

Great Totham Primary School



Parent Handbook

'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, 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 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 4:30pm, 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 contains a chest of drawers with useful information, forms and lost property boxes.

If you should wish to contact a member of staff this can be done via the school office or class teacher email addresses. Please be aware that teachers' email address are not monitored throughout the day and any urgent matters require a phone call to the school office.

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

Morning Arrival

In the morning, children can enter their classrooms from 8:35am and must be in school by 8:50am. For Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 children, a member of staff or Year 6 monitor will be waiting to welcome the children at the doors. This allows the children time to come into the classroom, get organised and settled before the start of the school day.

Arriving Late

Regularly arriving late is unsettling for the children and disruptive for the class. However, should you on occasion have an emergency which means you arrive late to school, children must be accompanied by an adult to the school office.

End of the School Day

School finishes at 3.20pm. Classes are led out by their teacher. Reception and Key Stage 1 (Year 1 and Year 2) children are dismissed to a known adult. In Key Stage 2 (Years 3-6), parents can choose whether to meet their child or allow them to walk independently.

Please note all Infant children must be collected by an adult.

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

Lunchtime Routines

At lunchtime, the children can have a school meal (which is free for **all** infant children) or bring their own packed lunch.

Our catering team provides an appetising and nourishing school lunch with a range of different options each day. We try to source our ingredients locally, where possible.

During morning registration the children are asked for their meal choice and meals are then cooked to order on site.

The menu changes throughout the year and you will be ParentMailed a copy. During the summer term a well-balanced, nourishing, picnic-style lunch is available one day a week as an alternative to the plated lunches.



All allergen information is published alongside the menu on the school website and displayed outside the school office.

On behalf of all children who suffer with severe nut allergies, we request that your child's lunchbox is **free of nuts or products that contain nuts** (products stating 'may contain nuts are fine'). All school meals are nut free.

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

Our 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 via **ParentMail**.

The cost of a school meal is £2.30 per day. Payment for meals can 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.



Drinking Water

Children are encouraged to bring water to school each day in a small, named bottle (no other drinks please). There are also several water fountains around the school.

Mid-Morning Fruit or Vegetable Snack

In Reception and Key Stage 1 the government provides a fruit (fresh or dried) or raw vegetable snack free of charge for every child. In Key Stage 2 the children are encouraged to bring in a snack that meets the same criteria.

School Milk

Up to their fifth birthday all Reception children will receive a daily free carton of milk. If you would like this to continue, you can join the 'Cool Milk' scheme. A letter is enclosed in your welcome pack.

Child Care at Great Totham

We are pleased to be able to offer on-site child care at The Lodge. This 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 consists of a selection of cereals, toast, yogurts and fresh fruit. The children are also able to choose from milk or water to drink.

A range of indoor games and activities are provided for the children to enjoy.

All Infant children are taken to their classrooms at the end of the session, whilst the KS2 children walk to class independently.

Each morning session costs £4.

Afternoon: 3:20pm – 5:30pm or 6pm

Each evening the children are served a light meal. This may be for example pizza, beans on toast or fresh filled rolls.

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

These sessions cost £8 until 5.30pm or £9.60 until 6pm.

For more information about either of these childcare facilities please contact the school office.



School Uniform

School uniform plays a valuable role in contributing to our ethos. It helps to instil pride in the school, support positive behaviour and discipline, encourage identity with the school and protect children from social pressures to dress in a particular way.

We are committed to keeping costs to a minimum. Most items can be purchased from a variety of retailers. Branded items e.g. school jumpers purchased directly from school are sold at cost. In addition, second hand uniform sales are held regularly.



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 and to always take pride in their appearance
- All items of clothing should be clearly marked with your child's name
- No make-up, nail varnish or jewellery **including earrings.** A small inexpensive watch may be worn
- Children with long hair must have it tied back with a plain hair accessory in either black or school uniform colours
- No extreme haircuts
- No hair colouring
- No hair products on swimming days
- Summer dresses or skorts can be worn from the summer term to autumn half term

If your child has a verruca that prevents them from going bare foot during indoor PE, light weight black plimsolls are needed. Trainers are not suitable for the safety of the other children.

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

Plain charcoal grey pinafore

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

Optional school purchased tie, normal or clip on

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 sturdy shoes (low heeled, no boots) or plain black trainers

Optional summer uniform.

Bottle green and white checked summer dress or skorts

Plain white socks, no trainer socks

A sun hat in hot weather

PE Kit – Optional 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 in muted colours e.g. black, navy or bottle green

Swimming

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

Lost Property

Unnamed lost property is stored in drawers within the office reception area. At the end of each month any unclaimed items are donated to charity or retained for our regular second-hand uniform sale.

Please regularly check that children have nametags in all items of clothing and that other equipment, such as water bottles, are clearly named.



We do not accept any responsibility for items lost or damaged in school and therefore ask that additional valuable items are not brought into school.

Mobile Telephones

Children are not allowed mobile phones, or devices connected to them e.g. smart watches, in school (including after school activities such as discos and film nights) or to take them to any off-site activity e.g. educational visits or sporting events etc.

If there are exceptional family circumstances, please contact the office to discuss this.

Forgotten Items

Children are encouraged to take responsibility for their belongings, and we will not routinely telephone home for items which have forgotten. If you need to drop off belongings, they should be placed in the box in the office reception area and please fill in the name and class of your child in the book provided. Monitors will distribute any such items during morning break and lunch time.

Pupil Absences from School

If your child is absent from school, inform the school in person, by 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 your child is absent and the school has not received an explanatory message by 9.30 a.m. a member of the office staff will make contact to confirm your child is safe. If this course of action fails to identify the whereabouts of your child, then the police/Social Services may be informed. First Day Contact is an integral aspect of children 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 website for Attendance Policy)*

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 96% - 100% and as a parent it is your legal responsibility to make sure that your child is in school, health permitting.

- 95% attendance means just under 2 weeks of learning missed over the year
- Children with attendance of under 90% are defined by the Department for Education and 'persistent absentees'

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. In addition, attendance of all children is monitored regularly and we may contact you if there are concerns.

Looking After Our Children

School Security during the School Day

The main entrance is alongside The Lodge. All pedestrian gates are locked between 9.00a.m. and 3.10p.m, visitors should use the intercom to gain access.

All visitors must sign into the visitors' book and ensure they are familiar with the emergency evacuation process and safeguarding procedures.

Any child leaving the premises temporarily to attend unavoidable appointments must be 'signed out' and 'signed back in' by their parents at the office.

Dropping Off and Collecting Children

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 particularly as Walden House Road is very narrow with limited roadside parking.

1) Drop Off Zone - (Mornings only 8:35 – 8:50am)

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, to allow children to exit before promptly leaving. 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. 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 and parking enforcement officers 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 scoot to school, we ask that you take this back with you after dropping your child off and are mindful of the safety of pedestrians
- Dogs (other than guide dogs and our school dog) may not enter the site
- Play equipment may not be used by any child before and after school
- Pre-school children must be closely supervised



Free School Transport

Essex County Council is responsible for the transportation of children who qualify for free transport. More information at: <https://www.essex.gov.uk/school-transport/>.

Transport Details

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

Parents **MUST** inform the transport provider if their child is not travelling home with them that day.

Medical Information

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

Generally, only medicines prescribed by a medical practitioner would be administered in school. The medicine must be marked with a pharmaceutical label, stating instructions and the patient's name. In some discretionary cases, over-the-counter medication may be administered without prescription (for example, pain relief for a broken arm) with the permission of the Headteacher. In all cases, parents must sign a consent form. Common cold relief medication, including throat pastilles will not be administered and should not be brought into school.

Medicines are administered by staff 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 day, and needs to be at home, we will contact you. It is important that we have up-to-date information about contact numbers as it can be very distressing for your child to have to remain in school when they are unwell.

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 you will be contacted.

If your child sustains a minor head injury during the day, you will be informed by letter, thus minimising the risk of mistaken diagnosis should your 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 your child suffering from sickness or diarrhoea, please keep them at home for 24 hours after the last bout of vomiting/diarrhoea. It is important to prevent any individual from spreading an infection/virus to others. There are however many cause of both vomiting and diarrhoea which are not caused by infection or virus. Please speak to Mrs Wilson, our Family Support Worker, regarding any ongoing concerns.



You are asked to give written permission for staff to tend to your child if they have an accident involving bodily fluid (see pack for form).

Physical Education

If a child is medically unfit to take part in P.E a note needs to be given to the class teacher.

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 you in protecting your child during hot weather we:

- Encourage the children to sit in the shade out of direct sunlight for part of the lunch break
- 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
- 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
- Suggest that vulnerable children wear long sleeved shirts or blouses

Home School Partnership

Communication

Good communication between school and home is important. We have a responsibility to keep you informed about what is happening in school. We need you to inform us of any important events and issues that might be taking place at home.

If you have a concern about any aspect of school life, please contact us directly so we can help resolve this for you. We would appreciate the opportunity to help you rather than hearing about them on social media.

Newsletters

Our fortnightly newsletters keep you informed of events in school, important information and dates.

The majority of letters will be sent via ParentMail, please ensure you keep your contact details up to date.



Curriculum News

A termly curriculum letter will be sent to you by your child's class teacher. This provides you with information about what your child will be learning in school and enables you to support your child at home.

This will also contain handy reminders about homework routines, PE kit days and how to contact your child's teacher via email.

Reporting to Parents

We keep you informed about your child's progress on a regular basis. You are welcome to arrange meetings with class teachers whenever necessary. We offer three formal occasions for all parents to receive information about the progress their child is making. These are as follows:

1. *Autumn Term – Parents' Evening*

This is an opportunity to speak to teachers about how your child has settled into their new class.

2. *Spring Term – Parents' Evening*

Your child's progress will be discussed at this meeting including areas of strength and if relevant, any areas of concern. You will also be able to spend time looking through your child's work.

3. *Summer Term – Annual Report*

In the summer term you will receive a written report for your child. This gives information about attainment made in all subjects.

You have the opportunity to discuss any issues in relation to this report but there is no formal parents' evening during this term.



Parent Teacher and Friends Association (PTFA)

We are very lucky to have a great PTFA who work to raise additional funds for the school and organise social events for parents and children.

It is important that this group is well supported, and it relies upon parents being members of the committee and where possible assisting with and attending the functions which are organised each year.



PTFA news is included on the school newsletter and event information sent out regularly.

Recent projects supported by funds raised by the PTFA have included the KS1 outside classroom, adventure play equipment and beautiful new book areas in every classroom.



Learning the GTPS Way

Our approach to learning can be encapsulated in our school motto:
“Enjoy, Respect, Achieve”.

This means our whole curriculum and school experience focus upon providing our children with the widest range of learning opportunities aimed at developing the whole child. Our Learner @ statements underpin every learning opportunity as we believe these skills enable children to be successful learners for life in modern Britain.

A Learner @ Great Totham:

- Is a problem solver
- Perseveres
- Takes responsibility
- Gets stuck in!
- Makes mistakes & learns

Children are taught in a variety of ways for example whole class, streamed sets, or small focus groups. The year team is responsible for making these arrangements as best fits the children’s learning needs and they will adapt as your child moves through the school.

Classes are mixed each year and there will be opportunities to work across the year group regularly as the children learn together as part of a year group team.

Additional detail regarding our curriculum can be found on the website.



Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

All areas of teaching and school life provide opportunities to promote a child's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This is enhanced within the curricula for Life Skills and Religious Education.

An act of collective worship is held every day and we follow the agreed Essex syllabus. Parents who wish their child to be withdrawn from all or part of assemblies and/or Religious Education should contact the Head Teacher.

Special Educational Needs & Disabilities

Our educational aims are the same for all children. We respond to children's diverse needs; some children 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.

If you require any further advice or information, please do not hesitate to contact our SENCo (Special Needs Co-ordinator).



Pupil Premium

Pupil Premium is a fund given to schools based upon the number of children who are currently or have previously been 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 Universal Free School Dinner. This is not the same as FSM. 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 contact the office or all support will stop.

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. Our Homework policy is also available on the website.

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 enjoy sharing books with them.



Swimming

All children swim for a minimum of four weeks each year. A voluntary contribution to costs is requested to support this.

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

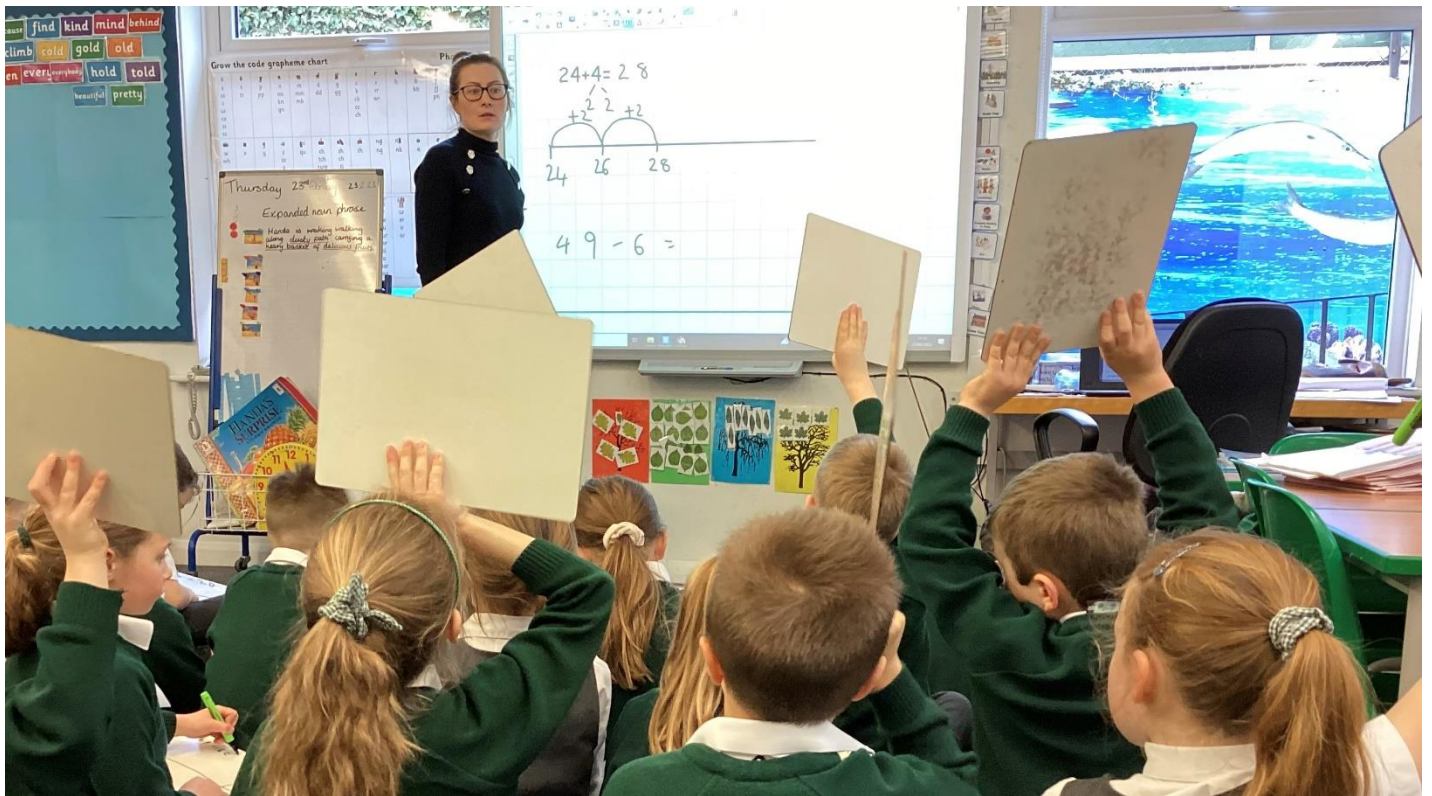
A wide variety of clubs take place throughout the course of the academic year and a list is issued each term. These may be run by staff or commercial providers.

Children who join clubs are expected to take their commitment seriously, and we ask you to support the staff in ensuring that your child attends 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.

All children must be collected by an adult after attending a club.





Emergency Closure Procedures including Severe Weather Conditions

In the event of an emergency or particularly harsh weather conditions, the following procedure is used. 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 must 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 (message 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 make your way slowly and safely 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.

