

St. Andrew's Junior School, Hatfield Peverel

Home Learning (Homework) Policy

1 Introduction

- 1.1** Homework is anything that children do outside the normal school day, that contributes to their learning in response to guidance from the school. Homework encompasses a whole variety of activities instigated by teachers and parents to support children's learning. For example, a parent who spends time reading a story to their child before bedtime is helping with homework.

2 Rationale for homework

- 2.1** Homework is a very important part of a child's education and can add much to a child's development. The government made clear its commitment to homework in the 1997 White Paper, 'Excellence in Schools', where homework was seen as 'an essential part of good education'. We recognise that the time and resources available limit the educational experience that any school by itself can provide; children benefit greatly therefore from the mutual support of parents and teachers in encouraging them to learn both at home and at school. Indeed we see homework as an important way of establishing a successful dialogue between teachers and parents. One of the aims of our school is for children to develop as independent learners. Homework makes a contribution to this aim and plays a positive role in raising a child's level of attainment.
- 2.2** We acknowledge the important role of play and free time in a child's growth and development. While homework is important, the amount set should not prevent children from taking part in the wide range of out-of-school clubs and organisations that play an important part in the lives of many children. We are well aware that children spend more time at home than at school, and we believe they develop their skills, interests and talents to the full only when parents encourage them to make maximum use of the experiences and opportunities that are available outside of school.

3 Aims and objectives

- 3.1** The aims and objectives of homework are:
- to enable pupils to make maximum progress in their academic and social development;
 - to help pupils develop the skills of an independent learner;
 - to promote a partnership between home and school in supporting each child's learning;
 - to consolidate and reinforce learning done in school and to allow children to practice skills taught in lessons;
 - to help children develop good work habits for the future.

In their homework, children are asked to practise or extend their skills but they are not asked to tackle unknown concepts or develop new skills.

4 Types of homework

- 4.1** We set a variety of homework activities. Homework does not just mean formal exercises carried out by children without help from adults. The involvement of parents/carers in joint activities, which can be very brief, is most valuable in promoting children's learning.
- Regular homework may include sharing books and reading (children to parents, parents to children, children on their own); literacy related work such as practising word families, spellings and handwriting, reading comprehension; numeracy related work such as practising number bonds and tables, completing number games and tasks or working on the MyMaths website. Homework might also include finding out information, reading in preparation for lessons, preparing an oral presentation or more traditional written assignments.

As children get older we expect them to do more tasks independently. We also set homework as a means of helping the children to revise for tests as well as to ensure that prior learning has been understood.

4.2 Homework is not given in the following circumstances:

- Where children are absent due to short-term illness;
- Where children are absent due to their parents taking them out of school on holiday;
- Where children are absent due to valid educational experiences, e.g. participation in public performances (theatre and dance shows) and rehearsals, or recognised sporting activities or training.

5 Amount of homework

5.1 We increase the amount of homework that we give the children as they move through the school. We expect children in years 3 and 4 to spend approximately 15–20 minutes per night on homework and children in years 5 and 6 to spend approximately 30 minutes per night. This is in line with the DfEE guidelines that were issued in 1998.

5.2 Teachers inform parents about homework and monitor its completion. This may be via a homework folder/diary or with letters home. Teachers may contact parents individually if there are any problems regarding work that is being done (or not done) at home.

6 Pupils with special educational needs

6.1 We set homework for all children as a normal part of school life. We try hard to ensure that tasks are appropriate to the ability of the child. If a child has special needs, we take account of this by offering advice and support in the task for the child and parent as appropriate.

7 The role of parents

7.1 Parents have a vital role to play in their child's education, and homework is an important part of this process. We ask parents to encourage their child to complete the homework tasks that are set. We invite them to help their children as they feel necessary and provide them with the sort of environment that allows children to do their best. Parents can support their child by providing a good working space at home, by enabling their child to visit the library regularly, and by discussing the work that their child is doing.

7.2 If parents have any problems or questions about homework, they should, in the first instance, contact the child's class teacher. If their questions are of a more general nature, they should contact the headteacher. Finally, if they wish to make a complaint about the school homework policy or the way it is implemented, parents should contact the Chair of Governors.

8 Monitoring and review

8.1 It is the responsibility of our governing body to agree and then monitor the school homework policy. This is done by the committee of the governing body that deals with curriculum issues.

8.2 This policy was agreed by staff and governors in June 2012.

Appendix

Suggestions for other activities to do at home to develop children's learning:

- Encouraging a wider interest in reading by regularly sharing books with a grown-up, characters, events and sequence of stories, predicting the end or what will happen next, going to the library, fiction and non-fiction, comics and magazines, internet;
- Using and applying mathematical skills – shopping (sum and change), exchange rate when abroad, TV times and setting the DVD (length of programmes in hours and/or minutes, what is the time now? how long until it starts? etc.), ingredients for cooking (weighing, measuring, estimating)
- Board games that encourage strategy, games with money, word games – e.g. monopoly, scrabble, mastermind, cluedo, draughts, chess and many more!; Card games;
- Travel games for long car journeys, reading maps on long journeys;
- Encouraging learning in life situations – helping at home, in the garden, shopping, pocket money, party invitations, thank you letters, being a part of planning family events/outings/holidays, taking greater personal responsibility, etc.
- Encourage a wide general understanding in local places of interest – trips and visits during the holidays or at weekends;