Children have access to our 'indoor and outdoor' classrooms where we have a range of apparatus and wheeled vehicles. They also take part in games, gymnastics and dance-based activities.



The Specific Areas:

1. Literacy

Reading and writing is taught by providing opportunities for children to use and explore words in a variety of contexts. At this stage teachers take children through the basic rudiments of reading and writing. Phonics lessons are also given on a daily basis.

2. Mathematics

Using games, practical activities, songs and discussion children are taught about number, measurement, shape and space. Children are provided with opportunities to sort and match objects and to record their findings at a level appropriate to them.

3. Understanding the world

Activities are planned to explore and find out about the environment we live in and people and places that bear significance on the children's lives. Children are given opportunities to plan, predict, experiment and question a variety of topics in a variety of situations. Our classrooms have an interactive whiteboard to support the development of children's ICT skills.

4. Expressive Art and Design

The children are involved in a variety of creative activities, such as art, cooking, design and technology, music and movement all planned to assist in developing the children's ability to explore and share their thoughts, ideas and feelings.



Specials:

1. Arabic/French

The study of Arabic/French at the Foundation stage is what also makes us a strong school as far as the learning of languages is concerned. Children are expected to learn Arabic right from playgroup and this runs through the whole school. The curriculum is delivered by competent, experienced and dedicated teachers who use various engaging strategies to get pupils engrossed in the language.

2. Hindi

The teaching and learning of Hindi starts at Reception. At this stage, our children are taught the very rudimentary bits of the language mostly through interactive and online activities including songs, rhymes etc.



EYFS ongoing Assessment

On-going **Formative Assessment** is at the heart of effective early years practice.

At ARIS, Practitioners will:

- Observe children as they act and interact in their play, everyday activities and planned activities, and learn from parents about what the child does at home (**observation**).
- Identify where the child may be in their own developmental pathway in all 7 areas (**assessment**).
- Consider ways to support the child to strengthen and deepen their current learning and development. Practitioners will develop many different approaches in response to the children with whom they work (**planning**).
- Identify possible areas in which to challenge and extend the child's current learning and development (**Individual Educational Plan**). This way of teaching is particularly appropriate to support learning in early years' settings.

Early Years Foundation Stage Profile:

Our children are assessed at the end of the Foundation year using the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (based on Early Learning Goals) which gives us detailed areas of what we should look out for in a child who is ready to start Year 1. This formal **Summative Assessment** focuses on all the areas of learning as detailed above.

Teachers

Our Teachers are the school's single most valuable and important asset. The School does its utmost to make ARIS a happy and contented place of work. All staff is held in high esteem and with equal respect. Personal and professional development is encouraged. Teamwork is our hallmark.

Health and Safety

The problem of communicable disease is prevalent in every group and ARIS is no exception. Parents must make other arrangements for the care of their children when they show symptoms of any deviation from normal health. If a child becomes ill at ARIS the Coordinator or Teacher will immediately notify the parents. The child will be kept separated from the group until taken home.

Children should not be sent to school with any of the following conditions:

- Fever of 100 degrees under arm (auxiliary) or higher, and if they also have one or more of the following: diarrhea, earache, shows signs of irritability or confusion, sore throat, rash.
- Vomiting on two or more occasions within the past 24 hours.
- Diarrhea – three or more watery stools in a 24-hour period.
- Draining rash or undiagnosed rash lasting over a 24-hour period.
- Eye discharge or pink eye. Children can return to school after medical diagnosis to rule out bacterial or viral infection or after 24 hours on antibiotic treatment.
- Fatigue that prevents participation in regular activities.
- Open oozing sores and scabs, unless properly covered and 24 hours on antibiotic treatment.
- Head lice – until treatment is effective and a follow-up check has been made by school personnel.

In case of minor injury or accident, the staff will administer basic first aid. All injuries or illnesses not requiring immediate parental notification will be documented and reported to parents when the child is picked up at the end of the day.

In case of medical injury or illness requiring immediate professional care (emergency), the staff will call The West African Rescue Association (**WARA**), **in which the child had already registered**, giving location and nature of emergency. As appropriate, the staff will administer basic first aid measures. Parents will be notified immediately. If parents are unavailable, those individuals designated as emergency phone contacts will be notified.

All children must have an emergency medical release form on file in case of such an emergency.

Attendance at School

Upon acceptance of enrollment, **ARIS** requires that the full application form be completed for our files (medical consent forms, allergy information, immunization records, emergency phone numbers, etc.). ***These forms must be on file before the child can be left at Al-Rayyan International School.***

Finally...

We like to view ourselves as partners with parents in the development and education of their children. Throughout the year there are many opportunities for parents to come and work alongside the staff and children at the Foundation stage. We also have training sessions and open days throughout the academic year for parents to have a better understanding of the entire Foundation stage including the curriculum. If you have any particular problems, however small, please come and talk to us. We cannot guarantee a solution, but we may have some useful ideas. If there are changes of circumstance at home please let us know as these often affect a young child's learning or behaviour.

Help us to help your child to benefit from their early years at school, and, may we take this opportunity to welcome you once again.