

Lyminster Primary School



Homework Policy

Lyminster Primary School Wick Street, Littlehampton, West Sussex, BN17 7JZ

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POLICY

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Philosophy

Much of the most up-to-date educational research and evidence is not positive about the impact of Homework – in the traditional sense – at Primary School level. Where we believe there is a clear benefit is in the regular ‘short, sharp burst’ practising of basic skills, particularly reading, but also spellings and times tables, and this is where we place our emphasis. However, we also believe there is some benefit to children learning ‘homework skills’ in the later years of Primary School, ready for the Secondary level of their education, where homework becomes much more important. We also want to give parents/carers the opportunity to engage in topic-related learning opportunities with their children, but these must be meaningful and manageable.

Aims

To enable children to quickly and efficiently achieve mastery over basic skills such as reading, spelling and times tables;

To ensure our older children are ‘secondary-ready’ by developing good study-habits;

To engage parents/carers and families in their child’s wider-learning through meaningful and enjoyable opportunities to explore a topic beyond school.

Principles

We believe that homework will be most effective when the following principles are applied:

For the teachers/school to:

- Set meaningful homework that links directly to class learning;
- Take account of the full range of learning needs and starting points in their class;
- Provide clear information to parents/carers on what the actual learning intentions are, and even how this could be extended;
- Acknowledge, value and celebrate effort in home-learning;
- Adhere as much as is practicable to deadlines and the consistency of homework-setting;
- Provide, in collaboration with colleagues, regular advice and support for parents/carers in how to practically support their children’s learning at home.

For the parents/carers to:

- Set routines from very early on in their child’s schooling (and even before), particularly with reading;
- Be positive with the children about their efforts;
- Provide a space and time for children to complete their homework;
- To support the school and the teachers;
- Enforce the expectation that homework is completed.

For pupils to:

- Complete their homework to the best of their ability;
- Take responsibility as much as possible for their own organization, and in particular to bring their homework home and back to school;
- Ask if they are unsure of anything;
- Give everything a try.

Homework Guidelines

For all year groups the half-termly ‘topic webs’ give parents/carers an insight into the learning taking place in each curriculum area and how this learning could be reinforced at home;

From Year R, children will be expected to read at home most evenings;

From Year 1, children will also have daily spelling and number practice, set weekly (this becomes times table practice as the child gets a little older), and occasional ‘Take-Home Tasks’;

From Year 2, children will also have half-termly ‘Take Home Tasks’, which may be in the form of a grid or list of suggestions to choose from, an open prompt for the children to interpret in their own way, or – particularly as the children get older – something more fixed;

From Year 5, in preparation for secondary school, the children will have weekly (usually written) tasks to complete, linked to either Maths or English in most cases;

From Year 6, the children will have weekly tasks in BOTH Maths and Literacy, bringing them more in-line with Year 7 expectations.

Adjustments/Differentiation/Variance

When setting homework, teachers will need to be mindful of the full range of abilities and learning needs in the class. For tasks such as spelling, reading and number practice, this will usually involve setting different ‘levels’ of task, such as different book bands or complexities of spelling within a given pattern. For other tasks, such as ‘Take-Home Tasks’, this will involve carefully framing the task or providing enough openness/extensions that all children can be appropriately challenged.

For particular children, it may be that they have an individualized Learning Plan which prioritizes certain learning for home and at school. For these children, and parents/carers may wish to use discretion as to how much of the other homework is appropriate. Teachers and the SENCo will be able to advise/support with this.

Some parents may wish to provide additional extension or opportunities for their children, and this is absolutely their parental right. However, the leadership of the school discourages teachers from setting additional homework for individuals that is not covered within an Individual Learning Plan – it is an unreasonable expectation that our teachers act as unpaid tutors-by-proxy.

We recognize that this ‘proxy’ element of homework-setting means that it is not always possible for teachers to fully personalize homework in the same way they are able to do with their lessons, and an element of parental discretion and judgement will always be a necessary part of an effective homework culture in the primary years. By the same token, we respect that parents have different circumstances and opinions around homework, and will always seek to work in partnership for the best interests of the child.

Motivation and Reward

We want our children to fall in love with learning, at school and beyond. This is one of our core missions. To accomplish this, we need to ensure that we are setting homework which is meaningful and relevant – ‘worth doing’ – and also engaging and interesting as much as possible. This ranges from ensuring we have the best possible books in our library to striving to come up with ever-different ways of approaching times table practice.

It can be a very difficult task for parents/carers to engage children in their homework, particularly in an era when so much entertainment is available, literally at children’s fingertips, and we commit to supporting parents by valuing, praising – and, most importantly, always acknowledging - home-learning. This can be through:

- Oral or written feedback;
- Celebration events for Take-Home Tasks;
- Awarding House Points (or similar) for effort or good homework habits;
- Headteacher’s Awards for exceptional effort or achievement;
- Display of Home Learning.

In the younger years, the extent to which homework can be accessed or achieved by children can be dependent on external factors however, and in any case we do need to be careful – in-line with our aims – to foster intrinsic motivation as much as possible. With all this mind, we are careful not to discriminate against pupils who do not seem to complete set tasks, certainly not before Upper Key Stage 2. This includes not sanctioning a child directly or indirectly for apparent lack of homework (again, this only strictly applies to before Upper Key Stage 2).