

SS John and Monica's Catholic School

Homework Policy

Homework is anything that children do outside the normal school day that contributes to their learning in response to guidance from the school and with the support of the family. Homework encompasses a whole variety of activities instigated by teachers and parents to support children's learning.

At SS John & Monica's we feel it is very important that ALL children participate in after school physical and academic activities to enhance their school experiences.

Why do we do Homework?

Homework is a very important part of a child's education and can add much to a child's development. The government made clear its commitment to homework a variety of documents and they have given schools guidance on appropriate time to be spent on homework in each class.

At SS John & Monica's homework is seen as 'an essential part of good education'. We recognise that the time and resources available limit the educational experience that any school by itself can provide; children benefit greatly therefore from the mutual support of parents and teachers in encouraging them to learn both at home and at school. Indeed we see homework as an important way of establishing a successful dialogue between teachers and parents. One of the aims of our school is for children to develop as independent learners. We believe that homework is one of the main ways in which children can acquire the skill of independent learning.

Homework plays a positive role in raising a child's level of attainment. We also acknowledge the important role of play and free time in a child's growth and development. While homework is important, it should not prevent children from taking part in the wide range of out-of-school clubs and organisations that play an important part in the lives of many children.

We are well aware that children spend more time at home than at school, and we believe they develop their skills, interests and talents to the full only when parents encourage them to make maximum use of the experiences and opportunities that are available outside of school.

Aims and Objectives of a Homework Policy at SS John & Monica's

Part of our mission at SS John & Monica's is to create and maintain good relationships between home and school. We believe that a strong partnership between school and home is at the heart of successful education. Regular, well-planned homework can:

- enable pupils to make maximum progress in their academic and social development;
- help pupils develop the confidence and self discipline needed to study on their own and preparing them for the requirements of secondary education;
- promote a partnership between home and school in supporting each child's learning;
- enable all aspects of the curriculum to be covered in sufficient depth;
- provide educational experiences not possible in school;
- consolidate and reinforce learning done in school and to allow children to practice skills taught in lessons;
- help children develop good work habits for the future;
- provide a contact for pupil / parent interaction;
- help parents gain an insight into their child's schoolwork.
- enable work to be personalised to the interest of individual children.

Types of Homework

There are three kinds of homework at SS John & Monica's:

- **Regular and Routine Tasks**

All children are expected to establish good habits by doing some regular reading at home. Spellings and tables are best learnt at home and are expected to be fully learned by Year 4. In school the teacher can guide the child's progress and direct the words or tables they are to learn, but they need time at home to memorise them. Some children need to develop the ability to concentrate and complete tasks in a set time. If your child has a difficulty with concentration, it is helpful for you to set a clock and ask your child to work within a given period, so that they can increase their pace.

- **Incomplete Class Activities**

All children may be asked to complete some work occasionally. If your child seems to have a lot of work to complete at home, you need to discuss this with your child's teacher as it may show a pattern of lack of concentration, difficulty understanding or some behaviour issues. Class activities are planned to be completed in a certain amount of time. It is often the case that work cannot be carried over from one session to the next. Other options may include completing work during playtimes.

- **Formal Homework**

In Year R the children will have key words linked to the Letters and Sounds activities in class to learn each week and they read their reading book each day. The books will be changed two times a week. Children receive a new sound sheet in their book bags each time a new sound is introduced in class. Pupils will complete the activity and keep this in their book bag.

Year Groups 1 – 5 will have set Formal Homework each Friday. The homework is completed and handed in to their teacher on the following Monday morning. At the class teacher's discretion the dates for homework may be changed. This formal homework is designed to consolidate the curriculum being studied in class or to allow for additional independent research opportunities. Children who have areas of weakness in some area may receive additional tasks to complete and these pieces of homework may be given over a longer period of time.

In Years 1- 5 this homework should include Maths, English (and possibly Science activities). In Years 5 & 6 it may include projects that give the older children a chance to develop their study skills. In Year 6, homework will be predominantly SAT's revision and preparation.

What Activities Can I do At Home?

We see homework as encompassing a wide range of possibilities. The following list gives just a few examples of things that families can do together that will support their learning:

- Reading daily with a parent or sibling
- Spelling games
- Family visit to a local museum, art gallery
- Finishing off work from class
- Learning parts for an assembly/production/Mass
- Going swimming
- Playing games which develop their physical skills
- Undertaking individual research for a project at the local library
- Learning number facts (tables and bonds), spellings etc
- Learning to ride a bicycle safely
- Ensuring musical instruments are practised
- Research using the internet (school cannot be held responsible for the content of web sites that children access during their home hours)

- Cooking, gardening, making things
- Explaining how things work
- Ensuring that children have opportunities to colour, paint, draw, stick, glue, etc

At SS John & Monica's we provide a range of homework that is linked to the age of the child. Younger children will complete simple tasks that involve learning spellings, reading, other literacy, number and Science work.

As the children progress through the school they will benefit from a wider range of tasks that enable them to prepare for entry to Secondary School.

The main focus for these tasks will be Literacy, Numeracy and Science as we believe that children who regularly read to and with parents/carers benefit by gaining in confidence and fluency as readers, and also that the best understanding of new maths concepts comes with practice, problem solving and discussion. While it may not always be possible to complete Science investigations at home, children should certainly develop their Science knowledge (facts).

We also set homework in Key Stage 2 as a means of helping the children to revise for the examinations they will face at the end of Year 6 (SAT's) as well as future testing that they will experience from Year 7 onwards. We want to ensure that prior learning has been understood; that children have opportunities to extend their learning and that they are also prepared for the workload they will experience in Secondary School.

How much homework will children receive?

We increase the amount of homework that we give the children as they move through the school. In the Foundation Stage the main focus for homework is support with reading.

We set an amount of homework that is in line with the DfE recommendations. We encourage Year 5 & 6 to spend slightly longer if they are having areas of difficulty.

Years 1, 2 and 3: 1 hour per week of formal homework plus

- Reading Daily
- Spellings Weekly
- Number bonds, X2/X5/X10 tables

Years 4 and 5: 2 hours per week of formal homework plus

- Reading Daily
- Spellings Weekly
- Consolidate Number bonds and tables; learn ALL tables to 12x12 by Year 4

Year 6: At LEAST 2 hours per week of formal homework plus

- Reading Daily
- Spellings Weekly
- Consolidate ALL Number facts/Operations
- Prepare for SATs

Pupils with Special Educational Needs & Disabilities and Deprived Pupils (DP)

We set homework for all children as a normal part of school life. We ensure that all tasks set are appropriate to the ability of the child. If a child has special needs, we endeavour to adapt any task set so that all children can contribute in a positive way. The aim of homework for these children will always be to promote closing the gap so that they catch up with the average of the class or better. Pupils with deprived backgrounds sometimes have a range of difficulties accessing homework as we ensure they are supported.

Pupils who are Intellectually Able and Talented

Staff will happily support parents who believe their children may have exceptional academic, artistic, technological and physical talents. We can advise on clubs and additional activities that will stimulate the development of children's specific skills. We offer a range of sporting and academic after school clubs currently that may be of value to these children.

The Role of the Parent in Successful Homework

Parents have a vital role to play in their child's education, and homework is an important part of this process. We ask parents to encourage their child to complete the homework tasks that are set. We invite them to help their children as they feel necessary and provide them with the sort of environment that allows children to do their best. Parents can support their child by providing a good working space at home, by enabling their child to visit the library regularly and by discussing the work that their child is doing.

We ask parents to check the home/school diary daily and to sign it. If there is an occasion where homework does not come home when you are expecting it and no explanation is given by the teacher, parents are more than welcome to contact the class teacher to discuss this.

Most of the work that is set will be of the kind that can be marked as a whole class (except for younger pupils). This is so that teachers can focus their energy in preparing lessons rather than on marking homework.

Homework which is handed in will always be checked by staff and feedback of a written OR verbal nature will be given to the child. Homework will then be returned to the child for use as a learning tool or it will be held by the teacher for use in ongoing Teacher Assessment. Projects that have taken weeks to produce will generally be used to support class work and will not be returned home until the end of the school year or when they are no longer needed.

If parents have any problems or questions about homework, they should, in the first instance, contact the child's class teacher.

Where children fail to hand in homework on the due date, they will be expected to complete these activities in their own time (and offered a second chance to hand in). Continued failure to complete homework will lead class teachers to meet with Parents inform them that homework has not been completed.

Parents will have signed the home/School agreement when their child started at the school and part of this is a commitment to support your child in their homework.

Monitoring and Review

It is the responsibility of our governing body to agree and then monitor the school homework policy. This is done by the committee of the governing body that deals with curriculum issues. Parents complete a questionnaire during the school's Ofsted inspection, and our governing body pays careful consideration to any concern that is raised at that time, or in between Ofsted inspections, by any parent.

The SMT will monitor the efficiency and effectiveness of the policy regularly.

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