



# The Independence Initiative Guidelines

## RATIONAL

At Kinross PS, we aim to provide opportunities and learning experiences that promote and develop independence and good decision-making in our students. The ability to be independent is something that not everyone possesses. You need to be independent in order to survive in the world. Learning to support yourself is fundamental for any success you ever hope to achieve.

At the end of the day, you only have yourself to fall back on, so it is exceedingly important to be able to handle things on your own. It is all about being secure with who you are and what you believe in. It is extremely empowering knowing that you are in control of your own life and your own choices.

### **For Parents: The Importance of Teaching a Child to Become Independent**

As parents, we want nothing but the best for our children. Hence, we are so inclined in attending to their needs. It is a way we express our love. However, to give children the opportunity to become successful in life, we also have to teach them independence. Here are the reasons why children ought to learn independence.

**It enables children to gain first-hand knowledge.** When children gain the chance to do things on their own, they are most likely to learn things efficiently. It is because they got to learn through trial and error. It teaches children self-discipline. Do not worry much, if they got to commit mistakes and face the consequences. Through these instances, children learn that there are consequences accounted to every action. Hence, they tend to think first next time they want to do something in mind. Just let them learn from their mistakes.

**It enhances children's self-esteem.** Do you remember the feeling you had last time you accomplished something on your own? Children also feel the same self-worth whenever they accomplish things by themselves. They become more confident in facing challenges, which is important in preparing them for real life trials.

**It prepares children to handle failure and stress.** Helping children to handle stress is easy, if they have the chance to become independent. Let them feel bad when they failed in accomplishing something. Eventually, they will learn to take negative feelings lightly. Just be there to provide advice or support, whenever they need to vent out stress.

**It gives the opportunity to choose what will make them happy.** Children need to practice to make their own choices. To develop their emotional maturity, they have to learn how to decide on their own. Adults can give them a set of choices. From these choices, children will have the freedom to pick one. Thus, they also learn that in life they cannot have everything. They only have the freedom to make choices.

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## **BACKGROUND**

The COVID-19 pandemic, also known as the Coronavirus Pandemic, is an ongoing pandemic of Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2).<sup>[1]</sup> The outbreak was first identified in Wuhan, China, in December 2019. The World Health Organization declared the outbreak a Public Health Emergency of International Concern on 30 January, and a pandemic on 11 March.

Authorities worldwide have responded by implementing travel restrictions, lockdowns, workplace hazard controls, and facility closures. The pandemic has caused global social and economic disruption, including the largest global recession since the Great Depression. It has led to the postponement or cancellation of sporting, religious, political, and cultural events, widespread supply shortages exacerbated by panic buying, and decreased emissions of pollutants and greenhouse gases. Schools, universities, and colleges have been closed either on a nationwide or local basis in 177 countries, affecting approximately 98.6 percent of the world's student population.

In Western Australia, guidelines were developed for schools in consultation with the WA Government. One of the restrictions was to have no parents/guardians on the school grounds for a six-week period. Students were dropped to the gates by parents and they were all required to display independence by; entering the school alone under the supervision of staff, unpacking their own bags and belongings and preparing for the school day quickly and independently by 8.40am.

A school survey was carried out to collect data from parents. 86% supported dropping off and picking up from the gates, 5% had no strong feeling either way and 9% were against it.

Staff and parents noticed the following benefits:

- Less anxiety at drop off time-easier separation from parents
- More independence displayed in general by students
- A quicker and more prompt start to the day
- Parents having more time in the morning and afternoons
- Parents getting to work earlier and on time
- Less interruptions to teachers at the commencement of the day
- Improved attendance

### **The Independence Initiative**

Due to the positive benefits observed by our school community, we have developed the 'Independence Initiative'.

The staff of Kinross PS have developed some guidelines which we believe will continue promoting independence in our students, but still allow for community connection which we feel is very important to the culture at Kinross PS. We are keen to build on the success we have experienced in the last few weeks. The children are arriving more settled and ready to learn and we are starting the day earlier and on time.

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## **Guidelines to be Encouraged**

### **Kindy and Pre-Primary**

**Guideline 1:** Parents to come into classrooms for the first 6 weeks in Term One to help settle the students and get to know the teachers

**Guideline 2:** After the initial 6 weeks, parents of students in K/PP drop and pick up students from the door from Monday to Thursday and Friday afternoons (arriving between 8.30-8.40am)

**Guideline 3:** Parents are not to unpack/pack the students' bags and belongings for them at the beginning and end of the day-this is a job for the child

**Guideline 4:** Parents are welcome on site on Fridays to either attend assemblies on assembly days or visit classrooms from 8.30-8.40am to greet the teacher and spend time in class with child.

*Parents are also encouraged to roster on as parent help in order to spend time with their child within the classroom. Parents will be also invited on site for special days eg Father's Day, Mother's Day*

### **Years 1-6**

*All parents of students in **Years 1-3** are able to drop children off/enter classrooms for the **first week of Term One each year.** **Year 4-6** parents may drop off/enter classrooms on **the first day of school each year** to drop off supplies and meet the new classroom teacher (Day 1, Term 1)*

*Additionally, parents of children in Year One, can drop off and pick up from the door if they wish throughout the year.*

*Parents will also be invited on site for special days and occasions ( eg family picnics, sporting events)*

**Guideline 1:** Parents of students in Years 1-6 drop and pick up students from the gates where possible each day from Monday to Friday if no purpose to be on school site (eg visiting canteen or uniform shop, organised parent meeting) Arrive between 8.20-8.30am, entering classes at 8.30am.

**Guideline 2:** Parents welcome on site on Friday mornings to either attend assemblies on assembly days or drop child to the classroom door.

**Guideline 3:** Parents are not to unpack/pack the students' bags and belongings for them at the beginning and end of the day-this is a job for the child

### **Communication and Parent Meetings**

At Kinross PS we have an open-door policy and encourage regular communication between parents and staff. Parents are encouraged to communicate to teachers by email or note to organise a meeting by appointment if they wish to discuss their child's progress or to inform the class teacher of any concerns or issues arising that the teacher needs to be aware of. Teachers are always willing to meet with you at an arranged time. If it is a simple message (eg Ben is being picked up by Nanna today, Beth had a poor sleep last night) an email or note will suffice. Parents are requested to refrain from meeting teachers before school, unless organised, as this can cause disruption to the beginning of the school day.

Thank you for your support of the 'Independence Initiative'.

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