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St. Mary's Homework Policy, Nov 2015

Introduction

We appreciate how important the links are between home and school and the need for us to work together to ensure a quality education for children. When children bring "work" home it enables parents to help their children and shows them that parents and teachers are working together for their benefit. Homework can encourage independent learning, give pupils the opportunity to practice skills learnt at school, improve children's attitude to learning and provide additional time to help pupils reach higher personal standards.

Homework will reflect the learning happening in the classrooms and support from parents will reinforce and extend what has been taught in school.

Initially the best way to help at home is to read books and other reading material with your child, whilst encouraging them to talk about the book. This is as beneficial for older children as it is for younger children. In Years 1 to 6 homework could include specific tasks to support achievement of next steps identified through the school's Assertive Mentoring approach.

Homework will be sent on Friday and be returned to school on Wednesday. This is in addition to daily reading.

The following gives details of the approaches at different stages;

Reception

During the Reception year, children will bring reading books home. Accompanying the child's reading book is a reading record book. Not only does this keep a record of books read, it is also a means of commenting on the child's reading and giving encouragement. It is helpful for parents to encourage their children to read themselves, rather than reading the book for them. It is helpful to teachers if parents sign this book after hearing their child read and add positive comments, these could be comments made by the child about the book.

If parents have any concerns, please contact the class teacher. A short period of reading (about 10 minutes each night) is encouraged. In addition, words may be sent home to practice.

Children may also be given a word / number game to play at home. Occasionally homework will involve bringing objects / items from home linked to topic work. This



enables children and parents to discuss their topics at home and further develop their learning.

Years 1 and 2

Reading homework will continue in Years 1 and 2 following the school scheme.

Children will start to take spellings home to be learnt and will also be requested to learn, initially the 2, 5 and 10 times tables as well as continuing regular practice.

There will also be opportunities to practise other mathematical skills learned in school as well as the opportunity to undertake extended topic work, Children may be asked to bring in items for a short talk or write a diary over a period of time.

The time spent on homework should be around 1 hour / week up to year 2.

Years 3 and 4

Again children will be expected to take reading books home each night. In many cases children will be able to enjoy reading these books to parents / carers. Parents can help by asking children what they are reading about and talking about the text with them. Some children will need support by being heard reading regularly or helping them with unknown words. This approach is a benefit for all children including the most confident, as they begin to develop expression and think more deeply about the text. Again parents are requested to sign the reading record when children have read at home, to let us know how far they have read and add positive comments.

Children will also regularly have spellings to learn as well as other English and Maths homework. Tables work will be extended.

Occasionally work may be sent home to be completed. Again children may be asked to bring items to support schoolwork or find information for areas of study.

Homework should be between 20-30 minutes / night and could be on any subject.

Years 5 and 6

The homework will include regular reading, spellings, tables until all are known, completing work, practising basic skills or preparing work for a following lesson. Tables work will be extended.

Homework will be set in preparation for High School and should take approximately 30-40 mins / night and could be on any subject.

Parents can help by; testing any spellings / tables learnt, listening to children read and talking about the content of books, praising children for work completed and successes and helping them to find information for areas of study.



Homework and Absence

If children are away from school owing to illness, then we would not send work home, presuming that they are not well enough to work. Equally, if children are absent from school for family holiday, then homework will not be set on the basis that parents have taken the decision to remove children from school for holiday.

It may happen that a child is off school for a length of time, though is well enough to do work at home (e.g. broken limb). In these instances it is the policy that parents meet with the Class Teacher to agree an appropriate approach.

If parents have any queries about homework, they are requested to see their child's class teacher.

Role of Parents

Some homework may require help from parents, e.g. finding out information for a topic, or testing spellings / tables. Other times children may just need a reminder or encouragement.

It is important that children are praised and encouraged in completing their work and it is also important that parents try to provide a reasonably peaceful space for their children to work in.

Children may need reminding to return work to school on the relevant days. Reading books should be returned daily.

We are very much aware that we have many families where both parents work and children are engaged in a number of other after school activities (e.g. Scouts, Young Farmers etc). As a school we believe in the importance of quality 'family time' and as such if on occasions homework requirements can't be met owing to specific family circumstances, parents are encouraged to discuss this with their child's class teacher.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The effectiveness of the policy will be monitored by the Senior Leadership Team. A review will be made in December 2016.

