

# Valley Road School

## Homework Policy

### Introduction

Homework is defined as any learning activity that pupils are asked to do outside of normal lesson time, either on their own or with support from parents and carers. Homework is not a statutory requirement but we at Valley Road believe well planned homework makes an important contribution to pupils' progress at school and helps pupils to achieve high standards.

Homework partnerships with parents, carers and pupils can extend high quality learning experiences beyond the limits of the school day. However we also believe that while considering the value of homework tasks, children also need time to relax, enjoy life and learn through experiences outside of school.

We believe homework which merely fills up pupils' time out of school is unlikely to be productive and may prevent valuable development that would otherwise occur through play and other interests. Homework tasks of completing work that should have been completed in school or carrying out numerous exercises from worksheets, often unconnected with classroom learning, have questionable merit and have no place in our school.

### Why Homework?

Homework should not be a chore, but children should see it as an extension of their schoolwork. There may be occasions when some tasks are more challenging or difficult than usual as homework plays a positive role in raising a child's level of attainment. We also acknowledge the important role of play and free time in a child's growth and development.

We see homework as encompassing a wide range of possibilities. The following list gives just a few examples:

- reading with a parent
- undertaking individual research – online or even practically e.g. at the local library, a family visit to a local museum
- displaying research to share learning
- learning number facts (tables)
- English activities both written and verbal

It can be seen from this list that homework can be a two-way process.

### What the school will offer

Homework will vary from year to year (see amounts). The school uses TEAMS as a way of setting homework for most year groups. This makes for easy access for parents to see the tasks that have been set as well as allowing communication with staff should there be any questions or clarification needed.

When teachers set homework, they will ensure that:

- It is always clearly related to current areas of study within the classroom
- The task is made clear to children and matched to their abilities, especially for those pupils with special educational needs
- Pupils have homework books for their work or complete the work online
- Time scales for completion and submission are explicit
- Work is marked as promptly as possible
- Problems or difficulties encountered by children are dealt with swiftly
- Regular completion of homework to a high standard is recognised and celebrated
- The impact of homework upon the standards of children's attainment is monitored
- All children will be expected to complete tasks. They will be given an opportunity to succeed in this through using a session in school time if they continually fail to complete it

### How we approach homework

As pupils progress through primary school to secondary school, the emphasis of homework changes towards more and more independent learning. Pupils practise tasks designed to encourage their independence and they practise new study skills that will be demanded at further education level as well as the workplace.

We believe independent working encourages responsibility and innovation. Where possible, children should try a task first before asking for help, however, it is essential that parents are aware of the work being completed and also support their child to ensure the work is completed to a good standard that shows pride in their work. Independent work makes both parents and carers more aware of the need to support their child in differing ways. Tasks where a parent can complete their child's work or make contributions to work that will later be assessed as the pupils, are counter productive.

While well-conceived homework tasks have a potentially valuable role to play, children also need time to relax, socialise and enjoy life outside of school. In our local area, there are many opportunities to learn and develop through participation in a wide range of challenging and enjoyable activities such as the arts, sport, voluntary and community activities and as a school we wholly support and encourage this. Homework should not restrict a child's access to these opportunities to develop however, we appreciate your help in managing your child's time to enable homework to be completed to a good standard as well.

The school sees the display of homework and the sharing of achievement across the year groups as essential.

A child is expected to hand in their work on the expected date. This may be either physically (via a book) or online (via TEAMS). If this does not occur and there has been no prior discussion with the parents as to this possibility, it will be expected that the child will complete the work during their own time in school. The school is committed to returning work to pupils within a few days of completion and this is not achievable unless a pupil has completed the work at the requisite time.

Children who do not complete their homework may be asked to stay in to do so at the teacher's discretion.

If a child persistently does not complete homework, then the teacher may contact the parents and ask to speak to them in order for school and home to work in partnership for the benefit of the child.

## How we prepare children for homework

We help pupils to learn how to cope with the demands of homework by including a session on independent study skills in the personal and social education programme at the beginning of every year. By the time the child leaves the school we expect them to be able to:

- manage and organise their time effectively
- identify their strengths and weaknesses and understand their own preferred learning styles
- understand how they can improve their learning and performance
- develop a range of techniques to assist study, coursework, and examination preparation
- set targets for themselves in discussion with their teachers

## How much time do we spend on homework?

There are no government recommendations for homework amounts. Our school guidelines are as follows:

Years 1 and 2	1 hour per week
Years 3 and 4	1-2 hours per week
Years 5 and 6	30 minutes per day

These amounts are the total of all homework tasks including Reading and spellings. We follow this guidance as an approximation. Pupils will always receive feedback on the work they have produced either verbally, in writing, or via TEAMS. We use a consistent marking policy, a copy of which is available on request.

## Homework across the school

We place homework activities on the relevant class page on Microsoft TEAMS. This will enable easy access for both pupils and parents to see what is expected. Dependant on the teacher's instructions in the task, teachers will mark on-line where the feedback is privately available to the child (and parent). If the work was requested to be in a homework book, or on paper, then feedback will be given on that platform.

## The Early Years

It is essential that young children develop positive attitudes to learning before formal schooling. This early 'homework' often takes the form of talking and playing with children as well as singing nursery rhymes together.

Often, for young children in school, the most valuable form of 'homework' or learning is where parents or carers play a key role in working with them. This involves not simply hearing children read; sharing books or learning spellings but also using role-play or games to develop a range of skills and helping children collect information and materials for displays.

The main value of homework as part of early pre-school activities is to help parents and carers:

- develop a culture of learning
- work in partnership with schools
- understand the ways in which children learn and, in particular, extend the understanding of learning through play activities
- access books and materials to support learning
- extend their own learning skills
- developing personal skills including putting on shoes and coats; being independent with toileting needs

## **The Infants**

Homework in the infants continues the development established in the Early Years. Priority is on developing reading through a love of sharing books. There are also weekly opportunities for developing skills in spelling and maths. When appropriate there will be the challenge of researching information for topic work.

## **The Juniors**

The core subjects of English and Maths form the core of homework activities. There may also be tasks based on topics and science. Work may be presented in a variety of ways.

## **Format**

Most homework set will be in a digital format online via TEAMS. Some subjects will require books e.g. maths and occasionally there may be paper copies. Spelling and tables tests will take place at school in the appropriate books.

## **Equal Opportunities**

We differentiate our homework activities to make it possible for every child to gain satisfaction and progress while working for roughly the same length of time on an activity.

We recognise that not all pupils will have the same available space for homework and may not have appropriate materials. We expect families to work with us to discuss any needs their child may have.

**Policy Agreed – October 2023**

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