

## Homework Policy

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| Reviewed by:      | Maria Hafalla – Deputy Head Academic | September 2023 |
| Approved by:      | Trish Watt -Headmistress             | September 2023 |
| Next Review Date: | September 2024                       |                |

### Overview

Before proceeding further it is useful to define exactly what the word **homework** actually means. For the purposes of this document the term is an inclusive one that refers to any work or activity which pupils are asked to do outside lesson time, either on their own or with parents/carers.

When used properly homework extends the challenge open to the pupil and ensures that teaching time is used to maximum effect. In this way homework should support the work children are doing in class. It also offers a valuable ongoing opportunity for parents, pupils and teachers to work together in partnership to support a child's learning.

The purpose of setting homework for children of primary school age alters as the children become older. At EYFS and Key Stage 1 level, the key purpose is to develop a partnership with parents and involve them actively in children's learning. To help parents this kind of homework might be referred to as **Partnership Work**.

Partnership work should involve short activities of a varied nature, which parents can do together with their child in the home environment. These could include simple games, learning spellings, learning basic number facts, practical experiences related to the child's immediate environment and, of course, reading. These activities provide important valuable opportunities for children to talk about what they are learning to an interested adult and to practise key skills in a supportive environment. By making clear the value of partnership work, the school is actively encouraging parents to become involved in the learning process. In the EFYS parents can upload images to show how they are supporting their child's learning at home on their child's Tapestry Profile.

The main purpose of homework for older children is to gradually develop the skills associated with independent learning. Children should get into the habit of regularly devoting periods of time to study on their own. They should be encouraged to develop the confidence and self-discipline needed to study alone and in so doing they will become more prepared for the requirements of senior school. This will, hopefully, lead to a smooth transition to the secondary sector where homework takes on an increasing importance.

Other purposes of homework:

- Consolidating and reinforcing skills and understanding, particularly in mathematics and English.
- Extending school learning.
- Revision for summative assessment tests.

- In order for homework to be an effective factor in the learning process and make the greatest contributions to children's learning, the following six principles should be adhered to:
  - There should be a clear structure in the form of a regular routine for each Year group. This will assist both parents and children by creating a familiar pattern for homework activities. Therefore, homework nights must be adhered to.
  - All participants in the homework process: parents, children and teachers should know exactly what their roles are and what to expect. Pupils and their parents should be very clear about what they are expected to do.
  - Homework tasks need to be carefully planned and structured to support progression in children's learning.
  - There should be high expectations from teachers regarding pupils completing their homework and handing it in for marking.
  - Pupils benefit most from receiving prompt, clear feedback on their work.
  - The homework policy ought to be regularly monitored to ensure that it supports children's learning in the best possible way.

Parent's commitment to homework is essential if this policy is to be successfully implemented. The procedures for homework and the expectations should be clearly outlined to all parents at the Parent Curriculum Evenings which take place early in the Autumn Term. Parents should be encouraged to communicate with the class teacher regarding the homework.

Ways in which parents can support homework:

- By establishing with the child a reasonably peaceful place to do the homework activity with adequate facilities.
- By ensuring the child does their homework by parents using Homework Diary (Years 2-6) to communicate with their child's teacher or talking to him/her directly at the beginning or end of the school day regarding any issues to do with homework.
- By making it clear to the child that you value the work they are doing and by supporting the school in explaining to children how this work can help their learning.
- By always trying to encourage the child and by praising his/her efforts.

For teachers of children at Key Stage 1 and pre Key Stage 1, the emphasis is very much upon working closely with parents to assist them to engage in regular Partnership Work at home. Establishing regular communication with parents is paramount.

The ideas given below are guidelines for good practice for Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 teachers:

- Set up clear expectations with parents during the first parent consultation meetings early in the Autumn Term.
- Monitor Tapestry profiles, Reading Record Books or Homework Diaries every day. Thank those parents who have supported their child at home and encourage those who have not done so.
- Regular communication with a child's parent should be conducted through the child's Tapestry profile, Reading Record or Homework Diary or in person at the beginning or end of the school day.

For teachers to utilise homework as a valuable tool in the learning process they should:

- Make sure that homework is always clearly explained so that children know exactly what to do.
- Cater for the needs and ability range of the whole class when setting homework.
- Give children a clear idea of when the homework should be completed by (usually the next day).
- Provide children with guidance on the presentation expectations for all written homework.
- Mark work promptly so that children can receive feedback on their progress quickly. Prompt feedback shows children that their work is important and their efforts valued.
- Try to ensure that homework is varied, interesting and fun so that it motivates children, stimulates their learning and fosters different study skills.

Each class teacher must endeavour to mark the work as soon as possible, but certainly within two days.

### **Reading**

All children should do at least one of the following on a daily basis:

- Listen to their parent(s) reading to them
- Read to their parent(s)
- Read on their own

Younger children should do this for around 10 to 20 minutes every night. This works best if the reading takes place at broadly the same time each day. In this way, children get into a regular routine that feels secure, comfortable and familiar.

As children become older and more competent at reading, they should read for between 20 and 30 minutes each night. Some of the oldest children or those who become more confident at a younger age may wish to read for longer.

A range of tasks should be set for homework. Familiar ideas include:

- Children learning high frequency word spellings
- Learning some number facts or multiplication tables by heart
- Practising a specific handwriting join or a pattern
- Learning some information which the children will then be tested on
- Playing a number game or working on a number puzzle
- Thinking about how they might solve a problem
- Preparing their contribution to a group presentation to the class
- Learning a poem by heart ready to recite it to the rest of the class
- Recalling an activity
- Practising a skill

There is also a place, particularly at Key Stage 2 for homework that consists of:

- Writing a story, a description, a book review or a report
- Completing a cloze procedure
- Completing mathematics work
- Doing a short comprehension exercise involving inference and deduction skills
- Research or Investigative work

With older pupils, teachers should be careful to ensure that too much homework time is not spent 'finishing off' written work carried out in class. This can often place too heavy a burden on some children and too light a burden on others.

The plenary session in a lesson can be used to explain homework tasks to children. Children will find the homework set more comprehensible if it relates to the lesson that has just taken place.

#### **Recommended time allocation for different age groups**

Younger children find the school day itself very tiring and the partnership work that they engage in with their parents should be restricted to short, but regular, periods of time during the school week. As children get older, expectations in terms of time commitment should be greater. That said, demands on pupils should be closely monitored by the class teacher and homework should not restrict other activities children do after school such as sport, music and clubs of all kind.

| Class         | Time Allocation                             |
|---------------|---|
| Reception     | 10 minutes (from the second term of school) |
| Years 1 and 2 | 20 minutes                                  |
| Years 3 and 4 | 30 minutes                                  |
| Years 5 and 6 | 60 minutes                                  |

#### **Homework for Children with Specific Learning Difficulties**

Great care should be taken when setting homework for pupils with specific learning difficulties, as this group of children may have both lower self-esteem and less ability to work independently. Although these pupils should be doing as much in common with the other children as possible, work will often need to be differentiated with some pupils being given special tasks.

Setting homework at the right level will not always be easy but the following principles should be used as a guideline:

- Explain to the child exactly what to do very clearly.
- Ask the child some check questions to ensure that he/she knows what he/she is expected to do.
- Make sure that the homework set is varied to suit different learning styles.
- Provide the child with the opportunity to succeed and feel good about their achievements.

Establishing close contact with the child's parent is particularly important as the child is more likely to require some assistance from an adult.

#### **EAL pupils and homework**

Once children are becoming competent in English they should be set similar (though differentiation may be appropriate) activities to their peers. Children who have just entered the school and know very little English may be extremely tired at the end of the school day and setting homework may not be appropriate immediately. Partnership type activities and listening to stories on tape, together with other language-based activities are the most appropriate forms of homework.

#### **Practical Issues**

A number of **practical issues** need to be addressed by all teachers and very clear and frequently repeated expectations need to be established with the children. Children should be provided with clear guidelines regarding how to transport homework safely back home and then back again to school. The Eaton Square School homework bag must be used for this purpose. The idea of personal responsibility should be stressed.

- From Years 2 – 6 Homework Diaries are issued for the children to take note of their homework and for parents to write messages for the teacher. The Homework Diaries are also used to record notes on reading.
- Children in Reception and Year 1 have a Reading Record where messages are shared about the children's reading progress by the teacher and the parents.
- In Reception - Year 2, weekly homework is set and placed in a folder. From Years 3-6 the homework may be done either in a homework folder, in the correct subject homework book or digitally on Teams, depending on the work set.
- The teacher should clearly indicate to the children exactly where completed homework should be put on its return to school.

The expectations for written homework should follow the expectations set out in the school's [G6. Layout of Written Work.doc](#) – G6. The same standards of presentation should apply. The books should be kept well organised.

#### **The monitoring and evaluation of homework procedures**

Teachers should check to see who has completed their homework on the day it is due to be returned. Children who have not brought their homework back to school should be deemed not to have done it. *'I've done it but it's at home,'* should not be accepted as an excuse. As long as there are no unforeseen circumstances that have made it impossible for the child to do the work set, the children may be asked to complete it as extra work the following night. If homework is not completed regularly, after three warnings a 'Thinking Time' or 'Detention' may be given and a meeting will be arranged with the parents and the class teacher.

Reception and Year 1 teachers should monitor children's Tapestry profile and Reading Record Books regularly to see which parents are doing regular partnership work with their child. Those parents who are clearly not supporting their child in this way should be invited into the school for a meeting to discuss the importance of this form of support. Either the Headmistress/Deputy Heads or Head of EYFS may choose to attend this meeting should they deem it necessary to do so.