



- þar er leikur að læra

# Iðavöllur Preschool

## Manual



Illustration: Óskar Jacques



*Illustration: Óskar Jacques og Yanislav Kamburov*

Opening hours: 07:45 to 16:15

Tel.:

Principal	414-3740
Head of Special Education	414-3741
Álfheimur	414-3745
Glaðheimur	414-3746
Prymheimur	414-3747
Jötunheimur	414-3748
Kitchen	414-3744

E-mail: [idavollur@akureyri.is](mailto:idavollur@akureyri.is)

Website: <http://www.idavollur.is>

Principal: Anna Lilja Sævarsdóttir

Deputy principal: Gerður Gísladóttir

Head of Special Education: Iris Rún Andersen

Cook: Hjördís Guðjónsdóttir

Heads of departments and other staff:

<http://idavollur.is/Stjornun/Starfsfolk>

## Contents

<b>Our school</b> .....	4
<b>Reception schedule</b> .....	4
<b>The adaption process</b> .....	5
<b>Daily school schedule</b> .....	6
<b>Disciplinary policy</b> .....	6
<b>School hours</b> .....	7
<b>Preschool fees</b> .....	7
<b>Changes to school period and notice period</b> .....	7
<b>Rules regarding sickness</b> .....	8
<b>Various information</b> .....	8
<b>Clothing</b> .....	9
<b>Play</b> .....	9
<b>Outdoor activities</b> .....	10
<b>Parent interviews</b> .....	10
<b>Buffet</b> .....	10
<b>The Karellen preschool system</b> .....	11
<b>Assessment tools and special needs education</b> .....	11
<b>Preschool celebration days</b> .....	12
<b>Löavöllur parents' association</b> .....	16
<b>Löavöllur parents' council</b> .....	17

## Our school

The preschool Iðavöllur is located at Gránufélagsgata in Oddeyri neighbourhood. The school's main objectives are that all students are happy in school, that communication is positive and that each individual can flourish. The focus is on trust and positive communications with the children's families. Iðavöllur is a multicultural school where language and language stimulation is of great importance. The school's employees emphasise professional pedagogical and educational work according to the Reggio Emilia approach.

The motto of Iðavöllur is: *þar er leikur að læra* ("learning is playing"). The school is for approximately 90 students in four departments, Álfheimur, Glaðheimur, Þrymheimur and Jötunheimur.

The primary school Oddeyrarskóli is in the same neighbourhood as Iðavöllur, and there is good collaboration between the two schools.



## Reception schedule

Parents/guardians receive a notification of preschool placement by e-mail. The parents/guardians subsequently have to contact the preschool to confirm the placement. Before the child starts attending the preschool, the parents/guardians are e-mailed an invitation to an initial interview at the preschool.

There must always be an initial interview before the adjustment process of a child can begin. It is recommended that the parents/guardians arrive without their child to these interviews. According to the preschool's procedures, the school will employ an interpreter for those whose first language is other than Icelandic so that all information is recorded correctly. The preschool staff ascertains whether interpreter services are required for discussions. In the initial interview, the preschool employee fills out a document with a list of questions for the parents/guardians. The focus of these questions is on the child, with the aim of getting to know the child and his/her family before the adjustment process begins. The reception interview may be found on the school's website; <http://idavollur.is/163-idavollur.karellen.is/uppl%C3%BDsingag%C3%B6gn%20sk%C3%B3lastj%C3%B3ra/m%C3%B3tt%C3%B6kusamtal.2019.pdf>.

In the interview, the family's key person in the adjustment process is identified. The key person is the employee who will be the family's main contact in the adjustment process. The parents/guardians will also be asked who will be present during the adjustment process, in part to ascertain whether interpreter services will be required. The parents/guardians are asked to let the school know of any last-minute changes to the choice of person to accompany the child in the first few days.

The head of the department sends the parents/guardians an e-mail about the adjustment process shortly before it begins.

## The adaption process

Children's adjustment process at Iðavöllur 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, children and the preschool as a whole. The parents stay with their children during the entire 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.

### *The first few days:*

**Day 1:** child and parent arrive at 9:00 and stay until 11:00

**Day 2:** child and parent arrive at 8:00 and stay until 14:00

**Day 3:** child and parent arrive at 8:00 and stay until 15:00

**Days 4 and 5:** the child arrives with its parent, who then leaves. It is recommended that the children are picked up at 15:00 at the latest the first days. Some children require that their parents stay longer with them.

If the child's school hours are shorter than indicated by the above schedule, the child will arrive/leave at that time. Parents/guardians are not permitted to use their telephones during the adaptive process. Parents/guardians may not take photographs in the school due to personal protection laws. Facilities for parents/guardians will be set up in the interview room. There, they can get refreshments while the child adjusts. The children are not expected to enter the room, and it is not recommended that they partake of the refreshments there. Please keep hot beverages away from the children. Please be discreet about anything you may see and hear at the preschool.



## Daily school schedule

07:45	The preschool opens
8:00-8:30	Breakfast
8:30-11:00	Playtime inside/outside
11:00-12:00	Lunch
12:00-13:00	Rest/storytime
13:00-14:15	Playtime inside/outside
14:15-14:45	Afternoon snack
14:45-16:00	Playtime inside/outside
16:15	The preschool closes

*Further details on the daily schedule can be found in each department.*

## Disciplinary policy

Good relations with the children is the basis of good communications, based on trust, security and acknowledgement. We use attentiveness and presence to maintain this. We set boundaries for the children and are firm and determined when necessary. We use the child's name when sending out positive messages, when we address the child, praise it and encourage it during play and projects. We refrain from using the child's name when correcting behaviour, in negative circumstances or for a negative purpose. We nurture factors that strengthen the child's self-image so that the child draws its strength from itself rather than the opinion of others. We look for and nourish the children's positive and strong sides in order to allow them to experience big and small victories and encourage and praise both practice and results. We strive to be present for the children, listen to them and respect their opinions. We withdraw the child from circumstances where it is out of control and allow recovery out of sight of other children. We use positive reinforcement and show attention to behaviour we wish to encourage but less attention to behaviour that we wish to discourage. An important part of children's positive conduct and learning is the presence of a good adult role model. We provide children with support and follow-up when circumstances are beyond their capabilities. We use the children's positive experiences to support positive behaviour and communication with others.



## School hours

The children can stay at the school from 4 to 8 hours. An additional fifteen minutes can be purchased before or after the whole hour. The preschool tries to meet the needs of parents regarding school hours, but it cannot be guaranteed that all wishes can be fulfilled. The school hours agreed upon at any time must be respected. The departments open at 7:45 and parents/guardians are requested to wait with their children in the foyer until a member of staff has opened the department. You are also requested to respect the school's closing time and everyone should have left the building by 16:15.

## Preschool fees

Information on preschool fees may be found on <http://idavollur.is/Upplysingar/Gjaldskra>. Preschool fees are collected at the beginning of each month. If the fees are not paid before the final due date, the guardians are sent a letter of reminder. If this proves unsuccessful, the debt is sent for collection and the child's preschool placement is subsequently cancelled.

## Changes to school period and notice period

The notice period for termination of preschool placement is one month, calculated from the 1<sup>st</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup> of each month.

Notices of termination are completed on the services portal of Akureyri on <https://innskraning.island.is/?id=thjonustugatt.akureyri.is>. One month's payment can be collected if rules on notice period have not been followed. There are different rules regarding termination for children who are entering primary school. These terminations are generally requested when determining the summer vacation. Changes to a child's staying period can also be requested by using a special form that teachers can provide. Changes are calculated according to the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month.



## Rules regarding sickness

The preschool is intended for children in full health.

Children who are not in full health should not come to the 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 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 is cared for until collected. The child is to be fever-free at home for at least 24 hours before returning to the preschool. In addition, the child is 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.

As a rule, skin creams and diaper rash creams are not used in preschools except in exceptional cases and then only in consultation with the department head teacher.

The website <https://www.heilsuvera.is/> contains a range of useful information that should be viewed.

## Various information

Changes to child's circumstances and arrangements should be notified, such as illness, death in the family, absence of parents, new address or telephone number, beginning or completion of studies by parents and marital status. In the event of any problems regarding the child's preschool stay, employees must be notified so that all concerned can collaborate on finding causes and solutions.

School staff is allocated 48 hours per school year for staff meetings, organisational meetings and educational courses and during these hours school is closed. Parents are notified of these days with at least one month's notice. All these days are noted in the school calendar. All information to parents is either in the form of a notification in the foyer or an e-mail to the parents. All notifications must be read carefully. Each department has its own notice board and issues its own calendar for each month. Calendars include the main events planned for the month ahead.



## 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 prominently marked, particularly outdoor clothing. It is necessary to have extra clothing at the school. The children's additional clothing is kept in plastic boxes on a shelf in the foyer, and it is important to add clothing as necessary. For convenience, we have compiled a list of necessary items that parents can get from heads of departments. Various materials and tools that can damage clothing are used in the preschool. Children should not wear clothes that you find particularly valuable.

## Play

Play is the cornerstone of the work carried out in the 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. The children have access to different spaces and play materials. All external factors have an effect on the play, and it develops accordingly. Surroundings are a part of the learning process.

There is group work in each 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. It is also a good foundation for forming connection with peers. 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.

There are daily song and storytelling sessions in each department. These are used systematically for language stimulation, which in turn boosts the children's communication skills and expression.

The preschool has two art workshops with materials and tools for creating art.

Lunch and rest hour in the preschool is from 11:00 to 13:00. Parents and guardians are asked to respect these hours and refrain from visiting the school except in emergencies.



*Lubbi finnur málbein* (Lubbi Finds a Language bone) is education material by speech therapists Eyrún Ísfold Gísladóttir and Þóra Másdóttir that is used systematically in the preschool. Lubbi is an Icelandic sheepdog who wants to learn to talk but has to learn all the sounds of the Icelandic language. The children have to help Lubbi learn by singing and other exercises. Dogs love chewing

bones, and Lubbi is no exception. That is why all the sounds look like bones and Lubbi gradually learns to talk by chewing the bones. *Lubbi finnur málbein* is speech training on three levels, with a combination of sight, hearing and touch. Each department arranges this work in its own way according to the age of the children.

## Outdoor activities

Outdoor activities play an important part in the preschool's work. There, 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.



## Parent interviews

Parents attend a reception interview before the child begins attending preschool. Parent interviews are conducted twice a year, in autumn and in spring. Each department determines the arrangement of interviews and invites parents/guardians. It is usually the child's group organiser who conducts the interview. In the autumn, factors such as adjusting to the school or transferring to a new department are discussed. We also want to hear about the expectations and experiences of the parents/guardians regarding the child's stay at the school. The results of HLJÓM – 2, the screening tool for phonological and language awareness in the oldest year are discussed.

The spring interview focuses on the progress in the previous winter, transfer between departments and/or education levels and discussion of the experience of parents/guardians. The child's progress folder is shown to the parents/guardians during the interview. The TRAS tool for children's language and social development is reviewed and discussed, as well as the HLJÓM – 2 results for the children in the oldest year. In addition, the results of MIO, the mathematics screening of preschool children, are examined and discussed.

Note that interviews with teachers can be requested at any time outside these fixed interviews.

## Buffet

The older children eat together in the hall. A buffet in the dining area can offer various possibilities, and more diverse food choices can be provided. A buffet arrangement can increase self-confidence by creating empowering circumstances for children where they can choose for themselves what food to eat. Thus, each child can put together its own meal. The children learn to respect food, know when they are full and respect others.

#### *Rules in the dining area:*

The child selects what and how much it puts on his/her plate.  
We encourage children to taste the food on offer.  
We take it slow; lunch is supposed to be quality time.  
We go over to the child and talk to him/her.  
We wipe anything that's spilled and assist the child as needed.  
We respect the child as an individual.  
Respect, trust and empowerment.



### **The Karellen preschool system**

The preschool 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 and relatives to obtain a password to the Karellen system, their e-mail addresses must be registered in the system by the school in question. The next step is to select login to Karellen through the child's school website or on [www.my.karellen.is](http://www.my.karellen.is) and select new registration. The same process may be used if you forget your password. If you cannot contact the system, please contact the school. For further information on the Karellen preschool system, see [www.karellen.is](http://www.karellen.is)

### **Assessment tools and special needs education**

Various assessment tools are used for special education, but we use TRAS, MIO and HLJÓM-2 as screening tools for all children in the preschool. TRAS records the language and social development of young children. TRAS 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. The factors

measured are rhyme, syllable segmentation, compounding two words into one, phoneme identification, identifying same-sounding words with different meanings, deletion of compound words and blending phonemes to form words. Subsequent work focuses on the factors that were subpar for individual children, and all parents receive instructions on how to do exercises at home. In spring, HLJÓM-2 is administered again to children who were assessed as *subpar* and *extremely subpar*. 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.



### Preschool celebration days

These days are intended to be a break from everyday routine where we can enjoy ourselves. We also view these days as a symbol of unity for everyone here in the preschool. The preschool's celebration days are recorded in the school calendar and the calendars of the departments. One employee from each department has a seat on the celebration day committee, which is responsible for organising the school's celebration days. The following is a list of these days, their meaning and what we do to celebrate them.

#### *Multicultural days*

The arrangement of multicultural days is managed by each department for itself. The focus is on one or two countries, their language and national flag. Children from the country of the month are the centre of the attention in their department.



### *Singing session and open between departments*

On the first Friday of each month, all children and teachers gather in the assembly room to sing together. The departments take turns organising the singing session, selecting 3–4 songs to rehearse.

The department responsible at each time stands in front of the other children and leads the singing. Following the singing, the doors between the departments remain open until the children return to their own departments. The purpose of this is to give the children a chance to visit all departments and get to know the preschool's environment and teachers. This gives all age groups in the school a chance to play together.



### *Children's birthdays*

When a child has a birthday, we hang up a picture of the birthday child in the department. During the day, the child will get a chance to be in the spotlight. The child puts on a crown, we sing the birthday song and the child offers the other children fruits. Parents can bring their own fruit from home, but otherwise, the school will provide the fruits.

### *Iðavöllur anniversary*

Iðavöllur anniversary is celebrated on 24 October or close to that day. We celebrate the foundation of the school by assembling, eating good food and etc.

### *International Teddy Bear Day*

In celebration of the international Teddy Bear Day, the children can bring their teddy bear to school.

### *Icelandic Language Day / Lubbi Day*

On Icelandic Language Day, the preschool celebrates Lubbi's birthday. We gather in the assembly room and sing Happy Birthday for Lubbi and even some of Lubbi's own songs. On this day, 4<sup>th</sup> grade students from Oddeyrarskóli visit the children and read to them.

### *Christmas coffee*

Parents/guardians are welcome to have coffee with us. Further information is sent before the event.

### *Leaf bread (Laufabrauð)*

The children go to the assembly room and carve traditional leaf bread with the assistance of the teachers. The leaf bread will be on offer with the Christmas dinner at the Christmas Ball.



### *Christmas Ball*

The preschool's Christmas Ball is held in the assembly room where children and staff sing and dance around the Christmas tree. Those who want to can come in their better clothes. Finally, Yule Lads visit each department and give the children a small treat. Christmas lunch is served at noon.



### *Last Day of Christmas (Prettándinn)*

Children and staff say goodbye to Christmas with an outdoor Christmas dance (weather permitting). The children get hot chocolate and gingerbread cookies while outside.

### *Men's coffee (Bóndadagur)*

To celebrate the traditional Icelandic Men's Day, we invite the men in the child's life to enjoy morning coffee and breakfast. Substitutes are, of course, welcome.

### *Women's coffee (Konukaffi)*

To celebrate the traditional Icelandic Women's Day, we invite the women in the child's life to enjoy morning coffee and breakfast. Substitutes are, of course, welcome.

### *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. Everyone dines together at a long table in the assembly room, and the children are given a chance to taste traditional Icelandic food.



### *The international day of preschool*

Preschool Day is celebrated in various ways, with the aim of promoting positive dialogue about the preschool work. On this day, we do something unconventional and fun at Iðavöllur, something different each year.

### *“Bolludagur” (Bun-day)*

Meat or fish balls are served for lunch, and the children get a cream bun for dessert.

### *“Sprengidagur” (Eating till I blast)*

According to an old Icelandic custom, salted meat and lentil soup is served for lunch.

### *“Öskudagur” (Ash Wednesday)*

Children and teachers wear costumes to school and celebrate together. Each department selects a theme and decorates the department accordingly. Children and teachers gather in the assembly room, sing a few songs and hold a communal dance in the assembly room, with open doors between departments. The children are offered goodies to eat to celebrate the day.



### *Spring festival (Vorhátíð)*

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 and activities, which usually take place outdoors.

### *Graduation of oldest children (Útskrift)*

The spring festival begins with the graduation of the oldest children. Families of the children are invited to a simple ceremony in the assembly room which begins with a performance by the children. The principal hands them a graduation document and a small goodbye present.

### *Graduation trip of oldest children (Útskriftarferð)*

At the end of the school year, the children go on a day trip that they have organised with their teachers.

The children bring a snack from home to the trip, but the school provides lunch.

### *Costume day (búningadagur)*

On this day, the children can wear a costume to school.

### *Toy day (dóta dagur)*

This day, usually in January, the children can bring toys from home.

### *Flashlight day (vasaljósa dagur)*

The children can bring a flashlight to school and use them in games in darkened areas.

### *17 June (Iceland's Independence Day)*

17 June is Iceland's Independence Day. Departments celebrate during the days before or after this date, because it is a national holiday in Iceland – so school is closed.

### *Pyjama day (Náttfata dagur)*

The children can wear pyjamas to school, and a pyjama dance is held in the assembly room.

### *Book day (Bóka dagur)*

Our book day is held close to the International Literacy Day. Children are encouraged to bring books to the school. Books from home are always welcome.

## **Iðavöllur parents' association**

All parents automatically become members of the parents' association when the child begins attending the preschool. Parents/guardians are asked to let the principal know if they do not want to be members of the association. The association's aims are to strengthen relations between parents, children and staff, increase parental participation in schoolwork and ensure the well-being of children. The association is involved in various events and trips organised by the preschool. The association has also supported the school to purchase various teaching materials and toys. The main events sponsored by the parents' association are the Yule Lads and accompanist for the Christmas Ball, Christmas presents and spring festival. In the association's annual meeting, held every autumn, the association's affairs are discussed and the board elected. The board has 4–8 representatives of parents/guardians in addition to the chairman. One employee of the preschool serves as a contact with the association. Information on the parents' association and annual fee may be found on

<http://idavollur.is/Foreldrafelagid/Starfsemiargjald>

## Iðavöllur parents' council

The parents' council consists of 3–4 parents/guardians elected in the autumn for a term of one year.

*The council's principal roles are:*

To review the school curriculum and other school plans and submit comments to the preschool and education council. To monitor the execution of plans and make sure that they are presented to the parents. To present the views and ideas of parents to school officials and the education council. To work with the principal in the interest of the children and the preschool.



