

HOMEWORK APPROACH



Communicating Love; Inspiring our
Community to Flourish

2021-2022

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Rationale

This policy aims to ensure a consistent approach to homework throughout our school. We appreciate there are a range of different viewpoints on homework and therefore seek to make best use of research in formulating our approach.

Highly regarded evidence from the Education Endowment Foundation shows that consistently engaging with high-quality work at home has a positive impact on the progress and attainment of pupils; potentially adding months' of progress.¹

Effective homework is associated with parental involvement and support, seeking to **enhance** rather than detract from family time.

The best homework: reinforces what pupils have learned in lessons; are **specific** to individuals; are short focused tasks; is appealing to pupils; can be built upon in school.

Purpose

- To strengthen meaningful partnerships between home and school.
- To stimulate enthusiasm for learning.
- To develop good habits of organisation, self-discipline and individual responsibility.
- To rehearse fundamental skills.

¹ <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/homework>

Efficiency

All families have a variety of commitments and demands on their time. At St Gabriel's we value and encourage pupils' extra-curricular activities and seek to offer a range of clubs as well as recognising that many pupils will be involved in a range of activities outside of school: sports, dance, swimming; cubs/rainbows and music amongst many others. Time for work and family events/routines can mean that some schedules are very packed and we do not seek to place significant time burdens on families to complete hours of homework every week. We also recognise that an important part of maintaining good mental health for everyone is ensuring a good balance between work and rest.

As a school, we are seeking to enhance family time rather than detract from it.

For this reason, we seek to ensure homework is both fun and efficient, making the most of what can be limited time. Short, focused tasks which consolidate class-based learning are ideal.

Engaging and Appealing Tasks

Research shows that the visual appearance, type and quality of task are major contributors to a pupil's engagement.

For this reason, we seek to ensure ***interactive media plays a significant role in homework.***

Individual

Every child is at a unique point of their own personal understanding and stage of development. In class, the dynamic relationship between pupil and teacher allows for tasks to be shaped or redefined as necessary. When setting homework, without interaction, it is incredibly difficult for teachers to ensure that each individual need is met. Therefore, interactive media can prove an effective tool in providing tasks relevant to each individual. We understand that the combination of viewpoints, expectations and circumstances are unique to every family, therefore we will seek to maintain a degree of flexibility and choice for all families.

Parental Involvement

In the same way as pupils, every parent and carer has their own unique background and experience in learning. This can sometimes prove a difficulty both for the parent, in understanding how to provide help, and for the pupil who is trying to reconcile approaches from school and home. It is important that the work is of benefit to the pupil and therefore can be completed in the main, independently. However, this is not to say that parental involvement is not required or important. Research shows parental involvement makes a big contribution to homework's effectiveness by:

- Speaking positively about homework
- Offering encouragement, enthusiasm and praise
- Asking questions and taking an interest
- Ensuring the provision of time and environment

Reinforcing Learning

Home is an ideal place to practise key skills which have been taught in school. Research shows the most effective type of homework is that which allows for rehearsal and reinforcement of learning from school.

Feedback

Parents and pupils are consulted informally regarding their views on the effectiveness of homework. We are keen to listen and seek opportunities at parent consultation meetings, playground conversations, pupil conferencing and other opportunities to gain feedback which is reviewed by senior leaders to plan future actions.

Format and Content

In Nursery and Reception, Tapestry is used to share learning from school and suggest ways that parents can support learning at home. We encourage parents to add observations of children's learning at home.

In Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, Seesaw is used to set home learning activities and for children to upload their home learning.

	Homework activity	Day set on Seesaw	To be uploaded to Seesaw by the following
Year 1	Phonics activities (uploaded for all sounds taught that week). The expectation is that children complete at least one of the activities.	Friday	Friday
	Weekly spellings based on sounds taught that week	Friday	Does not need to be uploaded to Seesaw
	Activity at the end of each Mathematics unit (approximately every 2-3 weeks)	-	-
Year 2	Phonics activities (uploaded for all sounds taught that week). The expectation is that children complete at least one of the activities.	Friday	Thursday
	Weekly spellings		Thursday
	Mathematics activity	Friday	Thursday
Year 3	English activity	Friday	Thursday
	Mathematics activity	Friday	Thursday
Year 4	English activity	Friday	Thursday
	Mathematics activity	Friday	Thursday
Year 5	English activity	Friday	Thursday
	Mathematics activity	Friday	Thursday
Year 6	English activity	Monday	Monday
	Mathematics activity	Wednesday	Wednesday
	Activity linked to the wider curriculum	Friday	Friday

Home Reading

We believe that Reading is fundamental to our children's future personal, social and economic wellbeing. Therefore, we want to ensure reading is cherished at St Gabriel's. *A variety of reading content is readily available from the school to be taken home, shared, enjoyed and practised together.*

Parks and King Class (Reception)

During the first few months of starting school, children will be supported to choose a book to enjoy and share at home. Whilst children are in the very early stages of beginning to read, they will be bringing home word cards to practise each week. Once they are ready, children will bring home a phonics book from our scheme which they are expected to have a go at reading to an adult.

They will also bring home a Free Choice Library book once a week to support their love of reading. This is a book which can be enjoyed as a family, not to be read independently by each child.

Bell Class (Year 1)

So as to secure children's confidence, accuracy and fluency as readers, children will bring home a book which they will be able to have a go at reading to an adult. This will be a book that is closely matched to their stage of development as a reader.

They will also bring home a Free Choice Library book once a week to support their love of reading. This is a book which can be enjoyed as a family, not to be read independently by each child.

Braille Class, Berners-Lee Class, Hopper Class, Jackson Class and Gutenberg Class (Years 2- 6)

From Year 2 onwards, children will bring home a Colour Banded Book. According to each child's needs, this might be supplemented with an additional Phonics Book Reader or word cards.

Once children are confident and independent readers, they will be able to choose from the free choice selection rather than just Colour Banded Books.

Read Theory

To build comprehension skills, pupils in Years 3-6 have access to the platform '**Read Theory**'; an adaptive resource which allows pupils to read widely at their level. Please be aware that as it is free to access so pop up adverts do appear whilst the platform is in use. The website is American so children will be encouraged to spot any American English spellings and identify the English version of the word. Children will undertake an initial activity in school and then they will be able to earn points depending on their participation level and success.

Online Platforms

We use a range of online platforms to support learning at home.

	EdShed (includes Spelling Shed and Maths Shed)	Times Tables Rockstars	Read Theory
Nursery			
Reception	✓		
Year 1	✓		
Year 2	✓		
Year 3	✓	✓	✓
Year 4	✓	✓	✓
Year 5	✓	✓	✓
Year 6	✓	✓	✓

Spelling

Spelling is an important skill which is ideally suited to home learning, rehearsal and reinforcement. We believe in learning spellings which meet the needs of individuals, therefore, our spelling homework is set through the '**Spelling Shed**' online interactive platform. We do not hold generic weekly spelling tests but pupils are able to test their knowledge through the interactive games and activities 'Spelling Shed' offers. Your child will be set new words to learn weekly.

Mathematics

We seek to build conceptual understanding to aid fluency in mathematical knowledge. Key skills to practice include number bonds and times tables. The online interactive platforms '**Maths Shed**' (*part of EdShed*) and '**Times tables Rockstars**' provide a wealth of games and activities to challenge each individual.

Each of these activities provides flexibility for pupils and families. Pupils have access to work which is suited to their individual needs, is interactive, motivating and fun. There is flexibility in the time that pupils spend on activities with the aim to match homework to the rhythms and routines of family life whilst valuing it and ensuring time is protected.

Parental support is vital in achieving a positive attitude towards homework and the key skills that it helps to embed. As a school, we monitor pupil use and endeavour to promote these homework tasks regularly and celebrate success in them at our weekly assemblies.

Should a family be struggling to participate as outlined, we endeavour to work in partnership to ensure that all children can achieve their full potential through regular engagement with home learning.