

HAS YOUR CHILD STARTED TO ATTEND AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC? INFORMATION FOR PARENTS



Cooperation between parents and the elementary 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 have a great deal of responsibility for child's school performance and they should assist when issues 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.
- The school can provide interpretation when communicating with you (interpreting is provided by National Pedagogical Institute at the request of the school).
- 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. Most schools use an electronic student book **elektronická žakovská knížka** (for example an application **Bakaláři**), to which you will receive access data at the beginning of the school year.
- 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** **školní rok** 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** **dvě pololetí**. 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 supplies 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 break.
- 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** **klasifikace** throughout the whole year, 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 do corrective 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** **domácí příprava** – 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 a tutor. 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 a volunteer.
- **Keeping track of the grading of your child and following the school communication** – the parent shall regularly follow the **grades and learning process** **známky a 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** **docházka** – the parent has to apologize for child's absence from school, informing the class teacher in the morning. Also, within short time to report

the length, reason and signature to the particular part of pupil's record book. The absence shall be supported by a compelling reason (health issues, family matters). The school is obliged to report all long-term unexcused 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 SUPPLIES ŠKOLNÍ POMŮCKY DOES YOUR CHILD NEED?

- Every school can follow various curricula and learning materials. Usually, the elementary school provides children with **textbooks učebnice**, the textbooks then shall be returned in a good order 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 supplies for art classes. These things are usually left at school in a locker.
- The school will provide you with a list of supplies and equipment that you have to buy including the information on the finances you have to pay to school for other supplies delivered to your child by school.
- Apart from the payments for school supplies, 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 supplies, small treats for children or is used for school events etc.
- The payments (contributions) of parents to school funds, for school supplies 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 MEALS AT SCHOOL?

- Parents prepare **snacks svačiny**. Children carry these snacks (including the drink) to school for the snack break.
- The school canteen caters for **lunches obědy**. You can 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 **program program** 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 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 kinds of **cultural events** 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 zájmové kroužky** 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: Pernerova 10/32, Praha 8. Phone: +420 704 600 700

CIC Kolín: Zahradní 46, Kolín. Phone: +420 774 866 838

CIC Mladá Boleslav: Dukelská 1093, Mladá Boleslav. Phone: +420 731 512 726

CIC Kladno: Severní 2952, Kladno. Phone: +420 735 173 719

CIC Hořovice: Palackého náměstí 640/34 (city hall, 3rd floor), Hořovice. Phone: +420 605 215 649

CIC Mělník: Náměstí Míru 51 (city hall, 3rd floor), Mělník. Phone: +420 777 402 129

CIC Liberec: Moskevská 27/14, Liberec. Phone: +420 735 752 467

info@cicops.cz

www.cicops.cz



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