

SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD AT SCHOOL



GOING TO SCHOOL IN ENGLAND

School is free for all children from 5 to 16.

This includes the cost of books and basic stationery.

Dates

The school year runs from September to July and is 39 weeks long.

In Derbyshire, the year is divided into six terms:

September to October
October to December
January to February
February to March
April to May
June to July

The main school holidays are:

Christmas — 2 weeks
Spring — 2 weeks
Summer — 6 weeks

There are also one week holidays at:

End of October
Mid February
End of May

Your school will be able to give you the exact dates of these holidays.

Attendance

Apart from school holidays, your child is expected to be in school every day unless they are too ill to attend.

You must tell the school if your child is absent for any reason.

Attending school

Most children attend NURSERY SCHOOL—3-4 years old.

Then they move on to PRIMARY SCHOOL—5-11 years old.

There are three education stages at Primary school:

Foundation stage—Nursery, Reception (Infants)

Key Stage 1 — Years 1 and 2 (Infants)

Key Stage 2 — Years 3 to 6 (Juniors).

SECONDARY SCHOOL is for 12-18 year olds—Years 7-13

There are three education stages at Secondary school:

Key Stage 3 — Years 7 to 9

Key Stage 4 — Years 10 and 11

Key Stage 5 — Years 12 and 13

At the age of 16 students take an examination called the GCSE (General Certificate of Secondary Education).

Study of GCSE subjects begins at the start of Year 10 (age 14-15) and final examinations are taken at the end of Year 11 (age 15-16). Students must study English, Mathematics, Science, Religious Education, Physical Education, ICT and Citizenship. They may also choose other subjects to study.

After completing their GCSEs, some students leave school, some go on to college and some stay for two more years to take three or four Advanced Level exams (A levels).

Pupils may leave school on the last Friday in June after their 16th birthday.

Finding a school

You may say what school you would like your child to attend, but sometimes there may not be a place at that school.

You need to apply for a place by a given date. In Derbyshire, for a place in the following September, you usually need to apply in mid-January for primary and junior schools, and at the end of October for secondary schools.



HOW TO HELP YOUR CHILD AT HOME

Reading

- It is never too early to tell your child stories and rhymes and talk about them. (You can use your home language or English.)
- Point to pictures and talk about them.
- Teach your child to read their name.
- Read labels when you are out shopping together.
- Listen to your child read and discuss it, in your home language if necessary, to check that your child has understood what they are reading.



While reading

* Ask questions as you look through a book

1. "What can you see?" questions such as:
 - *What are they wearing?*
 - *What time of year is it?*
 - *How do you know?*
2. "What do you understand?" questions such as:
 - *Who was the story about?*
 - *Where did it happen?*
 - *What happened?*
3. Prediction questions such as:
 - *Why do you think they are doing that?*
 - *What do you think is going to happen next?*

- * Don't worry if you do not understand all the words.
- * Ask your child to point to specific words in the story.

After reading

- * Ask your child to retell the story in their own words (using home language if necessary).
 - * Copy out a sentence from the book, cut up each word and ask your child to rearrange it in the correct order.
 - * Copy out a sentence but leave out some words. Ask your child to write in the missing words.
 - * Draw a picture to continue the story.
 - * Discuss a different ending for the story.
- If possible, teach your child to read in their home language.
 - Discuss the importance of reading.
 - Give plenty of praise.
 - Enjoy sharing books together and remember that if your child sees you reading and enjoying books, they are more likely to enjoy reading themselves.

Writing

First stages



- Allow a young child to explore materials with their fingers.
- Talk about the marks, squiggles and scribbles they make and show you appreciate them.
- Allow your child to "write" using different materials:
 - making marks in sand trays or in rice, salt, foam or flour.
 - using water and paintbrushes outside.
 - using chinks, crayons, felt tips, pencils... to write with.
 - using paper, card, coloured notebooks, envelopes to write on. (Clipboards and paper are great fun!)
 - Let your child share the writing of lists, cards and messages by adding their own marks.
- Make a scrapbook of dated and labelled work your child has produced.
- Encouragement, praise and interest will inspire a child's fascination with print.

Early writing and onwards

- Learn how the school is teaching writing from the teacher.
- Practise writing patterns, letters, name... at home.
- Support your child in producing a labelled drawing or simple book.
- Discuss first language script as appropriate and the importance of writing.
- Understand that the child's written language will develop later than spoken language or reading.
- Translate first language drafts if possible.
- Make sure that your child understands what they have written.
- Monitor homework tasks and support where possible and needed.
- Encourage proof reading of homework for spelling, punctuation and grammar errors.

- Help your child to prepare a checklist of their own “common errors” that they can use to check and improve their work.
- Encourage them to keep writing!

Listening and Speaking

- Speaking or singing to your child during your household chores will help your child learn new words and routines. You can sing about what you are doing!
- Talk to your child when dressing, making the bed, at bath time or bedtime. Share favourite stories, songs and rhymes to go with familiar routines.
- Encourage your child to join in as you tell a story or rhyme.
- Talk about the places you have been together.
- Visit the local shop, park, library... and as you walk along, or look out of the window of the car, talk about the things you can see.
- Continue to develop first language and help school with words in first language where needed.
- Your child may not want to speak English at home. They may need a rest!
- Share books with your child (dual text if possible).
- Speak on behalf of the child as needed.
- Talk about school and school work at home. Reinforce classroom language through home language.
- Go over homework with your child and provide support in first language to ensure that new concepts are understood. Use English as well if appropriate.
- Meet regularly with school staff.
- Discuss any difficulties with your child and with the school.
- Encourage your child to bring in items from home to share at school.
- Give opportunities to practise telephoning in English at home.
- Encourage your child to invite friends to play or to join a club after school in order to practise social English.



What else can I do to help?

- Before starting school help your child learn to put on their coats and shoes by themselves.
- Help your child to recognise colours.
- Teach the days of the week.
- Help your child to recognise numbers by looking at:
 - birthday numbers
 - numbers on the calendar
 - the number on your door
 - numbers on the telephone
 - numbers on the bus stop and many more.



Using First Language

- Your child is very privileged in being able to speak more than one language and experience more than one culture. Maintain this good start by encouraging your child to go on developing their first language at home.
- Let your child learn English from English speakers and their first language from you, so that they have good models for each language.
- Both languages can be developed together and this will help your child.
- There are many reasons why you should help your child develop their first language, as well as English:
 - it is important for strengthening family ties.
 - knowing about your language and culture helps you understand who you are.
 - it helps you keep your education going while learning a new language. It also helps you learn other languages.
 - knowing your first language well can help you learn English.
 - knowing more than one language can make you cleverer.
 - and communicating well in more than one language will increase job opportunities!

