

RIVERSDALE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Home Learning Policy

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INTRODUCTION

At Riversdale Primary School, we consider home learning to be any activity that pupils do, outside the normal school day, that contributes to their learning, in response to guidance from the school. This encompasses a whole variety of activities instigated by either teachers and/or parents/carers to support the children's learning.

RATIONALE FOR HOME LEARNING

Home learning is a very important part of a child's education, and can add much to a child's development, when it is carefully considered and targeted to the needs of the pupils. We recognise that the educational experience that any school can provide by itself is limited by the time and resources available; children can therefore benefit greatly from the complementary learning that they do at home. Indeed, we see home learning as an important example of cooperation between teachers and parents/carers. One of the aims of our teaching is to develop independence, and we believe that undertaking regular home learning opportunities is one of the ways in which children can acquire this skill.

Whilst home learning can play a positive role in raising a child's level of attainment, we recognise the great deal of research undertaken by the Education Endowment Fund (EEF) which shows that home learning in primary school has a small impact on pupil outcomes in comparison to secondary school, and that the impact also diminishes as the amount of time pupils spend on it increases. In addition, the EEF evidence suggests that the relationship between home learning and the learning during normal school time is important. It is for this reason that at Riversdale Primary School we refer to home learning as "skills practice" rather than homework. Our home learning is designed to place emphasis on retrieval and consolidation of concepts and skills that will strengthen pupils' foundation for further learning.

We also acknowledge the important role of play and free time in a child's growth and development. Whilst home learning is important, it should not prevent children from taking part in the activities such as out-of-school clubs and of other organisations that play an important part in the lives of our pupils. Balance is important.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aims and objectives of home learning are:

- to consolidate and reinforce the learning done in school, allowing children to practise skills taught;
- to enable pupils to make maximum progress in their academic and social development;
- to help pupils develop the skill of independence;
- to promote cooperation between home and school in supporting each child's learning;
- to provide educational experiences not possible in school;
- to help children develop good work habits for the future.

HOME LEARNING STRUCTURE

At Riversdale Primary School, we set a variety of home learning activities which reflect the age and needs of the pupils as they progress through the school.

In the **Early Years and Foundation Stage (EYFS)** we provide children with books to read with parents/carers. These books are closely matched to the child's reading experience in respect to the school's Phonics curriculum: Little Wandle Letters and Sounds (Revised). Children should be able to read these books with 90% fluency, as this ensures there is the right level of challenge. Children will be given the opportunity to read the same book several times to strengthen skills in concepts such as decoding, prosody and comprehension. To develop a love of reading, the school also provides general reading books which can be

read by the parents/carers or by the children with their parents/carers support, as this greatly impacts reading progression over time.

As letter formation is key for successful handwriting in the future, pupils in EYFS will be provided with letter formation worksheets to complete, based on the learning taking place in their phonics lessons. By doing this, pupils develop the correct muscle memory for writing each letter, and consolidate the specific grapheme/phoneme correspondences.

At Riversdale, we recognise that reading is fundamental to a pupil's ability to access the broad and balanced curriculum that we provide. As such, for pupils in **Key Stage 1**, skills practice revolves around phonics and reading. In a similar fashion to EYFS, pupils will take home a range of reading materials including: Little Wandle Big Cat books, matched to the pupils reading experience; and a reading book to share with parents/carers.

When pupils reach Year 2 and begin to move on to books outside the Little Wandle Big Cat range, having shown the desired level of fluency according to the phonics scheme, the focus moves from decoding, prosody and comprehension, to wider reading skills. Pupils are provided with questions based on vocabulary development, a key focus for the school, retrieval, inference and summary, to explore the concept of comprehension in a deeper way.

Sometimes, we ask children to talk about a topic at home prior to studying it in school as this provides the pupils with a more personalised context that the school may not be able to. For example, in the history topic "Technology at Home", we ask children to find out what home technologies were popular when their grandparents were young and encourage discussions around how this has changed over recent years.

Pupils in the summer term of Year 2, are provided with a login for an online learning platform (currently Century Tech) where they are able to consolidate skills learnt in class, or access pre-teaching materials to support in class learning. The application focuses on mathematics, grammar, punctuation and spelling as well as science and is closely matched to the National Curriculum. Furthermore, the application utilises Artificial Intelligence to accurately pitch the skills practice based on extensive baseline assessments, ensuring pupils have access to work that not only addresses any gaps in learning, but also an appropriate level of challenge thus encouraging aspiration for all pupils, regardless of educational needs and starting points.

At **Key Stage 2**, we continue to give children the sort of home learning activities outlined in the previous Key Stage, particularly reading, but we expect them to do tasks independently. In addition, pupils are introduced to Times Table Rockstars to support instant recall of the multiplication tables, as this benefits their overall learning in mathematics and reduces cognitive load in the long-term, allowing them to focus on the new concepts being taught.

With regard to Century Tech, pupils in this key stage are expected to undertake two "nuggets" five times per week. Some of these will be set by class teachers, based on in-class assessments, whilst others will be generated by the platform's algorithm. Pupils will have in-school sessions throughout the year dedicated to ensuring their ability to access the platform and modelling school expectations.

When children move into Year 6, they are provided with additional learning opportunities to undertake at home, such as readings or research as the school aims to support them with transitioning into the expectations that secondary education will hold.

Occasionally, across all key stages, we ask children to take work home that they have started but not completed in school, as we believe that they would benefit from spending further time on it.

READING

As stated previously, reading is fundamental to educational success and therefore much of the emphasis on home learning is placed on this.

Pupils from Nursery to Year 6 are expected to read either independently or with their family for a minimum of 15 minutes a day, with this increasing to a minimum of 20 minutes when the children reach Year 5. Their reading experiences should be noted in the child's reading record, by parents/carers initially, but as children move up the school, the expectation becomes that they complete their own comments each day, based on the provided framework.

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES

We set home learning for all children as a normal part of school life. In doing so, we ensure that all tasks set are appropriate to the needs of the child and make adaptations where necessary, so that all children can contribute in a positive way.

When setting home learning for pupils who are named on the register of special needs, we refer to those pupils' individual needs and if relevant their Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP) targets to make appropriate adaptations.

THE ROLE OF PARENTS AND CARERS

Parents and carers have a vital role to play in their child's education, and home learning is an important part of this process. We ask parents and carers to encourage their child to complete the tasks that are set, ensuring that this is done through a "little and often" model, which is proven to have a greater impact on educational outcomes.

We invite parents and carers to support their children as and when they feel it to be necessary, and to provide them with the sort of environment that allows children to do their best. This can be achieved by providing a quiet 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 and carers to check the reading record daily, and to sign it as requested.

If parents and carers have any questions about home learning, they should, in the first instance, contact the child's class teacher. If their questions are of a more general nature, they should contact the school via Reach More Parents (by Weduc) and a member of the senior leadership team will respond as quickly as is feasibly possible, within the context of the school day. Finally, if they wish to make a complaint about the school home learning policy, or the way in which it is implemented, parents or carers should contact the Headteacher in the first instance, following the Complaints Policy which identifies step one as "Raising a Concern".

USE OF TECHNOLOGY

The use of technology and the internet has made a significant contribution to the amount of reference material available at home, and the ease and speed with which it can be accessed. However, where pupils are required to undertake research via the internet, we highly recommend that parents/carers support their children by having appropriate monitoring and filtering systems in place, encourage their children to use safe search engines (these can be found on the school's Online Safety webpage) and ensure pupils are undertaking work in the same room as a trusted adult, who can keep an eye on the content being accessed.

For any online learning platforms used as part of the children's skills practice, the school will provide login details.

Whilst the school understands that parents/carers may have concerns about the use of ICT in home learning, we believe at Riversdale Primary School that undertaking skills practise using technology has great benefits for the children. Firstly, the use of technology allows for the children to have a truly personalised experience which allows gaps in knowledge and understanding to be addressed more effectively than printed worksheets. In addition, the school recommends a "little and often approach" whereby pupils spend 5-10 minutes, 4-5 times per week undertaking online skills practice. This equates to a maximum of 50 minutes per week in Key Stage 2. Finally, whilst we acknowledge the importance of limiting screen time, research shows that there is a distinct difference between productive screen time and leisure based screen time.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

It is the Senior Leadership's responsibility to monitor and assess the efficacy of the Home Learning Policy and make any improvements as the need arises.

It is the responsibility of our governing body to agree and then monitor the school home learning policy. This is done by the committee of the governing body that deals with curriculum issues. Our governing body may, at any time, request from our headteacher a report on the way in which home learning is organised in our school.

This policy will be reviewed in two years, or earlier if necessary.