



St Stephens Community Academy

Homework Policy

Introduction

At St. Stephens Community Academy, we recognise the vital role parents play in the education of their children. We strongly believe in the value of home-school partnership, of which our homework policy is an important element. Homework is defined as any learning or activities which pupils are asked to do outside lesson time, either on their own or with parents or carers. At St Stephens we see learning done at home as a valuable part of school learning.

Our Homework Philosophy

We believe that homework:

- Provides a home/school link and promotes liaison
- Increases parental knowledge and understanding of the curriculum
- Actively involves parents in the learning process
- Generates discussion at home amongst family members
- Encourages a positive attitude and approach to learning
- Encourages self-motivation and the development of organisational skills
- Fosters independent learning
- Should be targeted at each child's level
- Develops research skills
- Encourages pupils to become more familiar with out of school resources, e.g. local library
- Reinforces the teaching of the National Curriculum
- Encourages constructive use of spare time
- Improves pupil achievement
- Assists language development
- Does not have to be written
- Should be linked to learning in school

At St. Stephens Community Academy teaching staff recognise that pupils who have spent a busy structured day at school need time to relax and unwind at the end of the afternoon. We are also mindful of the need to encourage children to pursue out of school activities, e.g. swimming, ballet, Beavers, Brownies, music lessons etc.

Homework should be used to effectively reinforce and/or extend what is learned in school. We hope that children will feel a sense of personal satisfaction in a task completed well and that their efforts will be recognised and praised both at home and at school. Homework tasks should be undertaken to the best of their ability.

We hope parents and carers will be willing and able to give their active support to ensure that work done at home is completed conscientiously and in the best possible conditions. At St Stephens, staff will do their best to ensure that all learning activities sent home are age-appropriate, that can be completed within a reasonable time and have direct benefit to their pupils' learning.

Homework Expectations

Before the beginning of the academic year, each year group will be informed of what is expected of them with regard to homework. At the first parents' evening in July (Meet the Teacher), teachers will explain the organisation of homework in their child's class to parents. All pupils have homework books in which they record their home learning. Pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 have published homework books that they will be issued with.

In addition to daily reading, each year group will provide their pupils with '**Home Learning Grids**' linked to their current theme. These will be updated as each theme of learning changes e.g. 4-6 weeks. We request that the pupils complete one of the English or Maths activities each week (they can be done in any order) and choose at least one of the topic activities to complete over the time period set. A date will be set for the work to be in school. Learning can be recorded in any format in addition to the home learning book (e.g. photos, models etc.) All homework grids will be available on the school website under the 'Class Information' tab entitled 'Home Learning'. **Knowledge Organisers and Transferable Word Mats** will also be available to support your child in the 'Class Information' tab. Pupils will also be given paper copies of all homework expectations. Pupils will also be given a **Curriculum Overview** at the start of each term-this gives parents/carers ideas of how to support at home for each curriculum area.

Homework Content

The nature of homework will change as children get older. For children in the Early Years and Key Stage 1, developing a partnership with parents and carers, and involving them actively in children's learning is a key objective. Short activities of different kinds – reading together, learning key vocabulary, letter sounds and number facts - provide a very important opportunity for young children to talk about what they are learning to an interested adult, and to practise key skills in a supportive environment.

As children get older, homework provides an opportunity for them to develop the skills of independent learning, which they will need to continue lifelong learning and this should increasingly become its main purpose. It is important that children should gradually get into the habit of regularly devoting periods of time, which may not be long, to study on their own.

By the time children reach Year 6 their homework programme will cover a wide range of tasks and curriculum content, with a regular weekly schedule. This approach will benefit their learning and also ensure that, in relation to homework as much as to other aspects, their transition to Year 7/Secondary school is as smooth as possible.

Homework will be differentiated to take account of individual pupils needs and may include:

Home Reading; the importance of reading at home cannot be over-emphasised and we hope that children will read for pleasure in their own time. Pupils will be provided with a suitable school reading book, which can be taken home to read with a parent or other adult person. A record book will be provided for parents to sign when they have listened to or read to their child. Once pupils are reading fluently, they will be expected to take responsibility for their own reading books as necessary. Parents will be asked to sign reading homework to indicate that it has been completed. *We recognise how important reading is for our pupils and if we identify that they have not had enough time to read at home, for whatever reason, we will ask them to do this within the school day. It is expected that pupils will read for a minimum of 20 minutes a day. (home or/and school)*



Maths supports pupils' ability to learn key facts, for example, helpful rhymes, number bonds or multiplication tables and as they get older will receive homework to practise calculation skills. Pupils from years 2-6 will also have access to 'Timetable Rock Stars', an online resource to practise tables skills at home and from years 1-6 'My Maths' activities will be set. Your child will be given a password and user name to access this at home.

Topic Work gives pupils the opportunity to research topics they are studying in class. This research could be sourced from the local library, the internet or from family members. Pupils will be given the opportunity to feed-back what they have discovered to the whole class. Teachers may challenge pupils to undertake the completion of their own topic over a half term or term.

Other activities may include: handwriting practice, spellings, phonics practice, preparing questions, writing tasks, puzzles/games, learning songs or scripts for plays, physical activities, investigations or completing classroom activities.

Pre-school

In our Pre- School class, the pupils are encouraged to self- select a book to place in their book bag to support and encourage a love of reading at home. Parents are also informed via 'Class DoJo' which rhymes and songs are being learnt each week and the class story for the week to aid discussion and involvement.

Kids Zone

St Stephens have also put links to **on-line learning sites** for your children to access at home. *As with all on line experiences we strongly recommend you are with your child when they are accessing electronic devices.*

Time expectations

Every child is different and it is important to avoid homework becoming a difficult issue at home. We encourage parents to use their discretion in how long to ask their child to work at a task. However, as pupils move through the school, it is important to help them develop stamina when completing independent learning tasks in order to prepare them for secondary school expectations. *If we consider it important, we will ask your child to complete unfinished tasks within the school day- this is particularly important for the upper Key Stage 2 classes.*

Guidelines:

Years 1 and 2: 1 hour per week. Reading, other literacy and number work.

Years 3 and 4: 1.5 hours per week. Reading, English and Mathematics as for Years 1 and 2 - with occasional assignments in other subjects

Years 5 and 6: 2 hours per week with continued emphasis on English and Mathematics, revision for SATs but also ranging widely over the curriculum.

Homework will not, in general, be used to finish off work started in class. The school believes that a regular pattern is important, particularly for English and Mathematics. It will endeavour to establish a familiar routine of when tables are set and when they are tested. This information will be made clear to parents at the initial parents' meeting.

Special Educational Needs (SEN)

Setting the right type and amount of homework for children with special educational needs will need careful consideration by the class teacher and co-ordination with both the SENDCo and parents. The objectives of homework outlined in this policy should apply equally to pupils with special educational needs. Whilst children with SEN may benefit from special tasks separate from the homework set for other children in the class, it is important that they should do as much in common with other children as possible.

Homework tasks for children with SEN should:

- have a very clear focus and time-guideline;
- give plenty of opportunities for pupils to succeed;
- help develop social as well as other skills where necessary;
- be varied - and not purely written assignments;
- be manageable for teachers.

We are mindful that specific tasks in the form of Individual Education Plans and Provision Maps for children with Special Educational Needs will be set. Parents will be made aware of this as appropriate.

Role of the school

- monitor the effectiveness of the homework policy each year
- support parents with the latest methods of teaching in English and Mathematics by offering parent meetings to put into context the development of English and Mathematics skills from Reception through to Year Six.
- Regular Parent/carers consultations will also provide opportunities to support and direct.

Role of the class teacher

- plan homework as an integral part of curriculum planning and indicate tasks on home learning grids/planning.
- inform pupils and parents of homework timetables through discussion in class, at parents' meetings and via the school website and texts if appropriate.
- ensure pupils understand and are capable of completing their weekly homework tasks and research projects
- match homework, as far as possible, to the ability of the children
- provide marking and feedback which encourages pupils to regularly complete tasks
- feedback should be appropriate to the task e.g. individual comment from the teacher, verbal or written marking of the task within an acceptable timeframe teacher supporting pupil self-marking reading diary entry written by pupils or parents recognising homework achievement through assemblies



Role of the parents/carers

- The school recognises that parents and carers have a key role to play in supporting pupils' homework. The nature of this role will change as children get older. For much of their homework, particularly with younger children, parents and carers will be encouraged to become actively involved in joint homework activities. Your **HELP, ENCOURAGEMENT** and **PRAISE** is the key to success.
- We ask you to provide a reasonably peaceful, suitable place in which pupils can do their homework – alone, or more often for younger children, together with an adult.
- We do not envisage a primary school child spending time in isolation with work he or she may find difficult. Give support and help but do not do the work for the children.
- Please support children in completing tasks and return work in a tidy presentable state.

Concerns

If any child does not understand a task, parents should encourage them to ask their teacher for further guidance. If you have any concerns about the levels of homework or the content etc., please see your child's class teacher. Do not let your child get upset about homework; if there is a problem, come in and speak to the teacher about it.

Consulting about Homework

The school will use the Meet the Teacher meeting to inform parents and carers about the school's homework policy and secure their involvement. The Homework Policy and useful information for parents in supporting their child's learning is displayed on the School Website. Other parents' meetings e.g.: Pupils Progress Meetings and Parental Engagement days will be used to promote this partnership. Parent views will be taken via the yearly Parental Satisfaction Survey. Parents will be consulted about any significant changes to the policy that are being considered by the Local Governing Body.

Reviewing the Policy

The homework policy will be reviewed annually. Where significant changes to the policy are felt to be required, proposals will be presented to the governing body.