

North Walsham Infant and Junior Schools

Home Learning Policy

June 2017

We are passionate about equipping every child with the academic tools they need to be successful in secondary school and beyond. In order to do this in an informed way, we look at what research says about the most effective ways of doing things and shape our school policies to match.

What does research say?

- Overall, homework in primary schools does not appear to lead to large increases in learning
- Activities that involve the parent and child working together on something or talking about work in school can be more effective
- Regular daily homework in the form of worksheets which a child is expected to do unaided can have a negative effect
- The most effective thing any parent can do to help their child succeed at school is to read stories to them every night.

Planning, collecting in and marking homework takes a lot of staff time. Since research show that formal homework does not lead to increases in learning, we therefore consider it to be poor stewardship of the limited resource of staff time to waste it on something that is unlikely to be productive. So rather than homework, we promote *home learning*.

Home learning in our schools aims to:

- Recognise and celebrate learning that already happens at home
- Promote parents and children reading and talking together
- Providing opportunities for pupils to feel proud about pushing themselves beyond what is compulsory
- Encourage perseverance, self-discipline and pupils taking responsibility for their own learning
- Enabling classwork to concentrate on those things that require the teacher's presence.

Home learning in the Early Years (Nursery and Reception)

- In the early years, parents should read a story to their child daily.

If parents cannot do this for some reason, then the parent should ensure that an older sibling, or older relative can do this on their behalf. There is nothing else a parent can do that will have more impact than this. Parents should make sure their child is a member of their local library in North Walsham and visit regularly.

Home learning in Years 1-6

Compulsory home learning: basic skills practice.

- All children will be expected to read books daily at home.

We want all children to be 5* readers. This means they are reading 5 times every week.

The more they practise reading, the easier and more enjoyable it will become. There is not enough time during the school day for children to practise skills as often as they need to – so doing this at home is vital. Children also need to learn to persevere in reading longer texts as their reading skills develop. Children who do not practise reading at home are very likely to fall behind and will then struggle throughout their school careers.

The more parents read to their children, the larger their vocabulary will grow and the more they will develop their own love of reading. This is as true of children in Years 5 and 6 as it is of children in Year 1.

- Children must also spend time each day revising their number facts (counting, addition and subtraction number bonds and timetables) and
 - spellings.

Ten minutes every day is much more effective than an hour once a week. The more children practise these, the easier the facts will be to remember. The quicker they can remember them automatically, the more their brain has space to work on other, higher level things. If we do not practise maths facts and spellings regularly, we will begin to forget them.

Optional learning challenges

On top of the reading, number facts and spelling that we insist all children must do, we also give children a range of optional learning challenges to do at home.

Optional home learning is learning that involves an element of choice; learning that gives options, but it should be parents rather than children who get to make the choice about how many – and which – challenges they choose to work on. Of course, we hope to inspire children to want to take on challenges for themselves. But ultimately, parents determine what actually gets done.

We want our pupils to learn:

- The more you challenge yourself, the more your brain grows as you learn new things
- Success comes from effort and practice
- Success lies in our own hands....we can choose the easy path or we can choose to take on challenges
- Success is optional. It is a choice you make. Stretch yourself and learn or take it easy and waste your talents?

These Home Learning Challenges are optional for an important educational reason. Success in life is entirely optional – we can choose not to push ourselves, we can choose to limit ourselves and only to do what is easy if we want. However, if we do that, we will never know what we could have achieved – if only we had really tried. We will never fulfil our true potential.

However, if we give them opportunities to go beyond what is required, children experience the deep satisfaction that comes from knowing what stretching yourself feels like.

Children need to learn self- motivation – to do things because they are worth it and not because the teacher or their parent tells them they have to. Some children will embrace this straight away and others will not really learn this until they are much older; possibly not until they are themselves adults. However at primary school level, home learning provides a context for children to begin to appreciate lifelong learning for its own sake.

During each half term or Creative Enquiry theme unit, children will receive a list of suggested challenges to do with their parents at home. From this list, parents choose how many challenges they wish their child to do. Parents know better than the school what their family and work commitments are and how many tasks are feasible for their unique context. Nobody is expected to do all of these. Every challenge completed, will count towards the award of stamps in a child's Children's University Passport.

Children can also challenge themselves by practising their basic skills online, using the **mathletics** website which the school subscribes to.

Spending an hour on this website, practising basic skills would count as having done an after school learning challenge – pupils should make a note in their Pupil Planner and then it could count towards their Children’s University hours.

We also want to recognise and celebrate the learning that goes on at home that is not organised by school. This is just as valid as any optional learning challenge set by the school. Children can tell us about what they have been learning at home by drawing, sending a photo via Class Dojo, bringing in leaflets or photos or writing about it.

For example, a child might

- Be learning to play a musical instrument
- Attend a football or swimming club
- Be taught how to cook something or make a snack
- Go on a trip with their parents to visit a museum or art gallery
- Learn another language
- Go and see a concert or a play at the theatre
- Go to classes about their religion
- Play an educational game online
- Go with their parents on a long walk in the park – maybe collecting conkers or making bark rubbings
- Attend ballet, judo or drama classes
- Belong to an organisation such as the Brownies or Cubs and attend regularly
- Be learning how to knit or sew or do woodwork or fix a bike
- Use the internet, together with their parent, to find out about something they are learning at school.

This list is not exhaustive – anything where a child is learning something new, counts.

Year 6

In order to get Year 6 ready for secondary school, where regular homework will be expected on a daily basis, the class teacher may also send home additional compulsory tasks in English, science and maths, on top of the home learning outlined.

For example, they might be given a maths worksheet to do or a reading comprehension.

Children with statements or Education and Health Care Plans

The compulsory element of the home learning policy may be modified for children with an education and health plan or statement, to best fit in with their needs. Where this is necessary, it will be discussed with parents.

Compulsory Home Learning

Year Group	Reading Daily	Other
Nursery	10 minutes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sharing library or other book with child 	
Reception	10 minutes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sharing library or other book with child 	5 minutes daily on the following : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speed Sounds (initial sounds) • High frequency words

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Write Inc book or other reading book (as appropriate) 	(red words) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number facts
Years 1 & 2	20 minutes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reading library/other book • Read Write Inc book or other reading book (as appropriate) 	5 minutes daily on the following : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spellings • Number facts (counting, addition and subtraction and times tables) • Regular quizzes set by the teacher
Years 3, 4 ,5, 6	30 minutes daily <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reading library/other book (some children may still have Read Write Inc or other reading scheme books)	10 minutes daily on the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spellings • Times tables and number facts • Regular quizzes set by the teacher

This policy will be reviewed in two years in June 2019.