

Gracehill Primary School

Homework Policy



April 2016

Definition – What is homework?

Homework is anything that children do outside the normal school day that contributes to their learning in response to guidance from the school.

Homework encompasses a whole variety of activities instigated by teachers and parents to support children's learning. For example, a parent who spends time reading to their child before bedtime is helping with 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.

In Gracehill Primary School, we see homework as an activity which will help develop the whole child and it may include some of the following:

- Reading with a parent
- A family visit to a local place of interest
- Finishing off work from class
- Undertaking independent research for a project/topic
- Learning number facts/tables/spellings
- Literacy or numeracy activities both written and verbal

Rationale

A good and well-managed homework programme helps children to develop the skills and attitudes they will need for successful lifelong learning.

In Primary School the purpose of homework changes as children get older. For younger children developing a partnership with parents or carers and involving them in children's learning is the key purpose. As children get older, homework provides an opportunity for children to develop the skills of independent learning.

Homework is seen as an extension of work in school, a reinforcement of class learning and an opportunity for children to share with their parents what they are learning about.

Aims of Homework Policy

- To ensure a whole school consistent approach to homework and to make homework manageable for all concerned
- To consolidate and reinforce learning done in school and assist in preparation for future class work, particularly in Literacy and Numeracy
- To allow children to practise skills taught in lessons
- To enable pupils to make maximum progress in their academic and social development
- To help pupils develop the skills of an independent/lifelong learner
- To encourage skills and attitudes which help children improve their educational performance
- To provide a context for pupil/parent interaction
- To promote a partnership between home and school in supporting every child's learning by enabling parents to have a direct insight into their child's school work
- To enable all aspects of the curriculum to be covered in sufficient depth
- To provide educational experiences not possible in the school setting
- To help children develop good work habits and self-discipline for the future

Roles and Responsibilities

Teachers

At the start of each school year every parent will receive information regarding their child's particular year group. This information will include details about timetable, areas/topics to be studied and guidelines for homework as these will differ to some extent from year to year. This information will also be available on the school website.

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 the children and matched to their abilities
- It is supported by a written record which will be taken home
- Time scales for completion/submission are explicit
- Work is marked as promptly as possible and problems or difficulties encountered by children are dealt with swiftly
- Regular completion of homework of a high standard is expected
- During parent/teacher interviews there will be opportunities to evaluate homework
- All children will be expected to complete tasks. They will be given an opportunity to succeed in this through using a homework session in school leisure time if they continually fail to complete it to a satisfactory standard.

Parents

It is vital that parents display a positive attitude to homework and value its importance. It is also important for parents to recognise that it is the children's responsibility to complete the work. The boundary between what many parents see as constructive help and what children view as interference is indistinct and can vary from day to day. Parents need to listen to the child's explanation of what they have to do, discuss the work their child is doing and whether or not help is needed and what form this might take.

If parents have any problems or questions about homework, they should, in the first instance, contact the class teacher. If their questions are of a more general nature, they should contact the Principal.

Consequently, parents need to discuss with their children the following questions –

1. When is it a good time to do any homework?
2. Where is the best place for homework to be done?
3. What helps concentration?
4. How long should my homework take me?
5. Should I ask for help with my homework, even when it is finishing work started in class?
6. Who should I ask for help and how much help should I expect?

Parents are therefore responsible for –

- Providing suitable, quiet surroundings where pupils can do their homework, ie. not in front of the television
- Encouraging younger members of the family to play quieter games if in the same room
- Making it clear to children that they value homework and support the school in explaining how it can help their learning
- Encouraging children to persevere with a task and giving support if appropriate
- Giving due importance to non-written tasks such as listening and talking about children's reading on a regular basis
- Assisting with the learning of spellings and tables
- Signing all relevant homework tasks/Friday tests
- Keeping school informed of any changes in the child's home circumstances which may affect learning

Homework should not be a stressful experience between parent and child. This leads to poor learning and defeats the whole purpose. Contact with the class teacher should be made if this is happening.

Children

Children are responsible for –

- Tackling homework promptly and with a positive attitude
- Reading at home and returning books on time if borrowed from school
- Making full use of all the opportunities they are presented with
- Being organised and remembering to take homework, including all relevant books/materials, home and return it on time
- Taking responsibility for their own learning and completing work within an agreed time
- Remembering that learning spellings and tables is of vital importance and that ‘learning homeworks’ are still expected to be completed
- Taking pride in presentation and content, acknowledging the high personal standard expected

Pupils with special educational needs –

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. If a child has special needs, we endeavour to adapt any task set so that all children can contribute in a positive way.

Absence from school –

Usually when a child is absent from school this is due to illness. If requested the class teacher will try to provide some work which may be carried out at home if the child is well enough to do it.

Occasionally children are absent for other reasons such as family holidays. As a school we believe that the merit of the trip must be weighed against the lost work and that parents should make their decision accordingly. However it is unreasonable either to expect the teacher to prepare work in advance for the child or for the child to have to spend part of his or her holiday time doing school work. The class teacher will not usually provide work in these circumstances.

Procedures and Expectations

Homework will obviously vary in content and expectation as children become older. The following table clearly displays how long homework set by teachers, should take, on average, and how this progresses throughout the school.

Year Group	Time spent on average
P1	10 – 15 mins
P2	15 – 20 mins
P3	20 – 25 mins
P4	25 – 30 mins
P5	30 – 45 mins
P6	45 – 60 mins
P7	45 – 60 mins

Please note these are guidelines – all children will have different approaches to how they complete homework. Some will finish quickly; some will take a little longer. If your child is unable to complete the homework within the guideline times and appears to be taking an overly long time to complete work please do not allow them to become stressed about the task. Put a note into the homework book for your child's class teacher and if this is a regular occurrence please arrange to meet with the teacher to discuss your concerns.

It should be noted that as children reach Key Stage 2 classes, they may be required to undertake a project with a longer period of time allocated to complete the task. On occasions such as these, children are expected to manage their own time on a daily basis and to ensure that the completed task is finished in the specified time. This is in preparation for many post primary homework arrangements when children have a much greater degree of freedom in which to organise work to be completed at home.