

Great Totham Primary School



Parent Handbook 2021-2022

‘An overwhelming majority of parents and pupils would recommend the school. There is a palpable sense of mutual respect and trust at the school’

Ofsted 2017



Great Totham Primary School

Dear Parents,

I would like to welcome you and your family to Great Totham Primary School. As a school community we hope to make all new members feel at ease and we look forward to getting to know you over the forthcoming years.

At Great Totham we aim to provide an exciting learning environment of the highest standard, where the children can build upon their previous experiences and develop into confident learners. Key to this is a strong partnership with parents as we develop our shared responsibility for your child's education.

This handbook is intended to give you essential information about our school and the way we work. We have tried to make the information relevant without overloading you, so inevitably you may have additional questions or wish to find out more. Any member of staff will be happy to help and our web page also contains a range of useful information.

Yours sincerely

S. Vass
Headteacher.



Our Vision & Aims

For our children we provide:

- A positive ethos that supports them to develop intellectually, physically, emotionally, socially and spiritually
- A stimulating and balanced curriculum that enables them to develop their independence & confidence
- A safe and secure environment that enables them to take risks, rise to challenges and develop as effective lifelong learners
- High expectations of their behaviour, attitudes to learning and achievement
- Teaching of the highest standard

For our parents we provide:

- A welcoming and supportive environment
- The opportunity to build an effective partnership based upon trust & respect
- Clear, open & timely communication
- Opportunities for parents to be actively involved in the school community

For our staff we provide:

- A positive, supportive working environment that values them as individuals
- Opportunities to develop professionally
- High expectations in relation to teaching and learning

We contribute to our local community by:

- Working in partnership with other schools
- Working together to mutually support school & community activities
- Ensuring that our children develop an understanding of their role and responsibilities within society.

These values are summarised in our motto of

‘Enjoy, Respect, Achieve’

Our School

Our school is a two form entry primary school. We are very fortunate to have a swimming pool, performance studio and dedicated computing suite as well as on site wrap round child care facilities (The Lodge).

The School Governors

Every school has a governing body. This is a voluntary group who work with the Headteacher and staff to lead the school. The current list of governors and committee structure is available on the website.

Governors are involved in a range of activities including holding the school to account with regards to standards and the quality of learning for all children. Any correspondence for the governors should be addressed to the Chair of Governors and sent through the school office.

The School Office – 8:15am to 4:15pm. Tel: 01621 891091.

The school office is central to the daily working life of the school and as such, caters for the demands and needs of a very wide range of groups and individuals.

To make it quicker for you to drop off payments, letters or forms there is a post box located in the office reception area. Please use a clearly named envelope. The reception area also contains a chest of drawers for vouchers, tokens etc. collected by the school and the lost property boxes.

If you should wish to contact a member of staff please enquire at the school office and they will help to arrange a mutually convenient time.

All visitors must report to the school office, sign in and collect a visitor's badge before proceeding to any other part of the building or site.

School Website: www.greattotham.essex.sch.uk

The School Day

Key Stage 1 & Reception (Infant)

Morning	: 8.55 a.m. – 12.00 p.m.
Afternoon	: 1.00 p.m. - 3.20 p.m.

Key Stage 2 (Junior)

Morning	: 8.55 a.m. - 12.05 p.m.
Afternoon	: 1.10 p.m. - 3.20 p.m.

The Morning Routine

In the morning the Infant children can enter their classrooms from 8:40am. A member of staff or Yr. 6 monitor will be at each of the KS1 entrances to welcome them. This allows the children time to come into the classroom, get organised and settled before the start of the school day. It also provides parents with the opportunity to pass on any messages to staff if required.

The Junior children stay on the lower school playground from 8:40am where they are supervised by a member of staff until the whistle is blown, whereupon they line up and are escorted into their classrooms.

Arriving Late

All children who arrive late to school must report to the school office.

The Afternoon Routine

Parents are invited to come onto the playground and wait for the children from 3:15pm. All the children will be brought out and dismissed by a staff member. Please note all Infant children must be collected by an adult.

Infant children traveling home on the school bus or attending The Lodge are escorted by a staff member, KS2 children are able to go independently to the waiting areas.

Lunchtime Routines

At lunchtime, the children are able to have a school meal or bring their own packed lunch. This is entirely at parents' discretion but please be aware that all Infant children are entitled to a free school dinner.

Our Catering Manager and her team provide an appetising and nourishing school lunch with a range of different options each day. Our school council helps the catering staff evaluate menu choices and we are always trying to source our foodstuff locally where possible.

During the morning registration the children are asked for their meal choice and provided with a coloured band. The meals are then cooked to order on site.

The menu changes each term and you will be sent home an updated copy. During the summer term a well-balanced, nourishing, picnic-style lunch is available as an alternative to the plated lunches and salads.

In addition to the published menu the children are able to select salad and fruit to complement their meal. All allergen information is published alongside the menu on the school website.

On behalf of all of our children who suffer with severe nut allergies, we request that your child's lunchbox is free of whole nuts or products that contain whole or parts of nuts please. All school meals are nut free.

Children are not allowed to share or swap food in school.

The Catering Manager is always happy to discuss food arrangements with parents, especially if any child has a serious food allergy/specific need.



Payment for School Meals

Payment should be made **by +Pay on pmx.ParentMail**. If in exceptional circumstances you need to pay by cheque, these should be made payable to 'Great Totham Primary School' and the name(s) of the child(ren) for whom the payment is made, written on the reverse side.

The cost of a school meal is £2.20 per day. Payment for meals should be made in advance, weekly or half termly. Many parents find it convenient to place some money on credit for their child's dinners and then top this up as required.

Once you have returned your consent form you will receive an email with your Parentmail account details. All communication and transactions go through this secure system.



Drinking Water

Throughout the year, children are allowed to bring water to school in a small, transparent, named bottle that can be drunk during the course of the day. Children will also be able to drink water from the water fountains around the site at appropriate times.

Mid-Morning Snacks

We aim to promote healthy lifestyles. Fruit/raw vegetables are allowed as a mid-morning snack and are supplied by the government free of charge for every Infant child.

KS2 children are encouraged to bring a similar type of snack from home.

If you do not wish your Infant child to receive free fruit please indicate on the Admission Data form. Please also highlight any allergies, so that we ensure your child is not offered an item of fruit inappropriately.



School Milk

Up to their fifth birthday all Reception children will receive a free carton of milk each day. The 'Cool Milk' scheme allows the parents of all other Infant & KS2 pupils to have the option of purchasing a carton of milk for their child as a mid-morning drink.

Please see the enclosed letter

Child Care at Great Totham

We run child care on site in The Lodge. This facility is run by school staff and provides the children with a safe, fun environment at both the start and the end of the school day.

Breakfast: 7:30 – 8:45am

Each morning breakfast is served until 8:30 and consists of a selection of cereals, toast, yogurts and fresh fruit. The children are also able to choose from milk or water to drink.

The children have a range of indoor games and activities available to them and use of the playground.

At 8:45am the Infant children are taken to their classrooms and the Junior children are able to join their friends on the front playground to await the morning whistle.

Each session costs £4.

Afternoon: 3:20pm – 5:30pm or 6pm

Each evening the children are served a small meal. This may be for example sausage & mash, pasta bake or pizza.

The children then have access to a range of play areas, including the school grounds and organised arts & craft activities.

Each session costs £8 or £9.60

For more information about either of these child care facilities please contact
Miss Atkinson in the school office.
(Ext. 211)



School Uniform

School uniform plays a valuable role in contributing to the ethos of the school. It helps to instil pride in the school, support positive behaviour and discipline, encourage identity with, and support for, the school and protect children from social pressures to dress in a particular way. Adhering to the school uniform policy is compulsory. The school reserves the right to temporarily exclude pupils who persistently do not comply with the stipulated dress code.

General requirements

- 'Plain' is defined as no fashion embellishments, no contrasting colours or markings, no advertisements or brand logos
- Children are expected to be smartly presented during the course of the day and to take pride in their appearance at all times
- We ask that all items of clothing, including socks and underwear, are clearly marked with the child's name
- The school prohibits the use of make-up, nail varnish and the wearing of jewellery **including earrings**. A small inexpensive watch may be worn
- No extreme fashion haircuts e.g. tramlines, shaved head (complete or partial)
- Children with long hair must have it tied back with a plain hair accessory in either black or school uniform colours
- No hair colouring or the use of visible styling products is permitted and no products at all on swim days
- Summer dresses or skorts can be worn for the Summer term to Autumn half term



Uniform

Plain charcoal grey tailored/formal trousers (long or short), not combat style, leggings or jersey style

Plain charcoal grey skirt, at least knee length

White shirt with a hard collar

One of the following school purchased tops with logo

- pullover or
- cardigan or
- sleeveless jumper

Charcoal grey or white socks. Plain charcoal grey tights. No trainer socks

School purchased tie, normal or clip on, not elasticated

The choice of top coat is optional and must be sensible and hard wearing

A small (to hold A4 sized book) bag that fits easily into a school locker or hangs on a coat peg or a school purchased book bag

Black shoes, low heeled, no boots, not canvas / material

Optional summer uniform.

Bottle green and white checked summer dress or skorts at least knee length

Plain white socks, no trainer socks

A sun hat in hot weather

PE Kit – PE bags in house colours available from office

Plain black football shorts

Plain house colour polo shirt
(Red-Oak, Yellow-Maple, Blue-Willow, Green-Birch)

White PE socks

Plain trainers (no boot style)*

Plain tracksuit

Swimming

One-piece swimsuit or swimming trunks (not long, baggy shorts due to safety). Compulsory swimming hat

- Please note if your child has a verruca that prevents them from going bare foot during indoor PE, please provide light weight black plimsolls. Trainers are not suitable for the safety of the other children.



Lost Property

All items of lost property are kept in a unit in the office reception area. At the end of each month any unclaimed items will be donated to charity or be retained to assist with the uniform requirements of families suffering financial hardship.

In the interests of school security, parents are asked not to 'search' unattended classrooms for missing items. Parents are asked to regularly check that children have name-tags in all items of clothing and that all other equipment is clearly marked with the child's name and class.

Other Items in School

We do not accept any responsibility for items lost or damaged in school and therefore ask that additional valuable items are not brought onto the school site unless specifically asked by your child's teacher.

Although not encouraged children are allowed to bring in small, sensible and named game/toy for playtimes. For example a skipping rope, colouring book etc. Children may also bring their own books to complement school reading scheme books during daily 'quiet reading' sessions.

Mobile Telephones

Children are not allowed, under any circumstances, to bring mobile telephones to school (including after school activities such as discos and film nights) or to take them to any off-site activity e.g. educational visits, sporting events, etc.

Forgotten Items

Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their belongings and are not allowed to telephone home for items which they have forgotten to bring to school (e.g. swimming kit). If parents wish to bring such belongings to school during the day they may place them in the box provided in the office reception area and fill in the name and class of the child in the book provided. Monitors will distribute any such items during morning break and lunch time.

Pupil Absences from School

If a pupil is absent from school for one day, parents are asked to inform the school in person, by letter, telephone (01621-891091 ext. 1) or e-mail (admin@greattotham.essex.sch.uk). Failure to provide an acceptable reason for absence will result in your child's absences being recorded as 'unauthorised'.

If a child is absent and the school has not received an explanatory message by 9.30 a.m. a member of the office staff will contact the child's home/parent's place of work to confirm that the child is safe. If this course of action fails to identify the whereabouts of the child in question then the police/Social Services may be informed. First Day Contact is an integral aspect of pupil safety; parental support in this matter is essential and much appreciated by the school.

Any leave of absence request must be made through the school office. Holidays will not be approved unless in exceptional circumstances. Any leave of absence of 10 consecutive sessions (5 school days) or more is eligible for a penalty notice. *(Please see the enclosed Attendance leaflet or school website for more information)*

Children who are absent in term time miss vital schooling and it takes time for them to settle back upon their return, often as long as they have been away.

Good attendance is between 95% - 100% and as a parent it is your legal responsibility to make sure that your child is in school, health permitting.

- 95% attendance still means just under 2 weeks of learning missed.

To support your child with their attendance in school please do not make non-urgent medical appointments during the school day

If you have any issues relating to attendance with your child, please contact our School Family Support worker, Amanda Wilson. She will be able to support you and work with you to resolve any concerns.

Looking After Our Children

School Security

The main entrance is alongside The Lodge. Both this gate and the infant gate is locked between 9.00a.m. and 3.10p.m. Entrance to the school between these hours is by the main gate only; there is a buzzer which will notify the office to release the gate.

For your child's safety we ask all visitors to ensure they enter through the main entrance at the school office, sign into the visitors' book and collect a badge. Upon signing in please ensure you are familiar with the school health & safety notice for school visitors and know what to do in the event of a fire alarm.

Any child leaving the premises temporarily to attend appointments (dental or medical etc.) must be 'signed out' and 'signed back in' by their parents at the office.

Delivering and Collecting Children.

As with all school sites there is considerable congestion on nearby roads at the beginning and end of the school day. In particular Walden House Road is very narrow with limited roadside parking. We encourage as many families as possible to walk to school but recognise that this is not always possible. The following agreed systems help make travel arrangements for all children safer and we would appreciate your co-operation.

1) Drop Off Zone

(Mornings only 8:40 – 8:55am)

This zone stretches along Walden House Road from the main school entrance and up to the first set of driveways. There is **NO PARKING** in this area of a morning it is only for cars to briefly pull into while the children exit the car and then promptly leave.

Year 6 monitors are on duty each morning with a member of staff to escort Infant children to their classrooms.

2) Voluntary One Way

We ask that cars enter Walden House Road from Kelvedon Road – this helps to ease congestion and ensure that the drop off zone runs smoothly for all.

3) Car Parking

There is no parking in the school car park for parents, regrettably there is not enough space. If you have access needs please contact the school prior to your visit so that arrangements can be made. If parking your car (not in drop off zone) please ensure you do not obstruct residents' driveways or park on the zigzag lines during prohibited times. The area is monitored by the police regularly.

Due to the narrow roads we do not allow children to cycle to school independently or store their bikes or scooters on the school site. If your child does scooter to school we ask that you take this back with you after dropping your child off.

Dogs (other than guide dogs) may not enter the site. Other than under the direct supervision of a staff member, children may not use the school play equipment.

Free School Transport

Essex County Council is responsible for the transportation of children from home to school and free transport is only provided in accordance with ECC policy. If you feel you qualify, enquiries should be directed to the officer responsible for home/school transport, at County Hall, Chelmsford (Telephone 0345 6032200).

Transport Details

The school is not responsible for hiring the coach, minibus or taxis which transport children to and from outlying districts. It is important to note that the coach contractors can refuse to transport any child whose behaviour is so continually poor that he/she constitutes a serious danger to other children and adults transported in that vehicle.

It is imperative that on occasions when children will NOT be using the coach or minibus to journey home, that you inform the transport provider.

Medical Information

It is important that the school has all relevant medical information about children at the school. This information will be securely stored in the school medical room and made available to all staff as appropriate. Parents are asked to ensure that the school is kept informed of any changes in relation to medical conditions and allergies.

If a child requires regular medication, parents are asked to complete a written permission slip for staff to oversee the administration, with clear instructions about timing and dose. Medicines can only be administered in school if they have been prescribed by the child's GP and cannot be fitted around the school day e.g. 4 x doses of antibiotics. We are unable to give children non-prescription medication such as Calpol and ask that non-prescription medication is not brought onto the school site, this includes throat pastilles.

Medicines are administered just before or during the lunch break and every dose given is logged. All medication will be kept in the school medical room excluding asthma inhalers which will be kept in your child's classroom.

If your child is unwell during the school day we will make every effort to contact you. It is important that we have up-to-date information about contact numbers as it can be very distressing for a child to have to remain in school when they are unwell if we cannot contact anyone to collect them.

If your child has an accident in school, first aid will be administered by a member of staff. We have qualified first-aiders in school who will supervise in the case of a more serious injury. If we have any concerns about a child following an accident in school, parents will be contacted immediately and your child may be taken straight to hospital.

If a child sustains a minor head injury during the course of the day, you will be informed by letter, thus minimising the risk of mistaken diagnosis should the child become unwell on returning home.

Please use ext. 3 to speak to our Family Support Worker regarding any medical concerns.

In the event of a child suffering from sickness or diarrhoea, parents are asked to keep the child at home for at least 24 hours after the last bout of vomiting/diarrhoea. Experience shows that an unwell child is often left feeling weak and therefore not in a fit state to cope with the many demands of school life. In addition it is important to prevent any individual from spreading an infection/virus to other site users.

Parents are asked to give written permission for staff to tend to children who may have an accident involving bodily fluid. *(See pack for form).*

Physical Education

If a child is medically unfit to partake in P.E, sessions a note needs to be given to the class teacher. As part of the National Curriculum all children are expected to take in P.E. sessions unless for clear medical reasons. If you feel your child is too unwell to partake in P.E, then he/she would probably be best at home, resting and recovering.



Sun Protection

Medical research has indicated that one of the possible causes of adult melanoma is excessive exposure to sunlight in childhood years. To support parents in protecting their children during the hot weather we:

1. Encourage the children to sit in the shade out of direct sunlight for part of the lunch break.
2. Encourage all children to bring and wear a hat to school, preferably of a legionnaire style which has a protective flap for the back of the neck.
3. Remind parents of the importance of applying sun cream on exposed body parts before school. There are now products on the market which give protection for the whole of the school day, are water resistant and therefore ideal for swimming days.
4. Suggest that vulnerable children wear long sleeved shirts or blouses.



Home School Partnership

Home/School Agreement

All schools are required to have home school agreements. This simple document forms the basis of the ongoing partnership between home and school. Please share this agreement with your child and return a signed copy to the school office. *(See pack for form).*

Communication

Good communication between school and home is a key part to the shared responsibility the school has with parents. The school has a responsibility to keep parents informed about what is happening in school. We also ask parents to inform the school of any important events and issues that might be taking place at home.

Newsletters

The school keeps parents informed of events in school, important information and dates through a system of regular newsletters. These will be sent out through pmx.Parentmail and will also be available on the website. There will also be other letters about specific issues, trips, clubs or sporting events which we will try and send out electronically as much as is possible.

Please ensure you keep the school up to date if you change any of your contact details.

Curriculum News

Each term year teams will send home a curriculum overview. This summary provides you with information about what your child will be learning in school and enables you to support your child at home. This summary will also contain handy reminders about homework routines and PE kit days etc.



Reporting to Parents

We endeavour to keep parents informed about the progress their child is making on a regular basis. Parents are welcome to arrange meetings to talk to the class teacher whenever they feel necessary. The school offers three more formal occasions for parents to receive information about the progress their child is making. These are as follows:

1. Autumn Term – Parents' Evening

This evening is an opportunity for parents to have an appointment to speak to their child's class teacher about how they have settled into their new class. At this meeting, the class teacher will discuss the targets that have been set for the child for the forthcoming months.

2. Spring Term – Parents' Evening

At this second parents' evening, the targets that were set are reviewed and parents are given the opportunity to discuss the progress that their child has made. The class teacher will explain in more detail the areas of strength and if relevant, any areas of concern. New targets will be set for the forthcoming months.

3. Summer Term – Annual Progress Report

Towards the end of the summer term the class teacher will write a full progress report for each child. This gives detailed information about the progress made in all subjects. Parents are given the opportunity to discuss any issues in relation to this report but there is no formal parents' evening during this term.



At the end of the summer term there is an Open Evening for parents to come with their child, to meet informally with the class teacher and to meet their new class teacher. This is a very informal evening that aims to celebrate the work of all children and to give parents the opportunity to come into school to share in this celebration.

In addition, we welcome parents to a range of school events such as sports day, performances or curriculum workshops.



Volunteers in School

We offer many opportunities for volunteers to become involved in school life and actively encourage parents to get involved with their child's education and learning.

Opportunities include: -

- Hearing readers
- Help with library books
- School trips
- Supporting classroom activities
- Outdoor learning days
- Helping with preparing for swimming lessons

Some volunteers are able to offer weekly support while others find it easier to offer help on individual occasions. If you would like to know more about how you can help in school, please talk to a staff member.



All parents who regularly help in school must have a Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) check. The school office will assist with this.



Parent Teacher and Friends Association (P.T.F.A.)

At Great Totham Primary School there is a P.T.F.A. and parents automatically become members once they have accepted a place for their child at the school. This group works continuously throughout the year to raise additional funds for the school and organise social events for parents and children.

It is important that this body is supported through parents being members of the committee and where possible assisting with and attending the functions which are organised each year. P.T.F.A. news is included on the school newsletter and event information sent out regularly.



The School's Curriculum

All children in England work within the National Curriculum.

Foundation Stage – Year R

KS1 – Yr1 & 2

KS2 – Yr3 to Yr6.

The National Curriculum covers a wide range of subjects which we organise to provide the children a broad and balanced approach that underpins the key skills in English and Maths and prepares children for a life in modern Britain. Children are taught in a variety of ways, whole class, streamed sets or smaller focused groups, to ensure all children are working to meet their need. The year team is responsible for making these arrangements as best fits the children's learning needs and they will change as your child moves through the school. Classes will be mixed each year and there will be opportunities to work across the year group regularly.

The curriculum is organised in a variety of ways to help ensure a rich and varied educational experience. Some subjects within the National Curriculum lend themselves to being taught as discrete subjects while others, such as a historical unit on the Romans, are better when linked with additional subjects. These 'Topics' or units of study enable children to draw upon and apply a range of skills within a given context. This helps to generate purpose for learning and inspire creative thinking.

At the end of each key stage the children are assessed and their progress shared with you. In Yr2 assessment tasks, commonly known as SATs help inform teacher assessments while in Yr6 the children will sit a range of formal papers which are sent off for marking.



Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

All areas of teaching and learning provide opportunities to promote a child's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. To enhance this, specific opportunities are planned within the school curriculum. Much of this is achieved through lifeskills and religious education. A significant contribution is also made by the school ethos, effective, positive relationships throughout the school, assemblies and class circle times.

An act of collective worship is held every day and the school follows the Essex agreed syllabus 'Religious Education in Essex'. Parents who wish their children to be withdrawn from all or part of assemblies and/or Religious Education should contact the Headteacher.

Sex and Relationships Education

This is included in the wider curriculum area lifeskills. Our specific sex and relationships programme begins in Year 5 and continues in Year 6. Parents are informed, primarily through the curriculum letter, of the upcoming topics to be covered each term.

Challenging Our Children

We strive to ensure that all children, whatever their ability and needs, are given equal opportunities to develop. Our children have an entitlement to a broad and balanced curriculum that offers challenge, enrichment and extension as appropriate. We also focus on the social and emotional aspects of learning to ensure that this challenge and extension is placed in a context that will support children throughout their school life and not just within the primary school context.



As children develop, their interest and desire to improve and broaden their skills and abilities in a range of activities grows. It is often rewarding to see how these skills develop into real talent. It is very much a part of our joint responsibility with parents to see that we do everything to encourage children to develop these talents, whether they are academic, sporting, musical, artistic or other. We are keen to share successes and achievements both in and out of school so that these can be celebrated.

Special Educational Needs & Disabilities

Our educational aims are the same for all children. We respond to all children's diverse needs; for some children these needs may require additional or different help to that which is normally provided within class. These needs may be short or long term. Where a child has a specific individual need this will be identified as early as possible, working in close partnership with parents and other professionals.

The SEND Code of Practice requires that all schools publish a School Information Report providing information about how Special Educational Needs and Disabilities are catered for within the school and that all local authorities publish their Local Offer detailing services and support that are available within the local area. Our School Information Report can be found on our school website and the Essex Local Offer found at www.essexlocaloffer.org.uk.

The School Information Report sets out our current provision and how we work closely with children and their parents to address their specific needs. It also explains some of the terminology and systems around SEND. If you require any further advice or information, please do not hesitate to contact our SENCo.

Pupil Premium

Pupil Premium is a fund given to schools based upon the number of children in receipt of Free School Meals (FSM). This money is to enable the school to provide a range of support and resources. How the school spends this money and the impact it has had on children learning is published on the school website.

All Infant children are automatically entitled to a free school dinner. This is not the same as FSM and no pupil premium money will be allocated to the school. It is very important that any parent in receipt of the following benefits contact the school office or complete the enclosed form so that we can apply for you.

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The Guarantee element of a State Pension credit
- Child tax Credit, provided you are not entitled to Working Tax credit and have an annual income (as assessed by HM Revenue and Customs that does not exceed £16,190
(You will not normally be eligible if you receive any amount of Working Tax Credit)

In addition if your child is moving into KS2 you must apply online for FSM or all support will stop.

Our Family Support Worker can support you with this, please call ext. 3.

- Go online to www.essex.gov.uk/educationawards
or
- Call 0845 603 2200

Homework

The children will be set an increasing amount of homework as they progress through the school. Age appropriate expectations and guidance will be shared clearly with you by the year team each year.

All children are encouraged to read regularly at home from a wide selection of quality fiction and non-fiction literature. We hope you will support your child with this vital skill and communicate their progress regularly to their class teacher.

Swimming

Although this is only a compulsory activity once within either KS1 or KS2, at Great Totham all children receive four weeks swimming instruction each year. A voluntary contribution to costs is requested to support this. An additional six weeks swimming lessons are available. Families experiencing financial hardship

should contact the Headteacher; all such information will be dealt with in the strictest of confidence.

Each year we ask for volunteers to help supervise the Infant children. They are all DBS checked and we are very grateful for their support. Without them the children would not be able to swim.

Clubs

A wide variety of clubs take place throughout the course of the academic year and a list of clubs is issued each term. These may be run by staff, volunteers or commercial providers.

Children who join clubs are expected to take their commitment seriously, and we would ask parents to support the staff in ensuring that all children attend regularly.



Clubs which are held after school in the playground or on the field will only be cancelled in wet weather if they cannot be accommodated elsewhere on the school site, and in such circumstances children will go home at the end of the normal school day. This does mean on occasion you may need to collect your child at short notice.

No child will be allowed to leave an after school club unaccompanied.



Emergency Closure Procedures including Severe Weather Conditions

The following procedure to close the school will be followed in the event of an emergency or particularly harsh weather conditions. School closures by their very nature, are rarely planned and we appreciate that this can lead to frustration and inconvenience. The ultimate decision to close the school is down to the Headteacher making an assessment of the viability of the site and safety of children and staff.

Decisions relating to snow conditions are particularly challenging. We have to assess early in the morning how many staff can arrive safely (before 8am), and consider the forecast for the day.

In the event that the school will be closed, this decision will be shared with you in the following ways and as quickly as possible:

- The school website. (Banner on homepage)
- Parentmail.
- Message on the school phone answer service.
- Essex emergency school closure page.

<http://www.essex.gov.uk/Education-Schools/Schools/Dates/Pages/Emergency-School-Closures.aspx>

If severe weather conditions are experienced during the course of the day, all the children will be kept safe in school, until they can be collected. On days such as this, clubs would be cancelled so children and then staff can leave the site promptly at the end of the day.

If your child travels by bus the school will, in the event of a closure, inform the company.

If it is possible to open the school, please be aware that all staff may not be present and nor would we expect all the children from surrounding areas to necessarily be able to make their way into school safely. School registration would stay open until 10am to enable you to slowly and safely make your way

into school and prevent potentially dangerous congestion outside the school in icy conditions.

On snowy days, the children will need wellies/boots and suitable outdoor clothes to enable them to go out and play on the field. If they are not prepared, including a change of shoes, they will be unable to go outside.

