



Home Learning Policy

Date for full implementation

September 2015

Date for review

September 2017 (or earlier if considered necessary)

Signature/s

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Chair of Governors

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Head Teacher

What is Home Learning?

'Home Learning is any activity which children are involved in outside the normal school day that contributes to their learning, either on their own or with others.' DfE Raising Standards

Home learning encompasses a whole variety of activities instigated by teachers and parents/carers to support the children's learning. For example, parents or carers who spend time reading stories to or with their children before bedtime are helping with home learning.

At Grange Primary School we believe that there are clear benefits for children who spend regular periods of time on different learning activities outside school. We see home learning as an important way of involving parents in the education of their child. Families are in a unique position to provide some very important opportunities for their children that a school is perhaps unable to provide.

However, home learning activities do not have to be prescribed by the teacher and may include: sharing a book, walking the dog, attending a club, playing a board game, visiting a museum, going swimming - all of which are invaluable developmental activities. Children also need time after school to play, socialise and engage in child type activities and out-of-school-clubs.

Home Learning tasks should not be onerous nor should they cause conflict at home. Too often, home learning can become associated with tension and excuses. At Grange Primary School, we would rather home learning activities be challenging, interesting and enjoyable. Our aim is for home learning to develop into a life-long love of research and enquiry based learning.

Aims and objectives

The aims and objectives of home learning are to:

- put the child at the heart of home learning
- enable children to make maximum progress in their academic and social development
- help children develop the skills of an independent learner
- promote cooperation between home and school in supporting each child's learning
- provide educational experiences not possible within the school
- help children develop good work habits for the future
- allow time for children to explore an interest in a topic in greater depth and to share their findings with their peers

Types of home learning

Children are encouraged to take home books and read with their parents or carers. Guidance is available in school on how to achieve the maximum benefit from this time spent reading with their child and suggested comprehension questions are sent home every September.

Children in KS1 and KS2 will be set regular Grammar Hammer and Maths Skills home learning. The Government has set out, in the new National Curriculum (2014) expectations for children in each year group in terms of the times tables and spellings they should know by the end of the year and these will also be shared with parents and carers in the initial Meet the Teacher meetings each September.

In addition, in order for children to develop research skills and to explore topics in depth, the class teacher will set a long term research topic each half term, culminating in a project board or a presentation to be shared with the class. When we ask children to study a topic or to research a particular subject, we encourage them not only to use the school library but the local library and internet as well.

We are committed to quality home learning at Grange Primary School. However, we recognise the need for families to be able to plan home learning time which fits around their own home activity timetables. We believe that, in setting half termly research projects, we have facilitated a more flexible and family led approach to the completion of home learning tasks.

As the children increase in age and maturity we expect them to do more tasks independently.

Research project home learning will be shared in class and peer reviewed. Children's hard work and effort will be acknowledged and praised. There may be issues arising from the work, which the teacher will follow up in lesson time.

We recognise that children have individual learning styles, which means that research tasks can be completed in a number of different ways. The class teacher will send out some suggestions when each research project is set and this may include a photograph of previous projects as an example.

Occasionally children may also be asked to take home work that they have started in school, when we believe that they could benefit from spending further time on it.

Inclusion and home learning

Home learning is set for all children as a normal part of school life. We ensure that all tasks set are appropriate to the ability of the child and we endeavour to adapt any task set so that all children can contribute in a positive way. When setting home learning for children who have Special Educational Needs it is done with reference to the child's targets within the Individual Support Plans. We value and celebrate the cultural diversity of our children and their families and we appreciate the enrichment that this brings.

Children who do not have access to a computer at home or who may require support with their home learning are offered the opportunity to attend one of the school Home Learning Clubs.

How can parents and carers help?

To be effective, home learning needs to be part of a wider partnership between parents and school. We ask parents and carers to use the Reading Diaries and Student Planners to maintain communication about home learning tasks. It is a fact that children develop their skills, interests and talents when parents encourage them to make maximum use of the experiences and opportunities that are available outside of school.

Parents and carers can support their child by:

- Listening to your child read daily
- Going on visits and outings together e.g. to estimate the cost of shopping at the supermarket
- Involving your child in practical maths tasks such as weighing out ingredients or reading a bus timetable
- Extending the home learning tasks by using appropriate websites or library resources
- Helping your child to find a suitable place to engage in the home learning tasks, with suitable equipment and space to work
- Making sure your child doesn't spend too long on a home learning task
- Helping your child to plan their home learning time so that it fits around other commitments
- Letting us know if there are any problems with homework so that the class teacher can assist
- Discussing home learning tasks with your child and offering support
- In KS2, checking and signing the Student Planner weekly

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 home learning tasks that are set and to ensure that the presentation is as good as it can be. We invite them to help their children as and when they feel it to be necessary and to provide their child with the sort of environment that allows him/her to do his/her best.

If parents and carers have any questions about home learning, they should, in the first instance, contact the child's class teacher through the Reading Record (in EYFS and KS1) or Student Planner (in KS2). If their questions are of a more general nature, they should contact the Headteacher. 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 Governing Body.

Improving key life skills

Social, evaluation, problem solving, managing feelings and working collaboratively are key life skills. The opportunity to develop any aspect of these key life skills improves children's motivation and approach to life and learning. Shared activities, games and even helping around the house can develop not only maths and English skills but also vital life skills too.

For example:

- Board games - Playing scrabble is a great way of learning to spell but also teaches turn taking, problem solving problems and managing losing!
- Card games are great for developing mental maths, independence and patience
- Dominoes are a great way to learn number bonds and develop motor skills
- Looking after a pet can support maths learning when measuring out the right amount of food or telling when it's the right time to take the dog for a walk but also encourage independence and caring

Use of ICT

The use of ICT 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. Teachers, however, expect their children to produce their own work, perhaps by editing something they have found, or by expressing it in their own words. The children are not achieving anything worthwhile by merely downloading and printing out something that has been written by somebody else.

Children's home learning should feature a balance of handwriting and printed material.

There are many websites containing highly educational material which can have a powerful, positive effect on children's learning. These websites will be detailed in the Curriculum Information documents sent out each term. Parents or carers are advised always to supervise their child's access to the internet.

We discourage children from bringing computer disks or memory sticks into school because of the risk of viruses. When appropriate, however, a teacher might suggest that a child's work is uploaded to DB Primary, our new Online Learning Platform.

Monitoring and review

It is the responsibility of the Governing Body to agree and then monitor the school home learning policy. This is done by the Governors' Achievement Committee.