



Sidemoor First School and Nursery

Policy on Home Learning

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Homework is anything children do outside the normal school day that contributes to their learning, in response to guidance from the school. Home learning encompasses a whole variety of activities instigated by teachers and parents to support, extend and enrich the children's learning. For example, parents who spend time reading stories to their children before bedtime are helping with home learning. Activities may include those carried out independently or with parents or carers.

2 Rationale for home learning

- 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', in which homework was described as 'an essential part of good education'. We recognise that the educational experience that any school by itself can provide is limited by the time and resources available; children can therefore benefit greatly from the complementary learning that they do at home. Home learning has a positive effect on children's learning which is enhanced if parents and teachers work in partnership. This shared experience makes a valuable contribution to the overall development of the child, as well as reinforcing the fact that learning is ongoing and does not only take place in school. Indeed, we see home learning as an important example of cooperation between teachers and parents. One of the aims of our teaching is for children to develop as independent learners, and we believe that doing homework is one of the main ways in which children can acquire the skill of independent learning.
- 2.2 Home learning plays a positive role in raising a child's level of attainment. However, we also acknowledge the important role of play and free time in a child's growth and development. While home learning is important, it should not prevent children from taking part in the activities of various out-of-school clubs and of other organisations that play an important part in the lives of our pupils. We are well aware that children spend more time at home than at school, and we believe that they develop their interests and skills to the full only when parents encourage them to make maximum use of the opportunities available outside school.

3 Aims and objectives

- 3.1 The aims and objectives of home learning 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 cooperation between home and school in supporting each child's learning;
 - to allow pupils to achieve greater depth in their curricular studies;
 - to provide educational experiences not possible in school;
 - to consolidate and reinforce the learning done in school, and to allow children to practise skills taught in lessons and to carry out independent research;
 - to help children develop good work habits for a future of life-long learning.

4 Types of home learning

- 4.1 Staff and pupils regard home learning as an integral part of the curriculum – it is planned and prepared alongside all other programmes of learning.

- 4.2 We set a variety of home learning activities. In the Foundation Stage and at Key Stage 1, we give children books to take home and read with their parents. We give guidance to parents on achieving the maximum benefit from this time spent reading with their child. We also ask Key Stage 1 children to learn sounds, or mathematical tables as part of their homework. Sometimes, we ask children to talk about a topic at home prior to studying it in school. For example, in the history topic on toys, we ask children to find out what toys were popular when their grandparents were young, and, if possible, to bring examples into school to show the other children. Sometimes, we ask children to find and collect things that we then use in science lessons, and occasionally we ask children to take home work that they have started in school, when we believe that they could benefit from spending further time on it. When we ask children to study a topic, or to research a particular subject, we encourage them to use not only the school library but also the local library, as well as the Internet and CD-ROMs.
- 4.3 At Key Stage 2, we continue to give children the sort of homework activities outlined in paragraph 4.2, but we expect them to do more tasks independently. Literacy and numeracy tasks may be set, but all pupils are expected to contribute to their learning by completing at least three tasks on the home learning grid each half term. This is topic related and promotes the development of independent research skills and is shared with the class.
- 4.4 Home learning is valued and, when appropriate, is marked according to the general school marking policy. Home learning completed well is acknowledged and praised. There may be issues arising from the work, which the teacher will follow up in lesson time.
- 4.5 We recognise that children have individual learning styles, which means that some tasks can be completed in a number of different ways, while others demand a particular approach.

5 Amount of homework

- 5.1 As they move through the school, we increase the amount of home learning that is expected of the children. We expect children in Key Stage 1 to spend approximately one hour a week doing home learning activities, although this may well include reading with a parent. We expect children in Years 3 and 4 to spend approximately 15–20 minutes per night on home learning. This is in line with the DCFS guidelines that were issued in 1998.
- 5.2 We give all our pupils a home-school reading diary in which reading is recorded, either by the teacher, the teaching assistant or the parent, and in which parents and teachers make any relevant comments.

6 Inclusion and homework

- 6.1 We set homework for all children as a normal part of school life. We ensure that all tasks set are appropriate to the ability of the child, and we endeavour to adapt any task set so that all children can contribute in a positive way. When setting home learning tasks for pupils who are named on the register of special needs, we refer to those pupils' Individual Education Plans (IEPs). We value and celebrate the cultural diversity of our pupils and their families, and we appreciate the enrichment that this brings. Learning can be matched to each child's individual ability.

7 The role of parents

- 7.1 Parents have a vital role to play in their child's education, and home learning is an important part of this process. We ask parents to encourage their child to complete the home learning tasks that are set. We invite them to help their children as and when they feel it to be necessary, and to provide them with the sort of environment that allows children to do their best, preferably quiet and supportive. 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. Children work best with encouragement

and praise and when they are comfortable. If the situation becomes stressful then learning will not take place and the value of home learning is negated.

- 7.2 We ask parents to use the home–school reading diary regularly, and ideally on a daily basis, and to sign it as requested.
- 7.3 If parents have any questions about home learning, 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 home learning policy, or the way in which it is implemented, parents should contact the governing body.

8 Use of ICT

- 8.1 The use of ICT and the Internet has made a significant contribution to the amount of reference material available at home, and the ease and speed with which it can be accessed. However, our teachers expect their pupils to produce their own work, perhaps by editing something they have found, or by expressing it in their own words. The children are not achieving anything worthwhile by merely downloading and printing out something that has been written by somebody else.
- 8.2 There are many websites containing highly educational material which can have a powerful effect on children's learning. Our school learning platform provides links to the sites which will best support the children's learning. Parents are advised always to supervise their child's access to the Internet.
- 8.3 We discourage children from bringing computer disks/memory sticks into school, because of the risk of viruses. However, when appropriate, a teacher might suggest that a child's work is e-mailed to the teacher at school.

9 Monitoring and review

- 9.1 The headteacher is responsible for coordinating and monitoring the implementation of this policy.
- 9.2 It is the responsibility of our governing body to agree and then monitor the school home learning policy. This is done by the Curriculum Committee of the governing body. Parents complete a questionnaire each year, and during the school's Ofsted inspection, and our governing body pays careful consideration to any concern that is raised by any parent.
- 9.3 This policy will be reviewed in two years, or earlier if necessary.

MFJ

Signed: *MJones*

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