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# St Gabriel's CofE Academy

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## Homework Policy

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2020

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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.

## **Rationale**

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 a year's worth of progress across their primary school career<sup>1</sup>.

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.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/toolkit/toolkit-a-z/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 practice 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

The table below shows the homework expectations for each class.

	<b>Home Reading</b> Daily	<b>Read Theory</b> Once per week 20 minutes	<b>Spelling Shed</b> 3 times per week	<b>Maths Shed</b> 3 times per week	<b>Times Tables Rockstars</b> 3 times per week
<b>King Class Reception</b>	✓		Optional	Optional	
<b>Bell Class Year 1</b>	✓		✓	✓	
<b>Braille Class Year 2/3</b>	✓		✓	✓	✓
<b>Hopper Class Year 4</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Jackson Class Year 5</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Gutenberg Class Year 6</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

## **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.*

### ***Free Choice Friday***

We believe that the best way to help a child make progress in reading, is to support their love of books. Every Friday, children across our school will be able to bring home a free choice reader. This is a book to enjoy and share at home over the weekend as a family and is not a book which children will be able to read independently.

### ***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.

From the Spring Term, children will bring home a book from our Dandelion Scheme which they are expected to have a go at reading to an adult.

### ***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 might be a Colour Banded Book or a book from our Dandelion Scheme.

### ***Braille 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 Dandelion 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 4-6 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.

### **Spelling Shed**

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.

## **Maths Shed**

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**' and '**Timestable Rockstars**' provide a wealth of games and activities to challenge each individual. For conceptual challenges, the primary students page on the Cambridge university sponsored **NRich** website has a vast array of games, puzzles, challenges and 'Wild' maths that children could explore. <https://nrich.maths.org/primary>

## **Special note for Reception families!**

In King Class (Reception), **reading** is the focus for home learning (see above). In addition, we invite parents to share their child's development and experiences outside school through their child's **Tapestry Online Learning Journal**. From the second half of the Autumn term, children will be given the opportunity to access Maths Shed and Spelling Shed but this is *optional* for children in King Class.

## **Support**

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.

If you feel that the level of work provided needs adjusting, please speak to your child's class teacher in the first instance. We can show you how to tailor and adapt the assignments to suit your child and we run termly parent homework workshops.

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 our approach. As a first step in supporting children to participate, teachers will speak with children. Should the issue not be resolved, parents will be contacted via letter (see below) in the first instance.

Date: .....

Dear Parent/Carer

Child's name: ..... Class: .....

We noticed that your child has not been fully participating in Home Learning Activities. I'm sure you will appreciate the many advantages of taking part in Home Learning. As our policy states:

"consistently engaging with high-quality work at home has a positive impact on the progress and attainment of pupils."

I would therefore be very grateful if you could ensure that your child accesses the Home Learning activities, as outlined below:

	<b>Home Reading</b>	<b>Read Theory</b>	<b>Spelling Shed</b>	<b>Maths Shed</b>	<b>Times Tables Rockstars</b>
	Daily	Once per week	3 times per week	3 times per week	3 times per week
<b>King Class Reception</b>	✓		Optional	Optional	
<b>Bell Class Year 1</b>	✓		✓	✓	
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<b>Hopper Class Year 4</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Jackson Class Year 5</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Gutenberg Class Year 6</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

If you wish to discuss this further, please speak to Mrs Garner / Mrs Roberts.

Thank you for your support in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Mr A Taylor