



**HEILSULEIKSKÓLINN
ÁLFASTEINN**
-með sól í hjarta

Parent handbook

Contents

Our school	4
Our goals	5
The Health Policy	6
Positive Discipline	6
Eco-School.....	6
Adaption period for new children.....	7
Daily schedule	7
Meal times	9
Play and group work	9
Outdoor activities	9
School group	10
Rules regarding sickness	10
Clothing.....	11
The Karellen preschool system	12
Assessment tools and special needs education.....	12
Parent/teacher meetings.....	13
Teacher training days.....	13
Absences and changes in circumstance.....	13
Accidents and accident insurance.....	14
Bad weather	14
Preschool celebration days	14



Welcome to Health Álfasteinn preschool

The preschool is open from 7.45 to 16.15 Monday to Friday.

Useful telephone numbers:

Álfasteinn/ Principal : [460-1760](tel:460-1760)

Kitchen: [460-1755](tel:460-1755)

Álfadeild/Trölladeild: [460-1758](tel:460-1758)

Dvergadeild: [460-1759](tel:460-1759)

Email: alfasteinn@horgarsveit.is

Website: <http://alfasteinnhorgarsveit.is/>

Principal: Hugrún Ósk Hermannsdóttir

Deputy principal: Sigríður Gréta Þorsteinsdóttir

Head of Special Education: Bára Björk Björnsdóttir

Heads of department and other staff:

<http://alfasteinnhorgarsveit.is/Mannaudur/Starfsfolk>

Our school

The Health Preschool Álfasteinn in Hörgársveit is located just north of Akureyri on the boarder of Akureyri and Hörgársveit. The name Álfasteinn (Elf stone) comes from a nearby farm called Dvergasteinn (Dwarf stone) and the large stone that was excavated during the building of the preschool which is now located at the preschools entrance.

When the preschool opened on 30th July 1995 it was 114 sq.m. with space for 16 children. Today (2021) it is 550sq.m with space for 70 children in 3 departments: Álfadeild, Trölladeild and Dvergadeild.

The motto of our school is:” **Með sól í hjarta**” (“with sun in our heart.”)

Álfasteinn is built on the ideology of the Health Policy for preschools and uses Positive Discipline, in addition to ongoing projects related to the Eco-Schools programme. Great emphasis is placed on caring for the child as an individual with their own interests and rights. We believe the child has the right to develop through play on his or her own terms. Our aim is to see all children develop a strong self-image, have fun learning and show respect to others though friendship and communication. Emphasis is placed on nature and the environment, so that children will grow to respect and enjoy their environment. Icelandic customs and traditions are maintained as well as introducing the children to multiculturalism and diversity.



Our goals

Álfasteinn's main goals are based on the four areas of study outlined in the National Curriculum Guide for Preschools.

These are:

- That the children learn and develop through play and creativity. (Creativity and culture)
- That children are guided by respect and friendship in communication with others. (Literacy and communication)
- That children are aware of the environment and nature around them. (Sustainability and science)
- That children are aware of the importance of exercise and hygiene for overall well-being. (Health and wellbeing)

Ways to achieve these goals:

Creativity and culture

- Provide enough time in the daily routine for free play and creative expression.
- Ensure that children feel safe and confident during play and creativity.
- Encourage children to play and create both individually and in groups.
- Encourage children to make independent choices.
- Encourage children to express their own ideas.
- Provide a variety of materials that arouse the children's curiosity and desire to explore.
- Introduce the children to Icelandic traditions as well as diverse cultures.

Literacy and communication

- Encourage children to show warmth and kindness to others.
- Allow children to find ways to resolve their disputes.
- Children use Positive Discipline to learn social and life skills.
- Be vigilant in praising and encouraging children.
- Encourage children to take initiative and show independence in their work.
- Encourage children to listen and talk to each other.

Sustainability and science

- Teach children about animals and plant life.
- Go on day trips and local walks.
- Teach children about recycling and its importance to the environment.
- Teach children about the changes in nature from one season to the next.

Health and wellbeing

- Provide good quality, healthy meals.
- Provide opportunities for movement both indoors and outdoors.
- Teach children about nutrition and health through play and work.
- Increase children's body awareness and improve their overall motor skills.

By strengthening these factors, we promote the positive development of children. That is, they receive good education about nutrition and exercise as well as self-awareness. Extensive training in social interaction as well as fostering curiosity and increasing their skills for acquiring knowledge.

The Health Policy

The goal of the Health Policy is to promote and strengthen the health of preschool children with emphasis on nutrition, physical activity and artistic creation through play. Each child receives their own Health Book which is filled in twice a year. The preschool has its own sports hall and a large outdoor area that encourages a variety of movements. Children are served homemade healthy foods 3 times a day (breakfast, lunch and afternoon snack). More information can be found at <https://heilsustefnan.is/this-is-the-english-first-page/>



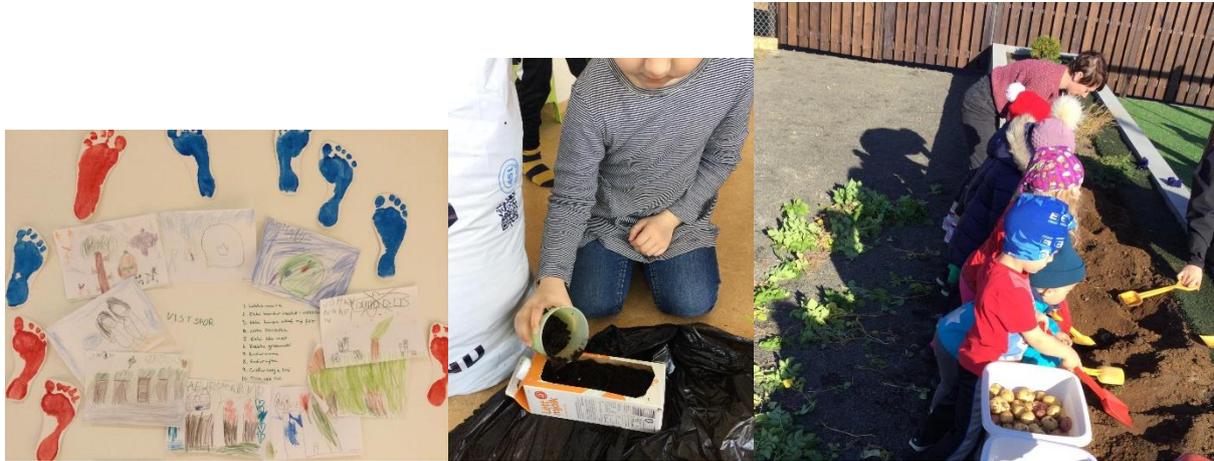
Positive Discipline

At Álfasteinn we practice Positive Discipline (PD) which uses discipline to teach rather than to punish, helping children to succeed and thrive both now and in the future. Positive Discipline teaches children life skills and how to work out problems together. Children's meetings are a large part of PD and at Álfasteinn we have small group meetings once a week. More information can be found here <https://www.positivediscipline.com/sites/default/files/what-is-positive-discipline.pdf>

Eco-School

Álfasteinn is an Eco-School which is an international project encouraging children to engage in their environment and allowing them to actively protect it. The seven step process that all Eco-Schools take part in raises awareness about environmental issues. Every two years a theme is chosen and a report is submitted to the Icelandic Environment Association. This report explains what projects the school worked on during the two years and what

environmental improvements were made. If the school achieves its goals they are allowed to fly the Eco-School flag for a further two years in recognition of their work. More information can be found here: <https://www.ecoschools.global/>



Adaption period for new children

The adaption period for new children involves parental participation. The idea behind this process is that the parents transfer their own sense of security and curiosity to the child. Children and parents need enough time to familiarise themselves with the department, environment, staff, and other children. The parents stay with their children during the adjustment process, take care of them, change their diaper, help them get dressed, eat with them and take part in all of the department's activities. The staff is present to hand out assignments and get to know the children and parents. By participating from the first day, the parents can be sure of what goes on in the preschool. Parents are not permitted to use their telephones during the adaption process. Parents may not take photographs in the school due to personal protection laws. It is best for the child if they same parent is present during the adaption period.

Daily schedule

Álfasteinn has three departments. There are two entrances, one is for children in Álfadeild and the other is for both children in Trölla and Dvergadeild. Each child has their own cubby hole for outdoor clothing. When a child begins they are given a cloth bag. This bag is for wet or dirty clothes that should be taken home at the end of the day. Emphasis is placed on a warm welcome for both parents and child. Parents should walk with their children into their department before saying goodbye.

Álfadeild

7:45 School opens

7:45 - 8:15 Children arrive

8:15 - 8:40 Breakfast

8:40 – 9:00 Singing time

9:00 – 10:00 Group work

10:15 – 11:00 Outside play

11:15 – 11:45 Lunch

11:45 – 14:10 Nap time/free play

14:10 – 14:30 Afternoon snack

14:30 - 16:00 Free play

16:00 - 16:15 Clean up/ school closes

After breakfast the children have singing time. On Fridays the oldest children join Tröllla and Dvergadeild in the hall for singing time. The younger children join them on the first Friday of the month. Group work is every day except Fridays when the children are invited to move between activities. Álfadeild have access to the sports hall between 9:00 – 10:00 every Friday.

Trölladeild & Dvergadeild

7:45 School opens

7:45 - 8:15 Children arrive

8:15 - 8:45 Breakfast

8:45 – 9:00 Singing time

9:00 - 11:15 Group work/outdoor play

11:15 - 12:00 Lunch

12:00 - 12:30 Nap/rest/story time

12:30 - 13:00 Free play

13:00 - 14:00 Group work/outdoor play

14:10 - 14:30 Afternoon snack

14:30 - 16:00 Free play/outdoor play

16:00 - 16:15 Clean up/ school closes

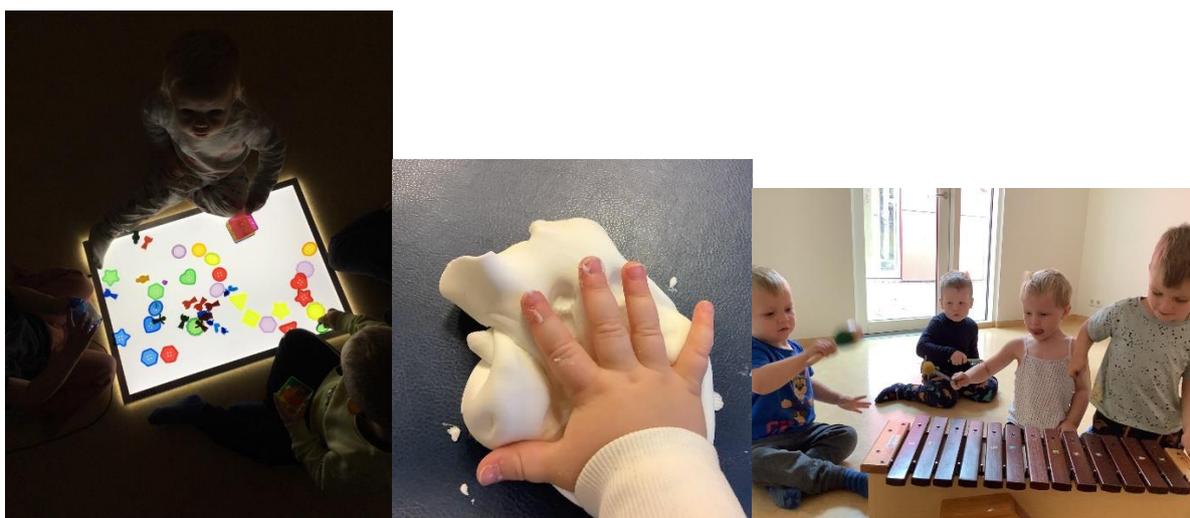
After breakfast the children join in the hall where they sing together. Group work is every day except Fridays. Between 9:00 – 11:00 and 13:00 – 14:00 the children participate in an activity with their group. All the children have access to the sports hall and the art room at least twice a week. Mathematics, children's meetings and a walk in the local area are all once a week. Each groups also goes outside for free play at least once a day. Each child gets the chance to help set the table at meal times.

Meal times

Breakfast is from 8:10 – 8:40 each day. If you intend for your child to eat breakfast, then they must arrive before 8.30. Please let us know if your child has already eaten at home. Breakfast is porridge with a variety of dried fruits and seeds on offer. Fresh fruit is served with every meal. Emphasis is placed on a healthy balanced diet and the menus are reviewed by a Health Policy nutritionist. The food provided contains around 70% of a child's daily nutritional needs. The weekly menu can be found on our website.

Play and group work

Play is the keystone to learning in preschool. Play makes children aware of the social rules in their environment. Through play, the children learn, develop their skills and practice communications and appropriate behaviour. Play activities stimulate the imagination and cause children to be creative and inventive. At Álfasteinn we give time each day for free play in a number of different settings. All children are part of a smaller group within their department. The purpose of group work is for the children to learn to work and play in a group and be considerate of each other. Each department arranges group work in its own way. In general, the children are split into smaller groups, each with its own group organiser. Thus, each group organiser can observe its group closely and monitor each child's development and progress. Typical group work activities include: physical activities, creative activities, mathematics, walks in the local area, music sessions, developmental play and games, children's meetings and so on. The children have daily singing and storytelling sessions which amongst other things helps to improve language skills.



Outdoor activities

Outdoor activities play an important part in the preschool's work. Outside gross motor skills and free play are emphasised. It is important that the children are dressed according to the

weather and have enough extra clothes. Parents can keep outdoor clothing in the child's compartment, bring it in on Monday and take it home on Friday. All wet and dirty clothes must be taken home daily, washed, dried and returned to the school the following day. Outdoor free play times are everyday unless the weather is especially cold. We are lucky enough to be located next to a woodland area as well as a residential area. These areas provide us with plenty of ways to teach the children in accordance with our preschool's goals. In the summer the older children are taken on trips to the coast and the forest recreation area in Akureyri.



School group

Once a week the eldest children (those graduating in the spring) have a one hour "school session". The purpose of this time is to prepare the children for primary school. They work on school related subjects such as numeracy, word games and writing. Sometimes these lessons are held outside. The school group takes part in the Logi and Glóð project in cooperation with the Akureyri Fire Department. In the spring the children enjoy a fun day at the fire station. The group also enjoy other trips such as to museums or the library. Throughout the year they spend time at the local school Þelamerkur. The idea of these school visits is so the children can meet the other students, teachers and get to be part of the school day; building the bridge between preschool and primary school. In the spring the school group enjoy a fun day out and after school their families are invited to join the graduation celebrations.

Rules regarding sickness

The preschool is intended for children in full health. Children who are not in full health should not come to preschool, both to prevent contagion, which is the greatest at the beginning of an illness, and for the child's own well-being. Staying inside during the preschool day when children are becoming ill or are feeling unwell is not permitted. Guardians are notified if a child falls ill during school hours and the child should be collected as soon as possible. The child is to be fever-free at home for 24-48 hours before returning to the preschool. In addition, the child has to be able to fully participate in all schoolwork, both indoors and outdoors, on return from an illness. Flexibility is maintained by allowing the child to be the last one out and the first

in. In exceptional cases, a child may be allowed to remain indoors for one or two days. This applies in the wake of a severe illness. The matter must be discussed with the principal in each instance. As a rule, parents are responsible for administering medicines to their children and are responsible for them. Prescription medication is not administered in the preschool unless a doctor's certificate stating that medication is necessary during school hours is presented. The heads of departments must always be consulted. The website <https://www.heilsuvera.is/> contains a range of useful information.

Clothing

The children's clothing should be in accordance with the weather, keeping in mind that the weather can change quickly. The children's clothing must be marked with their name, particularly outdoor clothing and footwear. It is necessary to have spare clothes at the school. The children's spare clothing is kept in the child's department. It is important that parents make sure their children have enough spare clothes in school. Here is a list of what clothes children should have in preschool,

In their bag:

- 2 hats (thin and thick)
- 2 pairs of gloves/mittens (thick/woollen and waterproof gloves)
- Wool socks
- Warm jumper (fleece or wool)
- Water proof clothing
- Snow suit
- Rain and winter boots

Spare clothing

- 3 vests or underwear
- 3 pairs socks
- 3 trousers
- 3 tights
- 3 tops/t-shirts

Various materials and tools that can damage clothing are used in the preschool. Children should not wear valuable clothes.



The Karellen preschool system

Álfasteinn uses the Karellen preschool system to manage registrations and as a more extensive means of channelling information between the home and the school. Families can access pictures of their children, monitor the school's attendance calendar and entries on their child's day in the preschool through their access both by app and on the internet. In order for parents to obtain a password to the Karellen system, their e-mail addresses must be registered in the school system. The next step is to select login to Karellen through the child's school website or on www.my.karellen.is and select new registration. If you cannot connect to the system, please contact the school. For further information on the Karellen preschool system, see www.karellen.is

Assessment tools and special needs education

Various assessment tools are used for special education, but we use EFI-2, MIO and HLJÓM-2 as screening tools for all children in the preschool. EFI-2 records the language development of 3.5-year-old children. This helps preschool teachers identify children with language impairments and undertake systematic early intervention when necessary. MIO is a screening process to assess the mathematical development of children in preschool age and helps staff to understand the mathematical skills that each child has achieved. Screening helps staff to identify discrepancies and to improve matters with targeted actions and early intervention. All children undergo MIO assessment in the preschool during a certain period. HLJÓM-2 is administered in the autumn to assess the phonological awareness of children in the last year of preschool in order to identify children at risk of developing reading disabilities. In spring, HLJÓM-2 is administered again to children who achieved below average. The results of HLJÓM-2 are transferred with the child when the child begins primary school. A special teaching team is operated in the preschool and attends to children through early intervention together with intervention after an assessment process.

Parent/teacher meetings

Parents attend an introduction meeting before their child begins attending preschool. This gives parents time to fill in all the necessary paper work. Parents are invited to a meeting after the child has been at the preschool for 3 months. Once a year (around the child's birthday) we hold parent meetings to discuss the child's development. Parents are given the chance to look at their child's Health Book and the results of any assessments. We also want to hear about the expectations and experiences of the parents regarding the child's stay at the school.

The general meeting of the parent association is held in the autumn every year. This is when the association's board is elected and plans for the year are discussed. The parent association is called Álfavínir. The goal is to strengthen the parents' connection to the preschool and ensure the welfare of all the children. All parents/guardians of the children automatically become partners as soon as their child starts preschool.

An introduction meeting for all parents on the work of the preschool is held each autumn during preschool hours. This meeting gives parents a chance to meet the staff and learn about what their child will be doing throughout the coming year.



Teacher training days

Each year there are three planning days and one training day for staff. These days are used to plan, prepare and retrain staff in various areas as well as evaluate the previous months. There are four staff meetings a year when the school will be closed between 8:00 to 12:00 or 12:00 to 16:00. All these days appear on the preschool's calendar, which is published in the spring for each school year.

Absences and changes in circumstance

It is important to report any changes in circumstances in your child's life, such as illness, parents' absence, new address, telephone numbers, end of studies or changes of marital status.

- If your child does not want to come to preschool it is important to discuss this with their teacher so a cause can be found and dealt with immediately.
- If someone other than the parents are picking up your children, then it is necessary to inform staff for safety reasons.
- Absences due to illness and the type of illness are recorded in the child's Health Book. Parents are therefore asked to report any absences and to indicate whether the absence is due to a holiday or an illness.
- If parents wish to take their child out of the preschool for a holiday, this is permitted but the fee for their place in the preschool will remain.

Accidents and accident insurance

Where children are playing, accidents or injuries can occur. If a child is badly injured the parents will be contacted immediately and the child will be taken to the Emergency Department if necessary. Hörgársveit provides insurance for all the children of the preschool. This means that all children are insured during the preschool day as well as when traveling to and from preschool.

Bad weather

If the weather is bad and impassable, parents are asked to contact the preschool on 460-1760 and check the preschool's Facebook page where there will be updates and announcements in case of closure due to weather.

Preschool celebration days

These days are intended to be a break from everyday routine. The preschool's celebration days are recorded in the school calendar and the monthly calendars. The following is a list of these days and what we do to celebrate them.

Útidótadagur (outdoor toy day): on this day children are allowed to bring an outdoor toy (not bikes or scooters) and please remember to mark the toy with your child's name.

Liturdagur (colour days): on these day's children are allowed to come wearing clothes of the colour of the day and we promote that colour in our daily activities.

Rugludagur (mixed-up day): on this day the children are invited to come in mixed-up clothes (such as odd socks, back to front clothes) and messy hair. We mix up the day a bit in school.

Náttfatadagur (pyjama day): on this day everyone is welcome to come in pyjamas and we have a cosy day or even a pyjama dance.

Foreldraheimsókn (parent's visit): on this day parents are welcome to visit us, look at what we are been doing and join in activities.

Bangsadagur (teddy bear day): on this day children are welcome to bring their favourite teddy with them to school.

Ævintýradagur (adventure day): on this day everyone is welcome to come to school in a dressing up costume and our school turns in to an adventure land.

Rafmagnslausdagur (electricity free day): on this day children are welcome to bring torches to school as we will be turning off the electricity and enjoying games in the dark.

Bókavika (book week): children are welcome to bring a book to school during this week and we will try to read as many as possible.

Jólapeysadagur (Christmas jumper day): on this day we dress in Christmas clothes (jumpers, socks etc.) and eat a Christmas meal.

Bóndakaffi (men's coffee): to celebrate the traditional Icelandic Men's Day, we invite the men in the child's life to join us.

Fjölmenningarvika (multicultural week): during this week we celebrate different cultures and countries.

Þorrablót (Midwinter Festival): the children celebrate, often by making a special crown to wear, and we sing songs connected with the Icelandic winter month of Þorri. At lunch time the children are given a chance to taste traditional Icelandic food.

Konukaffi (women's day): to celebrate the traditional Icelandic Women's Day, we invite the women in the child's life to join us.

Bolludagur (Bun-day): we celebrate this Icelandic festival by making decorations and eating cream buns.

Öskudagur (Ash Wednesday): children and teachers wear costumes to school and celebrate together. Everyone gathers in the hall to "hit the barrel" and win something good to eat and then we have a dance. The older children often walk to the local shop to sing for sweets.

Hattadagur (hat day): everyone is welcome to come in a hat for the day.

Kjarnaskógur (forest day): the children (3 years and above) enjoy a morning in the town's forest where we grill hot dogs.

Útskriftarferð (graduation trip): on this day the children that are graduating from preschool are taken on a surprise trip for the day.

Fjöruförð (coastal visit): on this day the children (3 years and above) visit the coastline (please remember waterproof clothes and shoes on this day).

Sumarhátíð (summer festival): The spring festival is held to celebrate the end of the school's formal winter activities, and the children's families are invited to celebrate with us. The preschool's parents' association oversees the food.