

DRUMAHOE PRIMARY SCHOOL



Homework Policy

Introduction

The date of this policy is 01/11/11 and will be reviewed annually.

This policy has been presented to and agreed by the whole staff on 01/11/11.

This policy has been presented to and agreed upon by the Governing Body on 01/11/11.

This policy is also available to:

- all staff (permanent, temporary, supply or otherwise)
- advisers/inspectors
- parents (on request)
- Drumahoe Primary School Governors.

All permanent staff have a printed copy.

The policy can also be found in the master policy file in the Principal's office.

The Principal and staff in Drumahoe Primary School believe that:

TIME SPENT

LISTENING.....to your child

READING.....to your child

EXPLAINING.....to your child

ENCOURAGING.....your child

IS TIME WELL SPENT !!!!!

What Do We Mean by Homework?

At Drumahoe Primary School we define the term 'homework' widely, to mean any work or activities which pupils are asked to do outside lesson time, either on their own or with parents or guardians. Homework is done outside the classroom, without the guidance of teachers; it can be done at school but more usually it is done at home.

Children perform at their best when home and school work together. Homework is an opportunity for parents to become active partners in supporting learning. Homework should also be enjoyable for the child involved and should stimulate imagination and creativity as well as reinforcing what is taught in the classroom. Children generally enjoy continuing their activities and sharing their experiences and ideas and bringing work started at home back into school.

Homework can cover a very wide range of activities, depending on the age of the child, but throughout the primary years a consistent emphasis will be put on reading for pleasure and purpose as part of homework.

Why is Homework Important?

There is no legal requirement for schools to provide a set amount of homework or for primary children to undertake formal homework. At Drumahoe Primary School, however, it is a vital means of helping to raise pupil achievement and of enabling the school to offer some pastoral support beyond the school day. As such, at Drumahoe Primary School we believe homework requires a vital commitment by teachers, pupils and parents. Teachers at the school are required to set homework under this policy.

Homework is important for the primary pupil because it provides a means for pupils:

- to consolidate and reinforce what is learnt in the classroom
- to build up basic skills (particularly reading, writing and numeracy)
- to become curious and independent learners
- to develop good study habits
- to prepare for the next stage of education.
- to involve parents and others in their work

Homework set at Drumahoe Primary School is meant to fulfil these.

It is important that every child sees that home and school are working together in partnership to provide help, support and encouragement. Homework can help to promote a positive attitude to learning at home and provides a vital link between home and school.

Why Do We Need a Written Homework Policy?

At Drumahoe Primary School homework is set by class teachers who decide how it can best support teaching and learning in the classroom. A written policy makes the purposes of homework and the basic principles we follow in setting and marking homework, clear to everyone involved.

Staff, Governors, parents, guardians, and children know that the purpose of homework is to:

- support learning in the classroom and to raise standards of achievement
- enhance the learning experience for each pupil
- identify and highlight pupil development and pupil needs
- ensure that parents and guardians have clear expectations about their role and that of the pupil
- to allow pupils to use materials and other sources of information
- to support our whole school development plan.

At Drumahoe Primary School we make homework an enjoyable and positive experience. In particular our homework policy will achieve:

- a consistent approach to setting, monitoring and marking homework throughout the school
- differentiation between the needs and learning targets of the individual pupils so that it both challenges and supports students
- progression as pupils mature and become independent learners
- opportunities for extended reading at all ages
- reinforcement and consolidation of learning at all stages of development
- partnership for parents, guardians and pupils in the learning process
- extra support for children with particular needs.

Our homework policy is **not**:

- a means of finishing work not completed in the classroom
- designed to create anxiety, undue pressure or conflict between parents and children
- an afterthought at the end of a lesson.

Homework set at Drumahoe Primary School is monitored to determine:

- that these principles are being met
- that the full range of types of homework are being set consistently
- that teachers in the same year group set equivalent amounts of homework.

Planning a Homework Policy

Consultation

The purposes and the practices of homework have been worked out collaboratively with all staff and have been the subject of wide consultation with Governors and parents.

Homework policy is part of our whole-school development policy for raising standards. Every member of the teaching staff has been involved in drawing up the homework policy and all staff will be involved in the regular review of policy.

The process involved:

- Consultation with parents through a questionnaire (S.E.T.A.Q.).
- Discussions with whole staff.
- Draft policy drawn up by senior management.
- Consultation on draft with staff
- Draft policy tested.

Planning

We have planned our homework policy in terms of:

- supporting teaching and learning through homework
- helping pupils to achieve through homework
- involving parents through homework.

Supporting Teaching and Learning Through Homework

The person with the major responsibility for seeing that homework is completed is the class teacher. All staff see this responsibility as an important part of their professional duties.

In addition, we provide for an overview of the homework that is set in the school. There is a designated senior member of staff responsible:

- for managing the policy
- for ensuring that it is implemented and monitored
- for responding to concerns of parents.

At the moment the designated member of staff is the Principal.

Our planning identifies that all staff share an understanding that homework needs to be:

- specific, differentiated and manageable for pupils at different ages and can be appropriately supported by parents and guardians
- regularly monitored to ensure that the demands of homework are as evenly balanced as possible
- clearly linked to daily progress in the classroom, in particular, in relation to literacy and numeracy
- regularly monitored and evaluated internally by senior staff.

INSET

In addition, the school recognises that staff need:

- to be supported by INSET on good practice in methods of setting, assessment and feedback on homework
- to ensure that homework policy and practice forms are part of the induction process of BTs and other staff who join the school.

Helping Pupils to Achieve Through Homework

Pupils are different and work and learn at different speeds. Teachers plan homework as part of their schemes of work for different areas of the curriculum, particularly literacy and numeracy.

At Drumahoe Primary School we ensure that pupils of all ages understand what they are expected to do at home, and why, and how it will help them to improve their work in class. A clear understanding of why homework is an important aspect of their education will be provided for older pupils. This will enable such pupils to realize that:

- a positive attitude towards homework is part of helping pupils to achieve high standards
- homework will be marked and monitored to high and consistent standards
- homework will be returned to pupils speedily and marked in a way which they can understand and improve upon (see Marking & Presentation Policy)
- a positive attitude towards homework will help them when they reach secondary school.

Our planning also ensures that:

- pupils at different ages know what resources they will need to have , for example
- reading or spelling books , tables and maths books, pencils or calculators and library or reference books to complete set homework.
- older pupils know what additional resources might be available, for example, at the local library or on the Internet.
- praise and positive rewards are used to encourage regular and successful commitment to homework and that pupils who fail to make that commitment understand the possible consequences in terms of personal achievement.

How Parents and Guardians Can Support Pupils' Learning Through Homework

Parents and guardians play a vital role in their children's lasting success. At Drumahoe Primary School, homework plays a valuable part of our home-school policy as a whole.

All parents receive a statement about the school's Policy for Homework at the beginning of the academic year. In addition, homework is a regular item for discussion at Parent/Teacher interviews and other parents' meetings.

Homework policy is also set out in all the publications provided by the school for parents.

Each child (P3-P7) is provided with a Reading/Homework Diary which invites parents to comment upon and sign on a daily/weekly basis. Any written homework is also expected to be signed after being satisfactorily completed. If a homework is illegible or untidy it will be re-written in school at an appropriate time.

We aim to involve parents wherever possible in supporting their children's learning.

We recommend that parents give a little time every day for homework rather than an intensive period once or twice a week. Parents and guardians can help with homework in different ways at different stages.

Most important, parents and guardians are asked to:

- make it clear to pupils how much they value homework and support the school in explaining how it can help their learning
- praise and encourage pupils when they take pride in their homework
- provide a peaceful and comfortable place, free from distractions such as television, where pupils can concentrate on their homework. If this is difficult, parents might encourage pupils to attend other places where homework can be done, such as homework clubs (if available) or the local library.
- encourage pupils of all ages to read as much and as widely as possible
- ensure Reading/Homework Diaries are filled in as appropriate.
- help pupils organise their time to the best advantage
- let us know if there are problems that cannot be resolved

Setting Homework for Different Stages

In setting homework we will plan to:

- establish a familiar routine for pupils and parents
- reflect the age and capacity of the pupils involved.

For pupils of all ages, homework will be set systematically by class teachers.

It is the policy of the school to set homework from Monday to Thursday, as we believe it to be a valuable extension to the day's studies and to allow parents to see on a daily basis, progress in the main subject areas of the curriculum.

Wherever possible, the similar activities and tasks will be given out on the same day each week. It will be made clear, as appropriate, that some homework will take longer than one day and time will be provided to ensure that it can be completed.

Instructions concerning homework will be clearly explained to everyone in the class and sufficient time will be given to copy down what is expected where appropriate.

There will be no homework given on certain occasions throughout the school year, at the teacher's discretion.

When a child is off for a period of time, but is able to work at home – then parents may obtain homework from their child's teacher. This is to ensure that a child does not fall behind their peers in terms of academic progress.

For those parents who decide to take their children on holiday during term-time it is not practical to expect the teacher to provide work whilst they are away. Guidance concerning reading may be provided when and where appropriate.

Foundation & Key Stage 1: Years 1–4

For the youngest children in Key Stage 1 the activities which teachers set to be done at home may not be described as 'homework' but they all support successful learning. The activities or tasks which the youngest children bring home are designed, wherever possible, to involve some form of activity and invite parental interest and involvement. Homework activities for children at this developmental stage will take into account:

- the vital importance of developing reading, writing and numeracy skills
- the relative development and tolerance of children in Years 1 and 2.
- the need for clear, regular and achievable tasks and monitoring.
- the full potential range of partnership by parents.
- the additional needs of some children for extra help.

Class teachers will recommend that reading takes place every day.

We will aim to provide a sensible programme for homework activities in Key Stage 1. The homework set will be primarily reading, spellings, other literacy work and number work. Frequent consultation with your child's teacher is advised.

Reading can involve parents in listening, discussing characters or plot, asking questions and helping pupils to know sounds and basic punctuation.

The other home work activities will be designed to be as enjoyable and active as possible, designed in such a way that parents can easily be involved.

Foundation Stage (P1 & P2)

P1 Reading Parents are asked to discuss and read a selection of books at the appropriate stage during the year. Guidance will be issued to parents in relation to this at a Teacher/Parent meeting during the first half of the autumn term.
Frequent consultation with your child's teacher is advised.

P2 Reading As the term progresses children will be given a small amount of reading that has already been prepared in school. Guidance will be issued to parents a Teacher/Parent meeting during the first half of the spring term.

Tables Once introduced, various tables depending on what is being taught, Monday to Wednesday, revision of these on Thursday with Test on Friday. Frequent consultation with your child's teacher is advised.

Key Stage 1 (P3 & P4)

P3 Reading Monday - Thursday

Spellings 6 - 8 spellings on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, revision of these on Thursday with Test on Friday.

Tables Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, revision of these on Thursday with Test on Friday.

P4 Reading Monday - Thursday

Spellings 10 Spellings Monday - Wednesday, revision of these on Thursday with Test on Friday

Tables Monday - Wednesday, revision of these on Thursday with Test on Friday

Written Homework

Written homework will be based mainly on the core subjects (English, Maths, Science) and occasionally other curriculum areas such as Geography, History etc.

Key Stage 2: Years 5–7

As children get older homework keeps pace with the more challenging demands of the curriculum and in preparation for the transition to secondary school.

Our homework planning for children at this key stage will:

- maintain the emphasis on raising levels of attainment in literacy and numeracy
- enable pupils to master key skills, for example, communication
- enable pupils to extend their knowledge base
- enable pupils to extend their range of reference and research skills
- encourage pupils to become independent learners
- prepare pupils for the demands of the secondary curriculum.

Key Stage 2 (P5-P7)

P5 Reading Monday - Thursday

Spellings 10 spellings Monday - Wednesday, revision of these on Thursday with Test on Friday

Tables Various tables Monday - Wednesday, revision of these on Thursday with Test on Friday

Written Homework - as for P4.

P6 Reading Monday - Thursday

Spellings 10 spellings Monday - Wednesday, revision of these on Thursday with Test on Friday

Tables Various tables Monday - Wednesday, revision of these on Thursday with Test on Friday

Written Homework - as for P4.

P7 Reading Monday - Thursday

Spellings 10 spellings Monday - Wednesday, revision of these on Thursday with Test on Friday

Written Homework - 4 nights per week various subjects.

N.B. All homework is graded to each child's ability and the number of Spellings and Tables detailed would be for the top groups in each class.

As your child gets older the amount of supervision of written homework will vary according to the maturity of the individual. Please ensure that the work is carefully set out and neatly written. Your child should be allowed to do as much as possible

on his own but time spent with him explaining points and encouraging effort is a real investment. Homework should not be sacrificed for social engagements.

Primary 6 and 7 pupils engaged in the Transfer Procedure may have additional homework from time to time until the end of November.

Notes:

(a) It is the policy of the school to give homework from Monday to Thursday, as we believe it to be a valuable extension to the day's studies and to allow parents to see on a daily basis, progress in the main subject areas of the curriculum

(b) In the upper school (P4-P7) all homework will be noted in a diary supplied by the school.

(c) We would ask parents to co-operate with the school in ensuring that homework is satisfactorily completed and that it should take precedence over other activities or organisations. Remember homework is given for the benefit of your child's education. Please sign or initial the homework diary and / or any written homework each evening, Monday - Thursday.

(d) Spellings are better not learned in isolation. It is important that a child not only knows what a word means, but also how it is used in sentence construction.

(e) Reading is an integral part of life. It is important that children are given the opportunity to read aloud to parents and to discuss books which they have read.

(f) All homework will be checked and marked by teachers - if a homework is illegible or untidy it will have to be re-written at break/lunch.

(g) There will be no homework given on a few occasions throughout the term, at the teacher's discretion.

(h) When a child is off for a period of time, but is able to work at home - then parents may obtain homework from the child's teacher. This is to ensure that a child does not fall a long way behind their classmates.

Please note:

Any query regarding either the content or duration of homework should be addressed in the first instance to the class teacher and if not resolved satisfactorily, then to the Principal.

In addition to homework designed to reinforce basic skills, set homework for pupils at Key Stage 2 will have a greater emphasis on written work.

The demands of the curriculum will gradually increase and as your child gets older the amount of written homework will vary according to the maturity of the individual. Please ensure that the work is carefully set out and neatly written. Your child should be allowed to do as much as possible on his/her own but time spent with him /her explaining points and encouraging effort is a real investment. Homework should not be sacrificed for social engagements.

The homework activities set by pupils class teachers may include, for example:

- mathematics investigations
- comprehension and creative writing
- research and presentation of topics or projects from all curriculum areas.
- exercises related to the preparation for the “Transfer Tests.”
- project work

Additional Educational Needs

Homework for pupils with additional educational needs will reflect their different needs and abilities and be related to their Individual Education Plans (IEPs).

Class teachers will also ensure that homework set:

- is differentiated for and appropriate to the individual needs of the child
- is varied and with a range of ways of showing progress
- has a clear focus and manageable timetable.

How Will Pupils and Parents Know What has Been Achieved?

At Drumahoe Primary School our pupils, parents and staff expect and receive immediate and appropriate feedback on homework. Ways of providing these include:

- monitoring the Reading/Homework Diary
- routine tests which monitor progress
- verbal feedback from classroom teachers to each pupil
- marking and grading for achievement and/or effort of routine written tasks
- written comments on longer written assignments
- praise and recognition in classroom and assemblies which reward and motivate all pupils
- written comments in Records of Achievement.