

GREAT WALTHAM CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL



**SCHOOL EVENTS AND PROCEDURES EXPLAINED
2011**



COMMUNICATION

E-mail

Parents are now encouraged to communicate when possible by e-mail. Absence letters, requests for forms, general enquiries etc can all be handled by e-mail, admin@greatwaltham.essex.sch.uk which is checked by office staff daily. Our newsletter and many other communications are now sent to parents via HomeContact. The newsletter often contains information which is not sent to parents in any other form and it is essential that parents read this thoroughly and make a note of all forthcoming events and dates.

Class Pouch System

All letters, reply slips, dinner menus, uniform orders etc which parents are not able to send by email should be given to your child to place in the class pouch at morning registration. The pouches are returned to the office with the registers. This reduces the queue of parents at the office window in the busy morning period and enables the office staff to deal more efficiently with all incoming items.

Reading Record/Planner

As well as being used to record reading sessions/homework the Reading Record books and Planners can be used as a tool for two way communication. Parents are encouraged to check Record Books/Planners regularly.

Parent Drop-in Days

We are trialling a new system whereby, on a nominated day each week, parents may 'drop in' at the end of the school day to have a quick word with their child's class teacher or look at their child's work. Currently these days are as follows:

Class 1R:	Monday	Class 3:	Wednesday
Class 1:	Monday	Class 4:	Thursday
Class 2:	Monday	Class 5:	Thursday

Parents' Forum

We are constantly trying to improve our communication with parents and to this end the Parents' Forum is a new initiative that we have set up. The aim is to provide a forum for parents to come into school and meet with members of the Senior Management Team on a regular basis to discuss any matter they choose, no matter how large or small. Likewise the SMT are able to discuss future plans and initiatives with parents.

Notes of the meetings are posted on the parents' notice board in the school reception area, and on the school website.

Home/School Agreement

The Home/School Agreement is a three part document which sets out the expectations/commitments of the pupils, the parents and the school. This is a legal requirement, and all parties must sign the document.



ATTENDANCE

Late arrivals

Pupils arriving at the site after 8.55 have to come into the school via the office entrance and parents are requested to complete the signing in sheet in the entrance so that the register can be up-dated. Pupils who arrive on site after 9.30 (unless the school have been previously advised) will have an unauthorised absence mark for the morning session on their annual record of attendance in accordance with Local Authority procedure.

Medical Appointments

Medical appointments should be made outside school hours. If this is not possible, prior notice should be given to the school in writing, by appointment letter/card when available. Pupils should be taken out of school for exactly the amount of time required for the appointment rather than for a whole morning or afternoon session.

Illness

The school operates a 'first day contact policy'. This means that should a child be unable to come to school the parent should notify the school office by 9.30 a.m. on the first day of absence to explain the reason for absence. If the school have not heard anything by 9.30 a.m. they will contact the parent by text message or telephone. It is not necessary to telephone on subsequent days unless the illness becomes prolonged. However, even if the absence is only for one day, parents are required to send a note, confirming the reason for absence, when the child returns to school.

In order to prevent the spread of infection, children should remain at home until they are better. Sickness and diarrhoea bugs take 48 hours to pass through the system and parents should ensure that their child has not been sick for a minimum of 24 hours before sending them back to school.

Once children start school they are more likely to pick up parasites such as headlice and thread worms. Parents are asked to be vigilant for these common but unpleasant occurrences, as the quicker outbreaks are dealt with the less chance they have to spread. It is advisable to check children's hair every day by combing. The school, or the local pharmacy, can advise parents on treatment. Thread worms are normally only evident at night and your child may complain of stomach ache and discomfort at or after bedtime. Parents should consult their GP if they suspect thread worms.

Holidays/Unusual Circumstances

Parents are requested to take all holidays during school closures. The Government has set very clear guidelines which state that the only genuine reason for taking holiday in term time should be if either parent is unable to take time off of work during the school holiday. Head Teachers have therefore been given the discretion to authorise one holiday of up to ten days in an academic year providing that the child has an otherwise satisfactory rate of attendance. When requesting leave of absence for holiday parents should be mindful that if their return flight is in the evening it is unlikely that their child will be able to return to school the following day and they should include that in the number of days requested. Holiday request forms are available in the school entrance. Parents may request, in writing, leave of absence for their child for one day in exceptional circumstances such as a family wedding.



UNIFORM, VOLUNTEER HELPERS, FOGWS and MUSIC TUITION

UNIFORM

Full details of our uniform can be found in the School Prospectus and on our website. Most items are generic and can be purchased in any uniform shop or supermarket but we do have a number of items bearing our school logo and these can be purchased from Schoolwear Plus, 12 Parkway, Chelmsford. Price lists can be found in the school entrance and on the website.

We encourage the children to wear sunhats during the summer and request that they bring sun cream that they can apply themselves, when the sun is particularly strong. School baseball caps can be purchased at Schoolwear Plus.

Jewellery should NOT be worn at school. Children are no longer allowed to use tape to cover their studs/small sleepers during physical education lessons and swimming, so those with recently pierced ears should learn to remove their studs. It should not be necessary to wear earrings to school after the healing period. Children who do will be asked to remove them.

VOLUNTEER HELPERS

All parents and friends of the school are welcome, indeed encouraged, to offer their services as volunteer helpers in the school, on a regular or ad hoc basis. In line with our Child Protection Policy, all volunteers must first be CRB checked (Criminal Records Bureau) and those who offer to provide transport to events must produce their driving license, insurance and MOT (if applicable), every time they do so. Volunteers are also asked to sign a confidentiality agreement.

FOGWS

The 'Friends of Great Waltham School' is the Parent Teacher Association, organising fundraising and social events. Such events are planned and run by a committee of parents and one or two staff. Meetings are informal and normally held during the school day. If you would be interested in joining the committee, or helping with any of the functions, please speak to one of the current members or ask at the school office. Leading up to, and during major events, such as the Christmas Bazaar, the FOGWS do need lots of volunteers to help with planning and manning, so please do make yourself known if you think you can help in any way.

MUSIC TUITION

Currently three peripatetic music teachers visit the school teaching piano, clarinet, flute, violin and guitar. Parents and pupils commit to the lessons for a whole year but are required to pay termly at the beginning of each term. The fees and method of payment are different for each teacher and parents will be advised how to pay when the first payment is due. There are generally eleven fifteen minute lessons each term, given during the school day. Most pupils are able to start learning an instrument from year 2.

In addition, some of the teachers run free after school recorder clubs for pupils in year 2 and above.

All of our musicians are given the opportunity to perform at various functions and church services throughout the year.



SCHOOL MEALS

Ordering

All meals are home cooked in our purpose built kitchen, produced from locally sourced fresh produce, working to menus nutritionally analysed by Essex County Council. Parents order meals for their children in four weekly blocks but may order as many or few meals during that block as they wish. Two copies of the menu are sent home so that parent and child can carefully choose which meals they would like to order, recording their choices on both copies, keeping one at home for future reference. The other copy should be returned to school. At the end of each 4 week block parents will be sent a statement showing how much they owe for meals and should send a cheque made payable to Essex County Council for the exact total. Every day there is one meat and one vegetarian option, a jacket potato option with salad (tuna or cheese) plus a pudding, yogurt or fruit, fresh cooled water is supplied for all children.

Cancelling Orders

Once meals have been ordered they cannot be cancelled except in exceptional circumstances such as illness. Final numbers for each day are advised to the cook by 10 a.m. so a child who is sent home due to accident or illness later during the morning may still be charged for their meal. If a child brings sandwiches on a day they have also ordered a meal, the sandwiches will be placed in the school fridge and the child asked to collect them at the end of the day.

Additional Meals

Parents may occasionally request a meal for their child at short notice, payment for which can be made on the day or added to the next four week block.

Free School Meals

If you are in receipt of Family tax credit or other benefit, (not working tax credit) you may be entitled to free school meals. Even if your child never, or only occasionally, wishes to have school meals it is worthwhile to apply for this. Please enquire, in total confidence, at the office or write to or telephone Mrs Richards, the School Business Manager.

School Meals Forum

We always welcome comments and suggestions on our meals from parents, who are invited to join their children for lunch in the Summer Term. In addition, comments can be fed back to the forum of parents, staff and governors who meet termly to review our meals.



ASSEMBLIES AND CHURCH SERVICES

ASSEMBLIES

Celebration Assemblies

Celebration assemblies, which are open to parents, are generally held on Friday morning at 9.00 a.m. (watch the newsletters for cancellations/change of time). Pupils are presented with school certificates which have been awarded for particular achievement during the week, and external certificates and trophies from their out of school activities. The house points trophy is presented to the team with the most points that week.

Class Assemblies

Each class has a special assembly, usually twice a year, to which parents are invited. Details are given in the newsletter and the term events diaries.

CHURCH SERVICES

Community Worship

Once every half term the whole school attends a morning service at our Church, St Mary and St Lawrence, normally on a Monday. The children should arrive at school at 8.45 on these occasions. Once the registers have been taken, the whole school walk to the Church where they sit in class groups. Older siblings join their younger brothers and sisters and parents, who wish to stay, sit with their children. At the end of the service the children return to school in their class groups.

Major Christian Festivals

Easter, Harvest and Christmas are all celebrated at our Church. The children are taken to the Church in their class groups and remain in these groups in the Church. Parents, grandparents and friends are invited to attend but asked to sit behind the school congregation. If it is necessary to bring babies and toddlers, parents are asked to keep them with them and to take them outside if they become restless. There is now a toilet at the Church. Children are taken back to school in their class groups.



SCHOOL CLUBS

The school is proud to offer many teacher and parent volunteer led clubs throughout the year for which there is no charge. For safety and practical reasons numbers always have to be limited but we do try to offer at least one club for each age group at some time during the year. Pupils who join a club are expected to attend regularly for at least one term and should then have a discussion with the teacher if they feel they do not want to continue. Parents should advise the school by e-mail, letter or telephone if their child will not be attending their club on a particular day. All children should be collected by an adult from after-school clubs unless the school are informed otherwise. The school will not normally make telephone calls about forgotten kit, musical instruments etc.

The school currently has several clubs run by outside organisations, some of which make a charge:

Chelmsford City Football Club run an after school activity at the school one afternoon a week during term time. The school passes on their letter at the end of each half term and parents may send their replies and payments (cheques made payable to Chelmsford City Football Club) back via the class pouch system.

Premiere Sport runs two morning and one after club during the week.

Astara Dance Club also run several after school groups for which the school passes on letters and can collect payment.

Bear and Biscuit is a club run by members of the local Church, they do not make a charge but this is not a school run club.

Please remember that if your child is joining a club run by an outside agency it is important that you make sure they have your contact number and any relevant health/dietary information about your child.

A timetable of all clubs is posted on the website, the school entrance notice board and emailed to parents at the beginning of each term.



AUTUMN TERM EVENTS

MEET THE TEACHER

At the beginning of each school year all parents are invited to a brief meeting with their child's class teacher when he/she will explain class room procedures, expectations, topics etc for the coming year. Parents are requested not to bring babies and toddlers if at all possible.

PARENT CONSULTATION EVENINGS

These are held twice a year, in the Autumn and Spring terms. Parents have the opportunity to view their children's work in the classrooms and discuss their progress with the class teachers. These meetings are limited to 10 minutes for each child but parents are welcome to make a mutually convenient after school appointment to discuss any concerns with the teachers at any time during the school year. Appointment sheets are placed in the school hall approximately two weeks before the meetings and parents are invited to put their names in the nearest available slot to their ideal time. Teachers endeavour to keep consultations within the 10 minute slots but parents with more than one child at the school should leave at least 20 minutes gap between their appointments in case a teacher is running a little late. Parents who are unable to get in to school to make an appointment, may telephone the office between 9.30 and 2.45 on the appropriate day.

INDIVIDUAL PHOTOGRAPHS

Individual photographs are taken in the Autumn term. The photographer usually starts at about 8.45 a.m. to give parents a chance to have their babies and toddlers photographed with their school age siblings. (No need to make an appointment just turn up at 8.45 a.m. on the day - the date will appear in the Autumn Term events diary and the newsletter). Proofs and order forms are sent home to all families.



AUTUMN TERM EVENTS

CHRISTMAS ACTIVITIES

Christmas Dinner

This is the only day of the year when all the children eat at the same time in the hall. The tables are laid with cloths, cutlery and crackers and Christmas music is played. The midday assistants help the cook and her assistant to serve the food, with the teachers and support staff taking the trays to the children. We strongly encourage all the children to have a cooked lunch on this day to be able to completely join in the fun.

Hat Making Competition

This is a Great Waltham Primary School tradition that goes back further than any of the current staff can remember, and takes place on the morning of the Christmas Dinner. Children are provided with everything they need to make a Christmas hat but are invited to bring in extra items from home to decorate their hat if they wish. The first part of the morning, before break, is the time for the hat making and after break all the children gather in one room for the class by class hat parade and judging. Small prizes are awarded for the best hats in each class.

Class parties

At the end of the Summer and Winter terms the children all have a class party. They are allowed to wear non-uniform on these party days but parents are asked to bear in mind that clothing and footwear must be acceptable for wearing to school and suitable for wearing in the playground at break and lunchtime, e.g. no crocs or crop tops. Children are invited to bring nibbles to share with the class but we must remind parents that nuts and all products containing nuts are strictly prohibited at school to safeguard our children with severe nut allergy.

Christmas Cheer

The school benefits enormously from the support given by parents, grandparents, governors and other volunteers and Mrs Wilson holds a small informal gathering in the hall during December to thank all the people who have given up their time to help in school during the year. This is an adult only, by invitation, event.

Christmas Production

KS1 pupils perform in a nativity based Christmas production on alternate years. Space and fire regulations necessitate careful allocation of tickets and parents are initially offered two tickets for each performance (one afternoon and one evening). One or more of these tickets may be used by siblings who have moved on to secondary school but primary school siblings and children from Up, Up and Away Preschool watch the dress rehearsal and are not allocated tickets for the main performances. Parents are also asked not to bring babies and toddlers. No charge is made for tickets but there is normally a retiring collection for charity.



SPRING TERM EVENTS

MEET THE TEACHER

Parents of our January intake are invited to a brief meeting with their child's class teacher when he/she will explain class room procedures, expectations, topics etc for the coming year. Parents are requested not to bring babies and toddlers if at all possible.

PARENT CONSULTATION EVENINGS

See Autumn term events.

INFANT MUSIC FESTIVAL

The Infant Music Festival, which is organised externally, involves Year 2 children from all local schools taking part in a short production during the Spring Term. The festival is held during the day, usually at Christ Church in London Road, and parents are invited to attend but tickets have to be ordered in advance and are initially limited to 1 per child due to lack of space. The performance is repeated during a class assembly later in the Spring term, when children can invite their parents, grandparents etc to watch.



SUMMER TERM EVENTS

GROUP PHOTOGRAPHS

Group photographs, i.e. Class, Sports Teams etc are taken in the Summer term. Year 6 pupils also have the opportunity to purchase a 'year book' which includes a picture of the school, a group photograph and number of small photographs of themselves which they swap with other pupils in order to create a 'friends gallery'. The group photographs are displayed for about one week in the school entrance with order envelopes which parents complete, enclosing their payment, and return to the office. The date will appear in the Summer Term events diary and details of when to view the photographs will appear in the newsletter.

SPORTS DAY AND TEDDY BEARS' PICNIC

On sports day all parents and siblings, along with their teddy bears, are invited to join us for lunch at our Teddy Bears' Picnic. Pupils' meals for this event should be ordered in the usual way on the menu sheets. A separate order slip will be sent to parents to order meals for themselves and their pre-school children.

JUNIOR MUSIC FESTIVAL

Our Year 5 and 6 pupils attend The Junior Music Festival, with pupils from many other local schools, every alternate year. The children attend a whole day workshop at the Civic Theatre, having already spent several weeks learning the songs at school, returning in the evening to perform to their parents. This event is organised externally and tickets have to be ordered in advance.

MUSICAL SOIREE

Approximately one third of our pupils are learning to play a musical instrument and to celebrate their wonderful achievements a musical soiree is held in the Summer term, when all our instrumentalists (aided by several staff and our peripatetic music teachers) perform for their families at a short evening concert. Parents, grandparents and older siblings are welcome to attend but please do not bring babies and toddlers or school age siblings who will have watched the rehearsal.

PUPIL PROGRESS REPORTS

During the second half of the Summer term parents are sent a report of their child's progress during the whole academic year.

EXHIBITION EVENING

Shortly after the production of the Pupil Progress Reports, the school is open for an exhibition evening when parents may come in with their child to view their work and have a look round the whole school. Appointments can be made for parents who have particular concerns regarding their child's report.

YEAR 6 LEAVERS' SERVICE

At the end of the Summer Term a service is held at our Church for the children who are moving on to secondary school. The seating arrangements are the same as for the major Christian Festivals but parents and grandparents of those pupils who are leaving are invited to sit at the front.