Family Information Handbook 2027

We are delighted to welcome you to the Kiewa Valley Kindergarten community and look forward to a positive and rewarding year for you and your child.

At Kiewa Valley Kindergarten, we value the contributions of our families and community and are committed to working in partnership to provide a high-quality, nurturing, and engaging learning environment.

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Kiewa Valley Primary School Kindergarten Philosophy

At Kiewa Valley Kindergarten, we believe children are capable, curious and creative learners who bring their own knowledge, ideas and life experiences into our program. We value each child as an individual and recognise that children learn best through play, relationships, exploration and meaningful experiences.

We are committed to providing a play-based learning environment where children feel safe, supported and connected. We believe uninterrupted play allows children to investigate, imagine, create, problem-solve and develop confidence in their own abilities. Through inquiry and following children's interests, educators intentionally scaffold learning to extend thinking, encourage independence and foster a lifelong love of learning.

We value respectful, caring and genuine relationships as the foundation for children's wellbeing and learning. We strive to create a welcoming environment where children and families experience a strong sense of belonging and connection. We recognise families as children's first and most important teachers and value collaborative partnerships built on trust, communication and shared decision-making.

As educators, we are reflective, collaborative and continually evolving in our practice. We work together as a team to create meaningful learning opportunities that support both individual children and the group as a whole. We embrace inclusion, equity and diversity and believe every child has the right to feel valued, respected and successful.

Our natural environment is an important part of our identity. We value our outdoor spaces, trees, grass and opportunities to connect with nature through play and exploration. We believe these environments encourage curiosity, creativity, resilience and wellbeing.

As part of Kiewa Valley Primary School, we are proud to be one connected learning community. We believe kindergarten is the foundation of lifelong learning, where children develop confidence, wellbeing, relationships and a positive connection to education through play-based learning. Through shared spaces, community events, collaborative practices and strong relationships between children, families, educators, leadership and community, we foster a genuine sense of belonging and connectedness for all.

Together with children, families and educators, we create a kindergarten community where children are encouraged to grow in confidence, build friendships, express themselves, take risks, care for others and develop as active participants in their world.

"Play is often talked about as if it were a relief from serious learning. But for children play is serious learning." *=Fred Rogers=*

MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

Kiewa Valley Kindergarten is a licensed children's service operated by the Approved Provider, Kiewa Valley Primary School Council. The Kiewa Valley Primary School Council under the guidelines of the Department of Education is responsible for the management our Kindergarten.

A Kindergarten Sub-Committee facilitates the management of the kindergarten service. The Kindergarten Committee currently comprises: Kiewa Valley Primary School Principal, Kindergarten Director and two parent representatives from the kindergarten.

Parents are encouraged to become involved in the kindergarten for example by being a parent representative, sharing special skills, assisting with educational programs such as gardening with the children.

SERVICE INFORMATION

License to Operate Children's Service
Kiewa Valley Primary School Council is the Approved Provider of the Approved Children's Service operating as Kiewa Valley Kindergarten.

Children's Service Regulatory Authority:
Department of Education and Training (DET)
PO Box 403, Benalla, Victoria 3672 Dept. contact: Bri Hicks Phone: 03 5858 8979

Copies of relevant legislation can be found near the sign in book of the Kindergarten.

- EDUCATION & CARE SERVICES NATIONAL LAW ACT 2010
- EDUCATION & CARE SERVICES NATIONAL REGULATIONS

For your reference a copy of the Kiewa Valley Kindergarten policies can be found on the app OWNA under the tab *CONFIGURE / Policies and Resources.* We also have hard copies of the policies available if preferred.

QUALITY ACCREDIATION

Our Kindergarten operates in accordance with the National Quality Standards (NQS) under the Education & Care Services National Law and Regulations.
In November 2024, the service was assessed under the National Quality Standards (NQS) as a children's service meeting in all quality standards. The seven Quality Areas under the NQS are:

1. Educational program & practice
2. Children's health & safety
3. Physical environment
4. Staffing arrangements
5. Relationships with children
6. Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
7. Leadership and service management

The Standards ensures that our service adopts approaches most appropriate to and focus on the best the children being educated at Kiewa Valley

KINDERGARTEN
Victorian Government Approved

PROGRAM INFORMATION

The Australian Government is committed to ensuring that every child has access to a quality early childhood education program. The fully State Government funded 3yo & 4yo programs are to be delivered by a four-year university-trained early childhood teacher, 40 weeks a year, in the 2 years before full time schooling (often referred to as 'pre-school' or 'kindergarten').

After consultation with our kindergarten families during 2026 and taking into consideration the Victorian Education roll out of Pre Prep 20 hrs of funded kindergarten for all children the year prior to school. We have made changes to the delivery of our Kindergarten program in 2027.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
8:30 - 4:00pm	Group A 4 Yr olds	Group B 4 Yr olds	Group A 4 Yr olds	Group B 4 Yr olds
8:30 – 4:00pm	Group C 3 Yr olds	Group D 3 Yr olds	Group C 3 Yr olds	Group D 3 Yr olds

	Friday
8:30 – 1:30	Group A and B All children enrolled in 4 yr old kinder
1:30 – 3:30	Optional 2 hours Fee for service.

Children enrolled in Group C or D (3-year-old program)

We provide **15 hours** of fully funded kinder for our 3-year-old group. The children will be in a combined 3- and 4-year-old group.

Children enrolled in Group A or B (4-year-old program year before school).

Fully State Government funded sessions for kinder [4 years & over] are for 3 days per week, for a total of **20 hours** per week. The children will attend for 2 days in a combined 3- and 4-year-old group. The Friday session will be a 4-year-old only session with a greater focus on school readiness such as social emotional skills and independence.

Optional 2 hours on Friday afternoon to extend attendance to 3:30. Families will need to choose this option at the beginning of the term and commit to the term. There will be a term fee for utlising the additional 2hrs weekly. This term fee will need to be paid by end of week 2 each term.



Important Dates

Victorian Term Dates 2027

The Kindergarten aligns with the Victorian term dates.

Term 1: 29th January to 25th March *[staff return on Wednesday January 27th] 9 weeks*

Term 2: 12th April to 25th June (11 week term)

Term 3: 12th July to 17th September (10 week term)

Term 4: 4th October to 17th December *[children finish on 16 December] 11 weeks*

Public Holidays

Kiewa Valley Kinder will be closed on all Victorian Public Holidays that fall within the school terms.

- Monday 8th March – Labour Day
- Monday 14th June – Kings Birthday
- Tuesday 2nd November – Melbourne Cup



Pupil Free Days

Throughout the year we will also have pupil free days which will align with the school. Pupil free days will be utilised usually at the beginning and end of the year for set up and cleaning. We also value the importance of professional development both individually and as a group (when appropriate we will join the school). Pupil frees day will also be utilised for completing transition to school statements. These days will be shared with families well in advance.

The following dates have been identified by the school for student free days.

- 27th and 28th January
- Tuesday 9th March
- Friday 11th June
- Monday 1st Nov
- Monday 29th Nov
- 16th and 17th Dec



Our amazing staff at Kiewa Valley Kindergarten



Lauren

Early Childhood Teacher

Monday to Friday



Jess

Early Childhood Educator

Tuesday to Friday



Simone

Early Childhood educator

Monday to Friday



Natalee

Early Years Manager

Monday to Friday

Enrolment and Orientation

All our enrolment forms are completed online using the OWNA app. We ask families to update these regularly when there are changes of circumstances such as phone numbers.

Requirements for enrolment at kinder

- Immunisation requirements
  Under the "No Jab, No Play" legislation that came into effect on 1st January 2016, children are required to be fully vaccinated for their age before they can be enrolled in a Kindergarten program. Therefore, our Kindergarten is required to obtain written evidence that your child is fully immunised for their age, is on a vaccination catch-up program or is unable to be fully immunised for medical reasons. Conscientious objection is not an exemption. The evidence provided needs to be the immunisation statement from 'MyGov' not the pages from your child's green health book.
- Completed enrolment form
  Including emergency contact information. If your child has medical or diet related needs such as Asthma or Allergies/Anaphylaxis we are to required have an action plan completed by your child's GP. We will also complete a 'communication plan' with you to discuss your child's needs and how we will minimise any risks.

Orientation

- At Kiewa Valley Kindergarten we understand that all children are unique individuals and will occasionally need more support to settle in smoothly. We encourage families to communicate with educators if you have concerns about how your child will settle at kinder. Sometimes having a family photo or a special job with an educator can support a smooth drop off.



Communication



Our educators endeavour to create collaborative, responsive and respectful relationships with our families and children. To do this effectively we will provide communication in a variety of ways to meet the individual needs of families. We also encourage families to share with us any information related to your child or family e.g from your child having a bad night, an upcoming holiday, struggles with separation (the positives and the negatives are all valuable).

We will communicate to families via the following platforms-

- OWNA for program updates at the end of the week, individual child photos and observations, reminders. You can also send us a message on OWNA.
- Newsletters – these will aim to go out monthly with updates about what is happening at kinder, important dates, reminders, shout outs.
- Email, txt and phone calls – To reassure you when you have dropped your child off and they are upset, to let you know of an injuries/illness (THEREFORE IT IS IMPORTANT ALL CONTACT INFORMATION IS UP TO DATE).
- Whiteboard just inside the kinder gate will often have daily messages/reminders.
- Face to face chats at drop off/pick up are also highly valued communication tools.



Privacy

Our kindergarten strives to protect the privacy of our children's personal information. The kindergarten has a privacy policy to ensure sensitive information regarding our children remain respectively confidential. Personal information such as medical conditions, behaviours, developmental diagnoses and social circumstances should not be discussed outside the kindergarten. If you have concerns regarding privacy, please feel free to discuss with the kindergarten educators.

There have been recent changes in Australia to ensure the safety of all children in early childhood settings. At Kiewa Valley Kindergarten we follow the 'Guidelines' detailed in the 'National Model Code' which provides information regarding safe practices in taking images of children and the storing of the images.

In order to ensure the safety and privacy of all children we now have a no phone (or device that takes images) policy at our kinder. Which means families are NOT TO TAKE photos of children whilst on Kindergarten grounds. We appreciate your support in protecting our children.

Families will be required to fill out a mobile phone agreement which states their understanding that phones are not to be used on kinder grounds.

What to bring to kinder?



Your child will need to bring to kinder a back pack which is large enough for their lunch box, drink bottle and change of clothes. Please make sure it is clearly labelled with your child's name. The kinder bag will hang on the hooks outside.

Children will be encouraged to unpack their own bag on arrival, putting their lunch box and drink bottle on the trolley inside. This is an important part of supporting children's independence and self-help skills.

Change of Clothes

A change of clothes is important even though your child is fully toilet trained. Your child might get wet playing with water. Some children prefer to wear their own clothes and not our spare clothing.



What food to provide for your child?

- Your child will require a morning snack, lunch and an afternoon snack during their time at kinder.
- Great options for snacks include fruit, cheese, dry crackers, yoghurt, dried fruit.
- At lunch time a sandwich, roll, leftovers such as zucchini slice are all great options. We encourage healthy foods for children during their time at kinder. Keep the sweet treats for home in particular roll ups, lollies, chocolate. We also encourage families to avoid nuts in their child's lunch box. We have a child who is ANAPHLYAXIS TO NUTS.
- A drink bottle with water is also required everyday your child is at kinder (no soft drinks or cordial).
- Please make sure your child's items are labelled.
- During the warmer months an ice brick is also recommended in your child's lunch box.



Benefits of this style lunch box –

Children can access their food. Educators are not opening 30 muesli bars.



Also thinking about the energy value of foods is important at kinder. Children need nutrient dense food to get through the day.

Reducing 'individually' packaged foods reduces children needing support during meal times.

Appropriate clothing at kinder

At kinder we want children to be comfortable and able to explore activities without worrying about getting their clothes dirty.

- Clothing you don't mind getting 'dirty' or the occasional bit of of paint on them.
- Sunsmart safe clothing i.e no singlets and make sure dresses have sleeves.
- A broad brimmed hat (no baseball caps).
- Please make sure clothing is clearly labelled.
- Shoes suitable for climbing and exploring … no thongs

We provide sunscreen for children but if your child requires their own please send along their own labelled sunscreen. We follow the guidelines outlined by SunSmart Australia which recommends applying sunscreen when the UV is 3 and over (this does feel like the majority of the year).

Kinder Uniform

Families can purchase kinder clothing online through the company EDU threads. There are polo t-shirts, crew neck t-shirts, hats and jumpers. Families are able to purchase any of the colours available. Just remember these items of clothing really need to be labelled with your child's name.

https://eduthreads.com.au/collections/kiewa-valley-kindergarten-1











Routine



At Kindergarten, we understand how important routines are in helping children feel safe, confident, and ready to learn. We also value the magic of uninterrupted play, where children can explore, imagine, and make discoveries about their world. Our days follow a familiar and predictable routine, while still allowing for spontaneous experiences that reflect the children's interests and the needs of our group.
We also take into consideration the seasons and our SunSmart policy when thinking about our routine. Term 1 and term 4 we may begin our day outside to avoid the hottest part of the day.

Below is a general guide for our day at Kinder (subject to weather and the dynamics of the group)

Time	Activties
8:30 – 9:00	Arrival, children are supported to greet educators, sign in and unpack their bag. (Term 1 and 4 could begin outside).
9:00 – 10:00	There will be a combination of structured intentional activities and planned play spaces according to children's interests and development needs.
9:45 – 10:00	Group time. Which may include the roll, chat about the day/weather, Acknowledgement to Country.
10:00 – 10:30	Morning tea is eaten all together. We value the importance of meal times as being an opportunity to practice social communication skills.
10:30 – 12:00	Transition to outside play.
12:00 - 12:15	Group time – Opportunity for sharing love of literacy reading books, puppets. Games encouraging turn taking. Music and movement.
12:15 – 12:45	Lunch all together.
12:45 – 1:15	Recharge time – Children are encouraged to explore quieter activities such as looking at books and puzzles. Children that require a rest will have a mat provided.
1:30 – 2:00	Intentional Teaching time – table top activities where the focus is on (but not limited to) assisting children to focus on activities, literacy and numeracy.
2:00 – 3:00	Group time, Transition to Afternoon tea.
3:00 – 4:00	Outside time, pack bags, transition to bus, OSHC or home.

Drop off and pick up routines

The initial drop offs at the beginning of the year can be challenging for Your child and yourself. It really does help if parents are able to keep Their feelings of uncertainty to themselves and reassure your child it will be ok.

It is important to recognise that children benefit greatly from our program if they arrive by 9am.

Tips-:

- Be consistent in your language and actions e.g I'm going to read you one story then I'm going. **Then make sure you go.**
- Arrive by 9am to ensure your child is able to partake in uninterrupted exploring in the morning.
- Help develop independence from the beginning. Showing your child where to put their lunch box and drink bottle.

Pick up in the afternoon.

- We would appreciate families pick up kinder children prior to school children. Having a yard full of older school children from 3:30pm can make our yard extremely chaotic.
- If you would like to check in with educators please arrive before 3:50pm to pick up your child.
- **The kinder session Mon-Thursday finishes strictly at 4pm.** That means that educators have other duties to complete from 4pm onwards.
- **Our licensing/legal requirements states families need to be off the kinder grounds from 4pm when the session finishes.**
- **If children are not picked up by 4pm they will be added into the ASC program at the school which will incur the OSHC fee for the afternoon session of $25**.
- If you would like to chat further with educators please make an alternative time to have a discussion.



Our community

We are very fortunate at Kiewa Valley Kindergarten to be on the same grounds at KVPS and our local Infant Child and Welfare Nurse. This enables us to provide a great location for care and education for 0-12 year olds.

Kiewa Valley Primary School

- In 2027 we will share the same building as the two F/1 classrooms and the OSHC program. This enables the kinder children to become more familiar with the school environment.
- Supports a seamless transition to school.
- The kinder groups will visit and join in special events such as the Mothers and Father's Day Breakfasts, assemblies, dress up parade, Harmony Day.
- We will have the children from Yr 4 visit us during the year to create relationships which will follow through for the 'Buddies' program when they children begin foundation.
- We will visit the library, play on the junior school playground and visit the chooks. All of these activities will foster the 'community' feel we value at Kiewa Valley Primary School and Kindergarten.





Going on the Bus

- Some of our kinder children (must be in the 4 year old program) can access the school bus service. If you are interested please let us know.
- You will be required to fill in documents for the school the Dept of Education. We will also get you to fill out an authorisation form about our responsibilities in 'taking your child to and from the bus'.
- Communication becomes extremely important if your child travels on a school bus. Checking your child's bag for notes and contacting kinder if your child will be absent are encouraged.





Out of School Hours Care

- The OSHC service at KVPS will be running out of the BER building in 2027. The majority of staff that work in OSHC across the week also work in the classrooms during the day. Which is another way kinder children can become familiar with the school environment.
- The OSHC program offers Before School Care (BSC) and After School Care (ASC) to students of KVPS and also kinder children.
- It is a **fee paying service**. Families are able to claim the Child Care Subsidy with their OSHC fees.
- Fees for Kinder children before the CCS is added are-:
  BSC $22 and ASC $25
- Hours BSC 7:30-9:00am and ASC 3:30 – 6:00pm
- The enrolment form you have completed for kinder is valid for OSHC as well.
- OSHC is governed by the same regulations as Kinder. Therefore, they have the same requirements for signing in and out.
- Attendance at OSHC is dependent on space in the sessions and the availability of staff to meet our adult/child ratios.
  Criteria for attendance includes the following -:
  1. School age children are priority
  2. Siblings of school children
  3. Then Kindergarten children **MUST BE TOILET TRAINED**

  Please speak to educators if you would like to put your child's name down for OSHC.

Illnesses and hygiene

At Kiewa Valley Kindergarten, the health, safety and wellbeing of all children, families and educators is important to us.

Young children are still developing their personal hygiene and self-help skills, including blowing their nose, using tissues, disposing of them appropriately and washing their hands. Educators will support and encourage children to practise these skills throughout the day.

We ask families to help us maintain a healthy environment by keeping children at home when they are unwell or showing signs of an infectious illness.

When should my child stay home?

Children should remain at home if they are unwell, unable to comfortably participate in the kindergarten program or may pose a risk of infection to others.

Please keep your child at home if they have:

- **A temperature of 38°C or higher:** Children must be fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication (such as Panadol or Nurofen) before returning to kinder.
- **Vomiting or diarrhoea (gastroenteritis):** Children must remain at home until at least 48 hours after their last episode of vomiting or diarrhoea.
- **An infectious illness:** Children must stay home for the exclusion period recommended under Victorian public health guidelines.
- **A persistent or significant cough:** If your child is coughing frequently, struggling to participate or appears unwell, they should remain at home.

A note about temperatures and medication

Giving your child Panadol or Nurofen before kinder to reduce a temperature does not mean they are well enough to attend.

Fever-reducing medication can temporarily mask symptoms but does not mean your child has recovered. If your child requires medication to manage a fever or remain comfortable, they are not well enough to attend kinder.

What if my child becomes unwell during the day?

If your child becomes unwell while attending kinder, an educator will try to contact the child's parents. Educators will share with family how their child is feeling and steps forward if it be monitoring or picking up the child from kinder. We ask families to collect their child as soon as possible so they can rest and receive appropriate care.

Children who are unwell need additional comfort and care, may not be able to participate comfortably in the kindergarten program.

When can my child return to kinder?

Return-to-kinder timeframes depend on the illness.

As a general guide:

- **Fever:** At least 24 hours fever-free without fever-reducing medication.
- **Vomiting and diarrhoea:** At least 48 hours since the last episode.
- **Other infectious illnesses:** In accordance with the recommended exclusion period under Victorian public health guidelines.

A child may return with a mild runny nose or occasional cough if they are otherwise well, have no fever and can comfortably participate in the program.

A green or yellow nasal discharge does not automatically mean a child is infectious. However, if your child has a significant runny nose, persistent cough or is generally unwell, please consider keeping them home.

Our Infectious Illness Policy

Our Infectious Illness Policy provides further information about illness management, exclusion periods and infection control requirements.

Families can request a copy from an educator or access the policy through OWNA.

Thank you for helping us keep our kindergarten community healthy and safe.

Celebrations

The children love to celebrate their birthday at kinder with their friends and educators. If you would like to bring something into share with the children. Cupcakes are an easier option for children. Please check in with your child's educators to see if there are any food allergies in the group.

We are encouraging families to avoid sending nuts, nut products to kinder in their child's lunch boxes. If you are sending along cakes a list of ingredients would be appreciated.



If your child is having a birthday party and you have invites to hand out. Educators are happy to pass these out to families (make sure your phone number is correct on the invite).







Friday – Optional Additional Hours

Under the Victorian Government's **Best Start, Best Life reforms**, our kindergarten program will provide children with 20 hours of funded kindergarten per week, totalling 800 hours across the year.



To provide families with flexibility, we are offering two options for Friday afternoons. Families can choose whether their child finishes at 1:30pm or stays for the additional two hours until 3:30pm.

Option 1 – Finish at 1:30pm

Children will finish kindergarten at **1:30pm on Fridays**.

This option provides children with their full 20 hours of funded kindergarten per week. There is no additional fee.

Option 2 – Stay until 3:30pm (Optional Additional Hours)

Families may choose for their child to remain at kindergarten until **3:30pm on Fridays**, finishing at the same time as the school day.

This option provides an additional two hours of supervised program time each Friday, supported by three educators working with the children.

The additional Friday hours are optional and attract a fee of **$400 per term**. This fee contributes towards the additional staffing and resources required to operate the program until 3:30pm.

Please note that these additional two hours are separate from the 20 hours of funded kindergarten provided each week.

Making Your Choice and Payment

- Families must select their preferred Friday finishing time at the beginning of each term.
- The selected option will apply for the entire term.
- Families choosing the additional hours until 3:30pm will be required to pay $400 per term.
- Payment is to be made by direct debit into the school account by the end of the second week of each term.
- Staffing arrangements will be planned according to the number of children enrolled for the additional Friday hours.

Items to keep at home.

We understand that children like to bring 'special' items to share with their friends. However, we encourage children to **keep toys at home**. Educators **will not be** responsible for items such as toys that are bought to kinder and either lost or broken. Children are more than welcome to bring along special treasures from nature i.e a bird nest they found or shells from a recent holiday. Educators will often incorporate treasures into the program to extend on children's interests.



Show and Tell

We value the importance of children sharing aspects of their home life, interests and special experiences with their peers and educators. Show and Tell provides a meaningful opportunity for children to share something that is important to them and make connections with others.

Children are welcome to bring something special to share, such as:

- A favourite or special book.
- Shells, rocks or other interesting finds from a holiday or family adventure.
- Photographs of family, pets, special occasions or experiences.
- Something they have made or collected that has a special meaning to them.

Show and Tell is more than simply bringing something from home. It supports children to build confidence when speaking in front of a group, develop their communication and language skills, organise and express their thoughts, ask questions, and practise listening respectfully when others are sharing.

We encourage families to help children choose something meaningful that they would enjoy talking about. Toys from home are generally discouraged, as our focus is on sharing experiences, discoveries and stories rather than bringing in personal play items.

We look forward to hearing about the special things happening in your child's world and providing opportunities for children to learn from and celebrate each other's experiences.





Thank you for allowing us to join your child on their kindergarten journey. We look forward to a fabulous year together at Kiewa Valley Kindergarten.



Play-based learning is a powerful, research-backed way for children to develop skills needed for school and life. At our preschool, educators use a play-based learning approach with intentional teaching, guided by the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) and the Victorian Early Years Learning Development Framework (VEYLDF).

What Is Play-Based Learning?

Children learn by exploring, imagining, creating, and trying out their ideas. Play helps build:

- Problem-solving
- Social skills and teamwork
- Language and communication
- Self-regulation and confidence
- Creativity and early literacy/numeracy foundations

What Is Intentional Teaching?

Intentional teaching means educators act purposefully and thoughtfully to support learning during play. It includes:

- Setting up meaningful learning environments
- Choosing materials that spark curiosity
- Asking thoughtful questions
- Modelling new skills
- Supporting problem-solving and shared thinking
- Knowing when to join play and when to step back



Why This Matters

Play-based learning builds strong foundations for children's transition to school, helping them feel confident, capable, and ready for new challenges.

How Educators Support Learning

Educators use:

- Scaffolding – step-by-step support
- Questioning – encouraging deeper thinking
- Modelling – demonstrating strategies
- Co-constructing – learning alongside children
- Shared sustained thinking – solving problems together
- Thoughtfully designed environments that inspire exploration

What Play-Based Learning Is Not

Play-based learning does not mean:

- A strict, pre-set curriculum
- Teachers leading all activities
- Long, structured lessons