

Homework policy

Date: September 2021

Definition

Homework is anything children do outside the normal school day, in response to school guidance, encouragement or prompt, which contributes to their learning.

Rationale

Educational experience that a school by itself provides is limited; children benefit from wider, complementary experiences out of school. However, some prompts and guidance from school can direct these experiences and develop greater learning. We see homework as an important example of cooperation between teachers and parents/carers. An aim of our teaching is to promote independent learners; homework is one of the ways in which children can acquire the skill of independent learning.

Whilst homework develops children's learning and independence, quality family time, play and free time are also important. Homework should not prevent children from taking part in wider activities such as those offered by after-school clubs and other organisations. Children develop their interests and skills to the full only when parents/carers encourage them to make maximum use of the opportunities available outside school.

In Sphere Federation, we refer to educational research. Research indicates that homework can provide some impact on improving outcomes. Schools whose pupils do homework tend to be more successful, although this may not be a causal relationship. Research (see [Education Endowment Foundation's Teaching and Learning Toolkit](#)) indicates the following points, around which our policy is based:

- 🌀 effective homework is associated with greater parental involvement and support.
- 🌀 the broader evidence base suggests that short focused tasks or activities which relate directly to what is being taught, and which are built upon in school, are likely to be more effective than regular daily homework
- 🌀 parental engagement can have a positive impact on learning
- 🌀 oral language activities can have a very positive impact on learning: spoken language and verbal interaction is important

The purpose of Talk Time is to encourage a conversation around children's current learning. We want our children to be expert talkers, using a variety of sentences and expressions, and able to back up their points or disagree with others in a polite way. Talk Time helps writing, too: it's hard to be a good writer if you're not a good speaker.

Aims and principles

We value homework for our children in order to:

- 🌀 enable them to make progress in their academic and social development
- 🌀 develop skills as independent learners
- 🌀 consolidate and reinforce learning in school and to engagement at home
- 🌀 promote cooperation between home and school in supporting learning
- 🌀 help children develop good work habits, increasing their chances of future economic well-being
- 🌀 enable aspects of the curriculum to be explored and enriched
- 🌀 celebrate diversity and explore issues around SMSC (spiritual, moral, social and cultural development)

Activities

The home learning activities we expect are set out in the Homework Guide (above).

We provide a **weekly paper copy** of the tasks and details are published on our websites' Homework page, too.

We also provide a **home learning book**. This is for use at home: children use this to practise spellings or number facts and possibly to make notes during your Talk Time discussion at home. It isn't brought to school each week.

We believe the frequency of homework set out below provides the right balance for pupils and meets the expectations of most parents.

Staff may occasionally provide additional homework; this will amount to two or three extra pieces across the year. As an addition, staff are happy to suggest to parents / carers other ways they can support their child's learning at

home. Occasionally, there will be exceptions to the daily and weekly routines eg during the Y6 residential trip; towards the end of a busy term.

If a child gets low scores in times tables tests or spelling tests for a series of weeks, teachers will alert parents/carers and consider next steps.

Role of parents/carers

Parents/carers play a vital role in their child's education, including homework. They should help by encouraging and discussing ideas and by ensuring their child has a good working space at home. Parents/carers should contact the class teacher or head of school with questions or concerns. The role of parents/carers is set out in the Homework Guide (above).

Holidays

There is no Talk Time or Spellings homework during holiday periods.

We do not authorise unnecessary term-time absence. Because of this, extra homework will not be given to children whose families are going on a term-time holiday. Where a term-time absence is necessary and unavoidable, staff encourage parents to do extra reading and practise / revise spellings, tables, handwriting etc; staff also refer families to the website where additional ideas and activities are described to support their child's learning. In the case of a long-term illness, teachers will provide some tasks if parents/carers ask.

Social, moral, spiritual, cultural development

We aim to promote SMSC in homework; sometimes, this is by directly addressing SMSC development in specific weeks eg: 'I can talk about moral choices', 'I know what democracy is' or 'I can respond to some art' (provided the art work is included so people at home can join in).

Inclusion and equal opportunities

We set homework for all children as a normal part of school life. We ensure that the tasks set are appropriate to the child. Homework requirements set out in the policy may, very occasionally, be adapted on an individual basis. For example, due to some specific SEN issue: teachers differentiate spelling lists or expectations around the amount to learn in order to cater for this.

We value and celebrate the diversity of our pupils and their families and we appreciate the enrichment that this brings. Often, homework tasks can encompass this diversity. This supports SMSC.