

# **St. Mary's Catholic Primary School**

**Chiswick**

**Living and learning, inspired by our faith**



## **Home Learning POLICY**

Reviewed: April Term 2016

Ratified by Curriculum and Standards Committee:

The original has been signed and counter signed. The original is kept with the head teacher.

## **Rationale/Definition:**

St. Mary's School, Chiswick defines the term 'homework' as any activity that pupils undertake outside of school, either on their own or with the support of family members. At St. Mary's, Chiswick we have a strong commitment to parental involvement and see homework as one way of developing this partnership. This policy is the outcome of a consultation process with the parent forum members and following ongoing feedback from adhoc information provided by parents, staff and the children themselves.

## **Why give homework?**

- It can inform parents about work going on in class;
- It can further stimulate enthusiasm for learning;
- It takes advantage of the home environment and resources and the chance for some one to one time with an adult;
- It can be a great source for gathering creative topic information to share with all the children in the class;
- It is a great opportunity to rehearse key skills such as times tables, doubling facts, addition sums, spellings, handwriting and other key facts;
- It can be a good opportunity for our more able children to show that they are able to apply the skills in other ways - applying it independently (we call this 'deepening' their knowledge).
- It helps to foster good habits of organisation and self-discipline in preparation for the demands of Secondary School.

## **Homework at our school**

Whilst we support all of the above key principles, St. Mary's is not a school at which homework dominates home and school life. We accept that not every activity will capture children and parents' imagination and that weekends can sometimes be busy. We believe that homework should be manageable for all concerned and that if it becomes a chore/burden/source of conflict it ceases to be a constructive aspect of learning and teaching.

We do not specify amounts of time that must be spent on a task, preferring individual children and families to set their own routines. We will, however, give general guidance so that children are not spending too much time on a task, thereby taking up the precious time that should be spent with one's family. Class teachers are happy to give advice and support for parents and children.

Guidance for Homework times				
Reception	Year 1	Year 2	Years 3-4	Years 5-6
10 minutes per evening	1 hour per week	1-1.5 hours per week	2-3 hours per week	3-4 hours per week

We hope that the children are motivated by positive incentives and by the tasks themselves; children are not punished if they fail to complete the work. However, every teacher keeps discreet homework tracking and if a child consistently fails to complete and return tasks, this is discussed with the child and then their parents. If a child

struggles to complete a homework task our dedicated staff are willing, of their own volition, to support the child during their play break to help the pupil's learning journey.

If your child is struggling with any aspect of homework please contact your child's class teacher in the first instance to discuss any issues that have arisen and together we can ensure that homework is part of a positive home school partnership.

We have a positive reward system in school and house points may be awarded for completion of homework. For example, 1 house point for completion of and handing homework in on time ,(we encourage children to apply the same standards and effort as in classwork.) 2 house points for homework of a very good standard and on occasion 3 house points may be awarded for an exceptional piece of homework.

### **How often should children read?**

We believe that reading is absolutely pivotal to a child's success, being the media for learning across most of Curriculum areas.

We emphasise the importance of books and literature in enabling our children to become happy, confident and enthusiastic readers with all the benefits this brings. With this in mind we feel that all children should be enjoying reading a book every night. For younger children this may not actually be reading it. They could, for instance, be sharing a book with an adult, interpreting a picture or predicting what is going to happen after the first couple of pages.

Children that are on our reading scheme will be given two books a week. Often parents feel they should have more but repetition and overlearning are key to developing confidence with the phonetic structures that are the backbone of reading leading to greater inference skills. To this end we provide high quality texts with depth and interest in story, character, illustration, vocabulary and subject matter.

### **Homework routines:**

Following parental feedback it was noted that the balance had to be right for the context of our school. In some classes it had been piloted with set days for handing out and receiving work to stagger it for the older children. The school firmly believes that 'family time' at the weekend should take precedence over any homework. Also, a factor to take into account was that our children are engrossed in a number of enriching wider activities in the evenings which, combined with homework, can be overbearing for children of primary ages.

There will be a range of homework tasks set each week and there will be a creative topic homework set each half term.

With all of this in mind, all of the homework is to be set on the Thursday and then returned in as per the following table. This is to allow flexibility for individual families:

-If the family has a commitment over the weekend then more can be done on the Thursday night and Mon-Wed to compensate for this.

-It allows children to complete it a little at a time or in bulk should this work for them and their family.

We cannot guarantee that “late” returned homework will be marked in the week it has been set. Teachers set aside time in their busy schedule to mark homework and if homework is returned late it will be marked with the next piece of homework.

Return Days for homework (can be returned early if preferred)

Class	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Reception				-Phonics -Handwriting -Number	
Year 1	Phonics English Mathematics				
Year 2	English	Arithmetic	Mathematics	Spellings	
Year 3	English	Arithmetic	Mathematics	Spelling	
Year 4	English	Arithmetic	Mathematics	Spelling	
Year 5	English	Arithmetic	Mathematics	Spelling	
Year 6	English	Arithmetic	Mathematics	Spelling	

### **After SATs in Year 6**

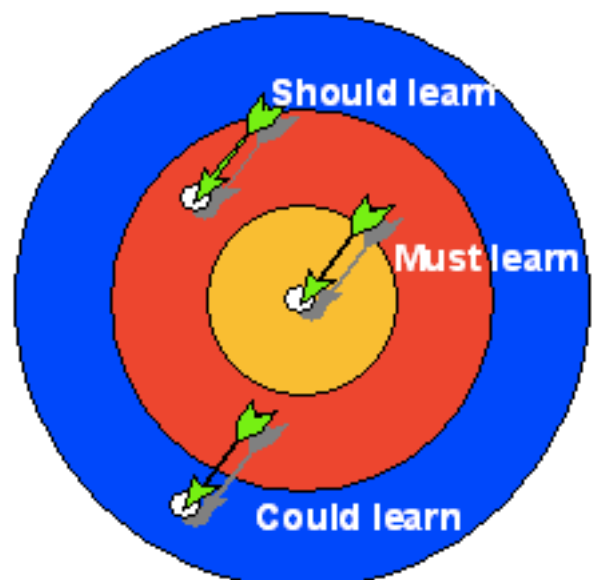
After completion of SATs in the summer term (in Year 6) all homework will be based on preparation for transition to secondary school and secondary school readiness.

### **Holiday homework**

It is not the policy of this school to set homework tasks over the holidays with the possible exception of revision packs/tasks for Year 6 and Year 2 prior to their SATs in the summer term. Reading will continue to be given as homework for the holiday period.

### **Will all of the homework be challenging?**

No it will not. Sometimes the children will be asked to build upon new knowledge that they have covered in the class to ensure that they have committed it to their long term memory. This will support them when they revisit this skill so that they can extend their knowledge across the curriculum/apply it in a different way, thereby ‘deepening’ their understanding.



Most homework set by the class teachers in St. Mary's is differentiated using:

- **Must** (all children) is pitched just below the age related expectation
- **Should** (most children) is aimed at the age related expectation of the year groups statements
- **Could** (some children) is more challenging

This is a guide that allows children to challenge themselves. It is the preferred method as a historical pedagogical approach such as having a lower, middle and upper ability homework can in fact limit the lower ability child and actually allows them to set a lower expectation of themselves. Children will find some areas of the Curriculum harder than others and with that in mind the 'primary educators' being the parents, are best placed to decide which tasks are best suited to their child. If the class teacher feels that the child is not challenging themselves appropriately and is capable of saying say 'Could' and hasn't done so, then a reference will be made in the homework diary to help to guide the parents.

Children who need to have their learning differentiated separately from the rest of the class will have their homework pitched individually if the teacher feels that they will not be able to attempt the 'Must' learning opportunity. This could apply to a child with SEN/D or a more able/Exceptional ability child.

It is important to note that a key priority for St. Mary's is to instill within its pupils attributes such as being self-motivated, having high expectations of themselves and being resilient learners. It cannot be stressed enough that it is alright for a child to get something wrong. A learner must often FAIL before they can learn (First Attempt In Learning F.A.I.L).

### **How much parental involvement should there be?**

This is a question that comes up again and again. Unfortunately there is no clear answer as it depends on a number of factors. Some parents for instance say that their child likes to get on with it independently, which is fantastic and will help that child to become an independent learner as well as affording the teacher's capacity to determine any gaps in knowledge and further support the child. In other cases parents explain that homework is a 'battle ground'. Where this is the case the school would wish to know and would invite the parents in to see how we can support them and the child through this. The last thing that our Catholic school wishes to do is to put a strain on the parent/child relationship through homework. In order to support this the school also has a home work club with a qualified teacher there to support the children.

### **What do I do if my child is struggling/finding it too easy?**

If your child is struggling with any aspect of homework – or finding it easy - please contact your child's class teacher in the first instance to discuss any issues that have arisen and together we can ensure that homework is part of a positive home school partnership. We are very aware of the time constraints on work and being a parent so please feel free to communicate via your child's learning diary. Simply write down what we can do to help and your teacher will be more than happy to support your child's learning

**Monitoring/Evaluation and Review:**

The school will review this policy every two years and assess its implementation and effectiveness. This policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the school.

This policy is part of our commitment to safeguarding children. It should be read in conjunction with our other safeguarding policies and procedures which promote safeguarding such as our Behaviour Policy.

Our policies are available on the school website or hard copies are available upon request.

