

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.

What is 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
- a family visit to a local museum
- finishing off work from the class
- undertaking individual research for a project at the local library
- learning number facts (tables)
- literacy activities both written and verbal
- being an active member of a sports club or youth organisation
- going swimming

It can be seen from this list that homework can be a two way process. Teachers may ask for tasks to be done at home, but are delighted to learn about children's success in other aspects of their lives and will seek to recognise this in school.

What the school will offer

During each term of the school year every parent receives an invitation to meet with their child's class teacher to discuss progress and areas of study to be undertaken in relation to the National Curriculum. These discussions will include information about the types of homework which

might be set by school as well as indicating activities parents might wish to develop with their children.

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
- 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 of a high standard is recognised and celebrated.
- The impact of homework upon the standards of children's attainment is monitored and included in the report to parents.
- Opportunities for the regular, formal evaluation of homework are provided for teachers, parents and children as part of the on-going consultation arrangements.
- All children will be expected to complete tasks. They will be given an opportunity to succeed in this through using a session in school leisure 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. It 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. 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. Homework should not restrict a child's access to these opportunities to develop.

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. 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.

Older children who do not do homework may be given an after school detention in which to complete their homework.

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 through action planning
- develop a range of techniques to assist study, coursework and examination preparation;
- set targets for themselves in discussion with their teachers
- use the School Council to voice concerns on any aspects of school life, including homework.

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 or in writing. We use a consistent marking policy, a copy of which is available on request.

Homework across the school

In all year groups we will send out to parents, details of homework in written form. These may on occasion be emailed to parents but we believe it is important for children to develop the responsibility of taking handed out information. Homework will give clear instructions or information and a date for completion.

We place homework activities on the relevant class page on Microsoft TEAMS. This enable easy access for both pupils and parents to see what is expected. Teachers mark on line and the feedback is privately available to the child.

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 opportunities for developing skills in spelling and maths. Sometimes there will be the challenge of researching information for topic work.

The Juniors

The core subjects of Literacy and Numeracy form the core of homework activities. There are opportunities for research on topics. Work may be presented in a variety of ways.

Format

Most homework will be in a digital format online via TEAMS. Occasionally there may be paper copies.

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 – September 2020

Review – September 2022