



Homework and Home Learning Policy

Status: draft

Date: March 2019

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Governor Leadership: Teaching and Learning Committee

Executive Leadership: Executive Headteacher

Key Manager: Head of School

Consultation/signing group: Teaching staff, school council, parents

What the students need to know:

- We will set you learning tasks to do at home so that you can maximise your progress.
- The tasks we set you should be able to do mostly on your own. Parents should only have to help a little.
- Some of the things you already do at home may be good learning and we will recognize this and communicate with home about your achievements.

What every member of staff needs to know:

- We will set regular learning tasks for pupils to complete at home in order to maximise their progress.

What every adult needs to know:

- Samuel Laycock will optimise progress for our pupils by regularly setting tasks to be completed at home.





Homework and Home Learning Policy

Aims

The main aim of the policy is to promote school and home working together for the benefit of pupils. There are therefore 3 main aims to our Homework and Home learning Policy:

- Optimising pupil progress through pupils devoting more time to achieving school based targets through reinforcement at home.
- To develop the partnership between School and Home in achieving key learning targets and optimising rates of progress for pupils.
- To develop independent working and responsibility for completing tasks where appropriate.

Introduction

As a special school catering for pupils with a wide range of Learning Difficulties the setting of home learning for our students has potentially, many different issues to those of a mainstream school. This policy endeavours to recognise and respect these significant differences.

The principle differences are that that often our pupils:

- place greater care/challenge demands on parents/carers
- need more time for support in their learning
- need more complex support in their learning
- have shorter independent attention spans
- need much more direct teaching in the area of personal and social development than many children in mainstream
- pupils with intensive Autism may need to understand a very distinct difference between work at school and their activities at home

The provision of home learning in our school will therefore acknowledge and be responsive to these issues. Home learning will be flexible to meet both the individual educational needs of pupils and also take reasonable account of home circumstances - whilst retaining the challenge for pupils to learn through home learning.

There will be an expectation that parents/carers will support appropriate demands for home learning and assist their children with a similar level of commitment that they would offer to their children in mainstream schools- allowing for the additional needs of our pupils outlined above. If parents have very strong views on the issue of home learning the school will seek to take these views into account.

Pupils with Autism

Teachers will be sensitive to the individual needs of pupils when setting home learning for pupils with Autism whilst finding ways to effectively and sensitively ensure the essential level of home learning specified by this policy. Where appropriate, greater demands of





home learning will be set - **but** – teachers will remain sensitive to the circumstances of the pupil and their family.

Pupils with Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs

Teachers will be sensitive to the individual needs of pupils when setting home learning for these groups of pupils whilst offering the essential level of home learning specified by this policy. Where appropriate, greater demands of home learning will be set - **but** – teachers will remain sensitive to the circumstances of the pupil and their family. Above all it is important that demands for Homework do not adversely effect a families ability to cope with a young person going through difficult times.

The nature of school work at home

School work at home will:

- **aim to be a positive- and where possible motivating- experience**
- **optimise independent learning**
- **promote consolidation and application of skills learnt in school**
- **promote a positive partnership with parents in their child’s learning**

A positive experience:

Progress in learning is optimised when pupils enjoy learning. This is especially the case for pupils with learning difficulties at a developmental stage of limited metacognition with limited ability to ‘force’ themselves to revise etc.

Therefore Homework tasks will seek to be fun and, wherever possible either include intrinsic motivation of an activity enjoyable to the pupil or extrinct rewards of dojos or similar recognition when submitted back to school. Rewards will be connected to the school’s values of RESPECT – especially those of Resilience and Effort.

Optimise independent working:

The schoolwork we will set to be completed at home will be well matched to the needs of the individual pupil. Homework will therefore generally not be at the limit of a pupil’s ability but within their capability to complete largely independently. This will promote self-esteem by generating a sense of independent ability.

Promote consolidation and application of skills learnt in school

Often Homework will limit the amount of new learning that the pupils needs to attempt without the support of skilled school staff. Therefore, the most appropriate areas of Homework is the practice and consolidation of skills learnt in school or the application of skills and understanding learnt in school to new situations; particularly those of everyday family life- for example working out shopping bills in Maths or reading a review of a product for an on-line product in English.

Promote a positive partnership with parents in their child’s learning

We seek to provide opportunities for parents to share enjoyment in their child’s learning- finding out new interesting things and helping develop their child’s skills. Shared reading is a particularly important part of this aim and we hope it to be a supportive and bonding





experience and stress that parents should celebrate the positive and sensitively support with errors made.

The role of parents:

School will work in partnership with parents to make Homework effective for each pupil. Parents should let school know if there are any difficulties with Homework so that school can adjust things to make things work better. School can't correct things if we don't know it's wrong! In particular parents should let school know if:

- homework is too hard or far too easy- sometimes pupils behave very differently at home than at school. If a child is showing different abilities at home and school it is really helpful to discuss this in partnership.
- A pupil is reluctant to complete homework for general child/teenage reasons- school can help with behaviour strategies and rewards for completing homework. School also has a Homework Club after school to help with this and for homework to better fit into family life.
- A pupil is extremely reluctant to complete homework due to their special needs- such as autism- and home learning would be better organised in a different way to make it very different from school.

Above all we do not want homework to add to the problem if a family is already experiencing difficulties. If this looks like it is becoming the case please speak with us so that we can try to help.

The areas of Homework:

Academic skills:

- **English**
- **Maths**
- **Other subjects**

English

English and Literacy are at the heart of our curriculum and the functional skills that will prepare our pupils for the optimum chances in later life. Therefore these skills are also at the heart of our homework policy where we set reading to done on a daily (at least 5 times a week) basis and spelling practice to be done on at least a weekly basis. Each week pupils will also be set a general English task, often writing, linked to consolidating and applying their learning in lessons.

Maths

Maths and Numeracy are the second key strand of our curriculum as they also vital to future opportunities. We will therefore set either a number bonds or times table task for each pupil to practice each day as the automatic recall of these facts is so central to optimising progress in the subject. Each week pupils will also be set a general Maths task linked to consolidating and applying their learning in lessons.





Other subjects

Other subjects will undertake homework through two main routes; general parental support for the subject each half term and a specific piece of work related to the learning in lessons at least once per half term.

Core functional skills:

- **Individual and independence skills**
- **Agreed child/parent priorities**

Individual and Independence Skills (from September 2019)

Each half term an personal target will be set and this will often be from the pupil's Individual Education Plan (IEP) particularly in the areas of Working with Others and Improving Own Learning. However, this target may also be from any pertinent need that the pupil is experiencing including key independence tasks that are less appropriate for IEP targets.

Agreed child/parent priorities (from September 2019)

School will offer the facility, should parents and pupils wish to participate, of achievements at home being celebrated in school and through school systems such as dojo. In order to join in with this system parents will agree a target with their child and record this on the Homework planner (in the school planner from September 2019). They will then also record when this target has been addressed at home and school will reward the pupil through our systems. In the unlikely circumstance that an agreed child/parent priority is not in line with school policy or our understanding of the needs of the pupil school will discuss this with the parent and/or pupil and reserve the right to indicate that we cannot reward this target.

The organisation of Homework:

- Setting
- Recording
- Marking and feedback
- Homework club

Setting:

Maths and English teachers will set the targets for their subject areas. Pastoral tutors will set the individual or independence target using their knowledge and relationship with parents to inform this process. This will be a topic for discussion at the Autumn Parents' evening and at other meetings with parents. Teachers of other subjects will write a brief outline of their work for each forthcoming half term and a brief summary of how parents could support their child in this area. Parents will be encouraged to comment and report back on the extent to which this has been effective at home. Each half term they will also send home at least one specific task/piece of work to promote the aims of this policy.

Recording:

The setting and returning of completed specific pieces of work will be recorded through teachers' own class recording processes.





The setting and addressing of Individual Targets and Agreed Parent and Child targets will be on a recording sheet- initially loose but to be included in the school planner from September 2019.

The “other subject” outline and advice will be recorded on a single sheet of paper initially and in the school planner from September 2019.

Homework will be kept for monitoring purposes- either in the pupil’s book/file or in a class file according to the teacher’s preference.

Marking and feedback:

All Homework will be marked and pupils given feedback within a week of the return date.

Homework club:

School will provide a Homework club for those who wish to attend and, in particular, for pupils for whom completing Homework at home would be problematic for whatever reason.

The monitoring and evaluation of Homework:

English and Maths lead teachers will monitor English and Maths homework on a termly basis according to the criteria of this policy:

- Rate of compliance- that both teachers and pupils are following the policy
- Accessibility and positivity of homework set
- The consistency and quality of Marking and Feedback

This monitoring will form part of their termly report to the Governors’ Standards and Curriculum Committee.

Other subjects will be similarly monitored by their subject coordinators. This monitoring will form part of their annual report to the Governors’ Standards and Curriculum committee.

The Individual or Independence target and school support for any agreed Parent/Pupil targets that come from home will be monitored by the Heads of Department as part of their Teaching and Learning- Behaviour for Learning and SEN, monitoring and form part of their report to the Governors’ Teaching and Learning Committee.

Support for Parents

The school will support parents in their role in relation to home learning. Our policy is of ongoing support for parents. Parents/carers should feel free to contact school for help at any time. In addition, we offer the facilities of the book loans from the school library.

Long term Absence

Appropriate home learning packs will be provided for pupils on long term cultural visits and specialised equipment is loaned wherever possible. Advice is provided to parents prior to the visit on methods of maintaining skills. A named member of staff has responsibility for maintaining contact with pupils who are frequently absent from school for medical reasons.





This member of staff will ensure that parents are provided with advice, training and resources as required.

Exclusion for one day or more

Where a pupil is excluded for more than one day home learning will be set according to the general policy. Where the exclusion is designed to be a non-motivating consequence of behaviour from which the child is intended to learn, due consideration will be taken that the home learning is of a neutral motivation and is not overly enjoyable leading to reinforcement of the problem behaviour. The home learning itself will not be intended to be punitive.

Equal Opportunities

Home learning will be planned, delivered, assessed and resourced in full accordance with the school's policy of Equal Opportunities. Strenuous efforts will be made to avoid any disadvantage arising from sex, religious belief, ethnic or socio-economic background. As far as possible all books and resources will be monitored for gender stereotyping. Effort will be made to secure materials representing the heritage of pupils from each ethnic and cultural background and, of those with disabilities leading positive every day lives.

Date of last review: March 2019

