

HAS YOUR CHILD STARTED TO ATTEND A BASIC SCHOOL IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC? INFORMATION FOR PARENTS



Cooperation between parents and basic school is considered to be very important in the Czech Republic. The school expects the parents to help children with learning and to keep regular contact with the teacher. Parents are expected to be responsible for their child's school results and they are expected to assist when problems occur.

WHAT IS THE BEST WAY TO COMMUNICATE WITH THE SCHOOL?

- Right upon the child's beginning at school it is important to make an arrangement with the director of the school on the **contact person** that you may contact when necessary (class teacher, education welfare officer, prevention specialist or other educational specialist).
- Note down the name, telephone, e-mail and office hours of the contact person.
- Make arrangements on the way (personal meeting, meeting over the phone, e-mail), language and frequency of your contact. Plan ahead; define the steps to follow in case of some unexpected situation or problem.
- Important communication tool between parents and school is a **pupil's record book žakovská knížka**, where all the marks, written excuses, important messages (changes in schedule, school events, problems with behaviour) are communicated.
- The school regularly organizes **parent's meetings třídní schůzky** – meeting of parents with the teachers. The parents get information on the learning progress of their child and on the school events and news. The attendance of parents is required by school.
- You shall communicate to school the feelings of your child, i.e. the child does not feel well among the classmates or it has problems with their behaviour.

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HOW IS THE SCHOOL YEAR ORGANISED? HOW ARE THE CHILDREN EVALUATED?

- The school year is 10 months. It begins on September 1 and ends on August 30 of the following year. The school year is divided into two terms. At the end of each term, i.e. on January 31 and June 30, the children will receive a **school report vysvědčení** (= grading of children performance in particular subjects).
- Majority of schools start classes at 8 o'clock in the morning. Younger children have 4 to 5 classes a day, older children sometimes have afternoon classes. At the beginning of school year every class gets its **schedule rozvrh hodin**. The schedule shows how many classes and what subjects are scheduled for particular days, the parents can thus check homework and school aids for the next school day of their child.
- Every class (usual length is 45 minutes) is followed by a **break přestávka**. Longer break (9:45 to 10:00am) is a snack time, shorter breaks take 5 to 10 minutes. The morning classes are followed by lunch.
- Throughout the year there are various **holidays prázdniny**, public holidays and other free days. During the holidays children do not attend school, their parents have to care for them or arrange a program where the children will be looked after.
- Children are continuously evaluated throughout the whole year **klasifikace**, the most common way of evaluation is grading using the grades 1-5 (1 being the best, 5 being the worst).
- Should the child get grade 5 at the end of the school year, the child has to resit exams from a particular subject. If the child fails the exam, the child has to repeat the same year.
- At school, the children are obliged to follow the **school rules školní řád**. Children repeatedly breaking the school rules are subject to an official reprimand or worse behaviour grade at the school report.



WHAT ARE THE DUTIES OF THE PARENTS?

- **The parents have to help with the homework** – the child has to do the homework, study and prepare for the tests. With smaller children the parents are expected to check their homework. If you face problems with the Czech language and would not be able to provide help to your child at home, you could ask the school for **tutor doučování**. In case your school does not provide a tutor, you can find a private tutor (you pay for the classes) or you can ask CIC or other organisation for volunteer.
- **Keeping track of the grading of your child and following the school communication** – the parent shall regularly follow the grades and **learning progress prospěch** of their child either in pupil's record book or electronic system and visit parent's meetings. The parents regularly sign the pupil's record book in order to communicate to school that they have checked the grades and read the messages from teachers or school.
- **Parent's meetings attendance** – the parent attends parent's meetings and other meetings organised by school. In case when the parent cannot take part at the meetings, the parent shall contact the school and try to arrange the meeting with teacher/-s for some other time.

- **Keeping track of child's attendance** – it is the parent who excuses their child's absence from school. The parent informs the school, records the absence into the pupil's record book (stating the reason for absence and attaching the signature). The absence shall be supported by a compelling reason (health issues, family matters). The school is obliged to report all long-term absences to relevant authorities. The pupil is expected to catch up on all the schoolwork that had been covered while the child was absent. The classmates or class teachers shall be of assistance on this matter.



WHAT DOES YOUR CHILD NEED FOR SCHOOL?

WHAT SCHOOL AIDS DOES YOUR CHILD NEED?

- Every school can follow various curricula and learning materials. Usually, the school provides children with **textbooks učebnice**, the textbooks then shall be returned to school upon the end of the school year.
- First graders usually use so called **workbooks pracovní sešity**, which contain printed tasks and children write notes directly into them. These workbooks are not provided by school, the parents have to contribute the school for the purchasing of those materials. Children also use other kinds of exercise books – these could either be provided by school or the school might ask the parents for buying them.
- The textbooks and exercise books needed for the particular day, snack and drink, pencil case (pen, pencils, coloured pencils) are carried to school by children in a school bag.
- Children also need a gym outfit for PE (physical education) classes, shoes to change for indoor school use (usually some kind of slippers), drawing aids for art classes. These things are usually left at school.
- The school will provide you with a list of aids and equipment that you have to buy including the information on the finances you have to pay to school for other aids and equipment delivered to your child by school.
- Apart from the payments for school aids, it is common that the parents pay smaller amounts of money as a contribution to the school or class fund. This money covers other school aids, small treats for children or it is used for school events etc.
- The payments (contributions) of parents to school funds, for school aids and equipment and for entrance fees for school events or cultural events are also common in state schools where the education is free of charge.



HOW DOES IT WORK WITH THE FOOD AT SCHOOL?

- Parents prepare **snacks svačiny** for school. Children carry these snacks (including the drink) to school for the snack break.
- The school canteen caters for **lunches obědy**. You could order and pay for these at school. The lunches comprise of soup, main dish and dessert (fruit/salad/something sweet). The enrolment form for school lunches is part of enrolment forms package provided by school. In case the school does not provide parents with enrolment forms package, the parents will get informed on the lunches some other way.
- The child is not obliged to eat in a school canteen; children can go home and eat at home.



AFTER SCHOOL ACTIVITIES AND AFTER SCHOOL CARE (AFTER SCHOOL CLUB)

- The after school club **školní družina** is an afternoon education for smaller children, it is not compulsory and has to be paid for by parents. The children usually play, learn or go out with after school club teachers. All the necessary information on the after school club (capacity, age of children for the club, operational hours, prices and enrolment procedure) could be found at school.
- Ask your school for the list of possible interest groups or **after school activities kroužky** that take place directly at school or nearby - usually in a Centre for children activities (DDM). When selecting an after school activity for your child, take into consideration the focus of the activity (what your child is interested in and what would develop your child the best), the financial aspects (some clubs are for free, some have to be paid), some activities require a purchase of special equipment (expensive sport equipment for example).
- Children visit various kind of **cultural events kulturní akce** or trips with their class throughout the school year, the entrance fees are paid by parents. The school can organise a **school trip školní výlet, out of town school škola v přírodě** or sports week. The parents decide whether their child will take part and cover the costs of accommodation, food and programme (the school informs the parents on the dates of events and associated costs).
- **After school activities are very important for the child!** These activities help children to get engaged with their school- or classmates, find new friends, develop their abilities and first and foremost learn Czech language quicker.

Do you need more information on the school attendance? Do you doubt your parental duties and obligations relating your child's school attendance? What are the obligations of the school? Have you been facing some problems since your child started the school attendance? Do you need help in communication with school? Contact the Centre for Integration of Foreigners' (CIC) social workers:

CIC Praha: Kubelíkova 55, Praha 3. Tel.: 222 360 452.

CIC Kolín: Zahradní 46, Kolín. Tel.: 312 310 332.

CIC Mladá Boleslav: Dukelská 1093, Mladá Boleslav. Tel. 222 360 452.

CIC Kladno: Severní 2952, Kladno. Tel.: 222 360 452.

CIC Liberec: Moskevská 14/27, Liberec. Tel.: 222 360 452.

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