



St Catherine's C of E School

Home Learning Policy



Introduction

At St. Catherine's C of E School we recognise the vital role parents play in the education of their children. We strongly believe in the value of home-school partnership, of which our home learning policy is an important element. Home learning is defined as *any learning or activities which pupils are asked to do outside lesson time, either on their own or with parents or carers*. At St Catherine's we see learning done at home as a valuable part of school learning.

Our Home learning Philosophy

We believe that home learning:

- Provides a home/school link and promotes liaison
- Increases parental knowledge and understanding of the curriculum
- Actively involves parents in the learning process
- Generates discussion at home amongst family members
- Encourages a positive attitude and approach to learning
- Encourages self-motivation and the development of organisational skills
- Fosters independent learning
- Should be targeted at each child's level
- Develops research skills
- Encourages pupils to become more familiar with out of school resources, eg. Local library
- Reinforces the teaching of the National Curriculum
- Encourages constructive use of spare time
- Improves pupil achievement
- Assists language development
- Does not have to be written
- Learning sent home should be linked to learning in school

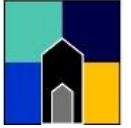
At St Catherine's School teaching staff recognise that pupils who have spent a busy structured day at school need time to relax and unwind at the end of the afternoon. We are also mindful of the need to encourage children to pursue out of school activities, e.g. swimming, ballet, Beavers, Brownies, music lessons etc.

Home learning should be used to effectively reinforce and/or extend what is learned in school. We hope that children will feel a sense of personal satisfaction in a task completed



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well and that their efforts will be recognised and praised both at home and at school. Home learning tasks should be undertaken to the best of their ability.

We hope parents and carers will be willing and able to give their active support to ensure that work done at home is completed conscientiously and in the best possible conditions.

At St Catherine's, staff will do their best to ensure that all learning activities sent home are age-appropriate, that can be completed within a reasonable time and have direct benefit to their pupils' learning.

Home Learning Expectations

At the beginning of the academic year, each year group will be informed of what is expected of them with regard to home learning. At the first parents' evening in September (Meet the Teacher), teachers will explain the organisation of home learning in their child's class to parents. All Key Stage 2 pupils have home learning books in which they write down each week what they have to do and the date the home learning is due.

Home Learning Content

The nature of home learning will change as children get older. For children in Key Stage 1, developing a partnership with parents and carers, and involving them actively in children's learning is a key objective.

Short activities of different kinds – reading together, learning spellings and number facts - provide a very important opportunity for young children to talk about what they are learning to an interested adult, and to practise key skills in a supportive environment.

As children get older, home learning provides an opportunity for them to develop the skills of independent learning, which they will need to continue lifelong learning and this should increasingly become its main purpose. It is important that children should gradually get into the habit of regularly devoting periods of time, which may not be long, to study on their own.

By the time children reach Year 6 their home learning programme will cover a wide range of tasks and curriculum content, with a regular weekly schedule. This approach will benefit their learning and also ensure that, in relation to home learning as much as to other aspects, their transition to Year 7/Secondary school is as smooth as possible.

Home learning will be differentiated to take account of individual pupils needs and may include:



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Home Reading

The importance of reading at home cannot be over-emphasised and we hope that children will read for pleasure in their own time. Pupils will be provided with a suitable school reading book, which can be taken home to read with a parent or other adult person. A record book will be provided for parents to sign when they have listened to or read to their child. Once pupils are reading fluently they will be expected to take responsibility for their own reading books as necessary. Parents will be asked to sign reading home learning to indicate that it has been completed.

Spellings

Spellings or phonics activities will be given weekly to all children. Some spellings may be differentiated by pupil ability; others may be key words from topics.

Maths

Pupils may be required to learn key facts, for example, helpful rhymes, number bonds or multiplication tables and as they get older will receive home learning to practise calculation skills. Pupils from years 2-6 will also have access to Timestable Rockstars, an online resource to practise tables skills at home.

Topic Learning

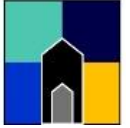
Pupils will be given the opportunity to research topics they are studying in class. This research could be sourced from the local library, the internet or from family members. Pupils will be given the opportunity to feed-back what they have discovered to the whole class. Teachers may challenge pupils to undertake the completion of their own topic over a half term or term.

Other activities may include:

Handwriting Practice
Preparing questions
Writing tasks
Puzzles/games
Learning songs or scripts for plays
Physical activities
Investigations
Completing classroom activities.

Home Learning Packs

In our Nursery and Reception classes, home-school packs are available for pupils to support in encouraging learning at home.



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Time expectations

Every child is different and it is important to avoid home learning becoming a difficult issue at home. We encourage parents to use their discretion in how long to ask their child to work at a task. However, as pupils move through the school, it is important to help them develop stamina when completing independent learning tasks in order to prepare them for secondary school expectations.

Guidelines:

- Years 1 and 2, 1 hour per week reading, spelling, other literacy and number work
- Years 3 and 4, 1.5 hours per week. Reading, English and Mathematics as for Years 1 and 2 - with occasional assignments in other subjects
- Years 5 and 6, 2 hours per week with continued emphasis on English and mathematics, Revision for SATs but also ranging widely over the curriculum.

Home learning will not, in general, be used to finish off work started in class. The school believes that a regular pattern is important, particularly for English and Mathematics. It will endeavour to establish a familiar routine of when tables and spellings are set and when they are tested. This information will be made clear to parents at the initial parents' evening at the beginning of the academic year.

Special Educational Needs (SEN)

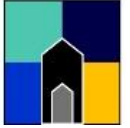
Setting the right type and amount of home learning for children with special educational needs will need careful consideration by the class teacher and co-ordination with both the SENCo and parents. The objectives of home learning outlined in this policy should apply equally to pupils with special educational needs. Whilst children with SEN may benefit from special tasks separate from the home learning set for other children in the class, it is important that they should do as much in common with other children as possible. Home learning tasks for children with SEN should:

- have a very clear focus and time-guideline;
- give plenty of opportunities for pupils to succeed;
- help develop social as well as other skills where necessary;
- be varied - and not purely written assignments;
- be manageable for teachers.

We are mindful that specific tasks in the form of Individual Education Plans for children with Special Educational Needs will be set. Parents will be made aware of this as appropriate.

Role of the school

- monitor the effectiveness of the home learning policy each year



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- support parents with the latest methods of teaching in English and Mathematics by offering parent meetings to put into context the development of English and Mathematics skills from Reception through to Year Six

Role of the class teacher

- Plan home learning as an integral part of curriculum planning and indicate tasks on short term planning
- inform pupils and parents of home learning timetables through discussion in class, at parents' meetings
- ensure pupils understand and are capable of completing their weekly home learning tasks and research projects
- match home learning, as far as possible, to the ability of the children
- provide marking and feedback which encourages pupils to regularly complete tasks
- feedback should be appropriate to the task e.g.
 - individual comment from the teacher, verbal or written
 - marking of the task within an acceptable timeframe
 - teacher supporting pupil self-marking
 - reading diary entry written by pupils or parents
 - recognising home learning achievement through assemblies

Role of the parents/carers

- The school recognises that parents and carers have a key role to play in supporting pupils' home learning. The nature of this role will change as children get older. For much of their home learning, particularly with younger children, parents and carers will be encouraged to become actively involved in joint home learning activities. Your HELP, ENCOURAGEMENT and PRAISE is the key to success.
- We ask you to provide a reasonably peaceful, suitable place in which pupils can do their home learning – alone, or more often for younger children, together with an adult.
- We do not envisage a primary school child spending time in isolation with work he or she may find difficult. Give support and help but do not do the work for the children. Please support children in completing tasks and return work in a tidy presentable state.

Concerns

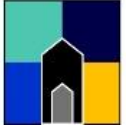
If any child does not understand a task, parents should encourage them to ask their teacher for further guidance. If you have any concerns about the levels of home learning or the content etc., please see your child's class teacher. Do not let your child get upset about home learning;

if there is a problem, come in and speak to the teacher about it.



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Consulting about Home Learning

The school will use the Meet the Teacher meeting to inform parents and carers about the school's home learning policy and secure their involvement. The Home learning Policy and useful information for parents in supporting their child's learning is displayed on the School Website. Other parents' meetings eg: Pupils Progress Meetings and Parental Engagement days will be used to promote this partnership. Home learning questionnaires will be used where appropriate to ascertain parent views. Parents will be consulted about any significant changes to the policy that are being considered by the Governing Body.

Reviewing the Policy

The home learning policy will be reviewed annually. Where significant changes to the policy are felt to be required, proposals will be presented to the governing body.