

# St Mary's Catholic Primary School



## Homework Policy (H.E.L.P.)

Date Written:	May 2000
Date Reviewed:	Autumn 2016
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Review Frequency:	3 Yearly
Date to be Reviewed:	Autumn 2019

## MISSION STATEMENT

The family of St. Mary's Catholic Primary School believes that each person is unique and made in the image and likeness of God as expressed through Jesus Christ in the Gospels. We believe that our mission is to recognise, nurture and develop the God given gifts, talents and spirituality of each individual.

### Aims

- ◆ To inspire children to appreciate, develop and practice spiritual, moral, cultural and aesthetic values.
- ◆ To foster in children a sense of awe and wonder for God's created world and to have an awareness of their unique place in it
- ◆ To appreciate childhood as valued and right for all pupils
- ◆ To provide an environment which creates and fosters loving, responsible and creative human beings.
- ◆ To enable each individual child to achieve their full potential
- ◆ To base our school's curriculum on direct and practical experiences which harness children's natural curiosity.
- ◆ To provide a curriculum which fosters active learning, autonomy and choice.
- ◆ To encourage and nurture independence in children which enables them to become life long learners.
- ◆ To value and promote thinking and communication skills as a foundation for all learning.
- ◆ To provide a safe, secure, structured learning environment.
- ◆ To expect and develop the highest standards of self-discipline and positive behaviour from all members of the school community.
- ◆ To provide children with a positive self-image which develops respect and co-operation with others.
- ◆ To promote challenging and equal opportunities for all children within a positive and ordered environment.
- ◆ To encourage parents and members of the wider community to enhance our children's education.

# H.E.L.P.

(Home Extended Learning Programme)

## 'UNLESS'

Unless the eye catch fire  
Learning will not be seen

Unless the ear catch fire  
Learning will not be heard

Unless the tongue catch fire  
Learning will not be named

Unless the heart catch fire  
Learning will not be sought

Unless the mind catch fire  
Learning will not be known

## Introduction

All human beings are learners and throughout our lives we continue to learn - it is a life long process. Learning does not just take place in school or during our school years. Learning is not just about the gaining of knowledge but it is also about using and applying knowledge to change our thinking about the world in which we live as well as providing an understanding of our place within it.

At St Mary's we believe that we are a learning community - adults and children alike. We would like to invite you, as parents/carers, to join with us in this process of extending your child's educational experiences.

The traditional term of "Homework" has suggestions of enslavement, toil and struggle which demeans the idea of life long learning.

We believe that the phrase Home Extended Learning Programme (H.E.L.P.) promotes and encourages a positive view of learning at home which can be enjoyable, stimulating and challenging. It also reminds the children that they can ask for help from others whenever they need it. In this policy the term "tasks" will be used for learning activities which the children are required to complete at home.

## Principles

Learning tasks at home should

- ❖ be purposeful
- ❖ be regular and consistent
- ❖ be appropriate to the child's age and level of development
- ❖ consolidate and extend the learning taking place in school
- ❖ prepare for future learning
- ❖ encourage independence and responsibility
- ❖ be enjoyable and interesting
- ❖ be a beneficial experience for all those involved

## Aims

- To promote the development of independent study
- To encourage perseverance and self discipline
- To allow for the practice of skills learnt in school
- To involve parents/carers and others in the community to encourage "life long learning"
- To promote learning from direct experience
- To open up areas of learning using materials and sources of information not always accessible in the classroom
- To promote thinking skills

## Types of Learning Tasks

In both Key Stages Literacy and Numeracy tasks may be related to other areas of the curriculum.

### Key Stage 1

The emphasis for children in Reception, Year 1 and 2 will focus particularly upon Literacy and Numeracy activities such as:

- Letter formation/Handwriting practice
- Reading (alone and with an adult or older child)
- Reading support activities (phonics, letter names, word building, writing in response to direct experiences)
- Playing number games
- Number patterns or investigations

### Key Stage 2

For children in Year 3 to Year 6 the tasks will include all of the above activities with the emphasis still on the promotion of Literacy and Numeracy skills or knowledge.

Science tasks/activities and other curriculum areas may also be added.

The tasks may include:

- Finding out information
- Committing the multiplication tables to memory
- Learning personal spellings
- Reading in preparation for school lessons
- Preparing oral presentations
- More traditional written assignments
- Simple experiments

## **Tests**

Children in Years 2 to 6 may be given activities or tasks with the focus on helping to prepare them for the tests to be taken in the Summer term. These will be largely revision tasks but may also include activities based on the format used by the tests.

On some occasions in Year 6 parental co-operation will be requested by the teacher to see that these tasks are performed under test conditions, without help and with time constraints included.

## **Help for Parents**

Teaching staff will produce Literacy/Numeracy activities in booklet form to support parents with their child's learning at home.

Teachers are also willing to meet with parents to offer support and guidance when necessary at a mutually agreed time.

## **Timing and Frequency**

The precise amount of time spent on out of school tasks is much less important than the quality of what is set and the way in which it supports pupil's learning.

Children in the Reception year will be expected to spend 10 minutes daily on Reading or reading support activities, giving a weekly total of 50 minutes.

In years 1 and 2 they will be expected to maintain the daily reading of 10 minutes, plus other Literacy or Numeracy tasks at other times during the week giving a total of 1 hour 20 minutes.

In years 3 and 4 the expectation will be for 20 minutes daily reading plus other tasks amounting to a total of 2 hours 40 minutes.

In years 5 and 6 the daily reading should still be maintained at 20 minutes but the length of time on other tasks will increase giving a total of 3 hours 40 minutes.

Teachers cannot guarantee precisely how long a child may take on a particular task since some may complete the activities quickly, whilst others may need longer and therefore these timings are guidelines.

The exact days on which the activities are set and the time limit given for their return will be at the discretion of the class teacher but normally tasks will be given which are not expected to be back the next day. There may be occasions when this is necessary and the teacher will then explain why this is so.

### **Communication**

In order to ensure that out of school learning tasks are seen as positive experiences it is essential that there is close liaison between home and school, particularly with regard to their timing/frequency. Teachers will keep parents informed of their requirements.

Parents wishing to discuss home extended learning activities with teachers should make an appointment suitable to both parties.

### **Homework Books**

Reception teachers meet with parents every two/three weeks to discuss learning and progress, and how parents can support at home.

Children in Years 1 to 6 will be provided with Homework Books as a means of communication between teachers, pupils and parents/carers. Other information will also be included as an additional means of home/school liaison. In addition, the children may be provided with exercise books to complete their tasks.

Reading Journals will be maintained on a regular basis by parents/teachers to provide an accurate profile of a pupil's reading development.

### **Marking & Assessment**

Marking has traditionally been seen as a simple exercise of wrongs and rights indicated by X or ✓. We believe that for a learner to really improve this is not always helpful. Pupils need feedback on their efforts in order to progress and learn effectively. This may be given individually, as a group or to the whole class and may not always be in written form. Where it is appropriate, teachers will use the 'Stars and Wishes' approach to feedback and marking of homework.

Teachers will give examples of their feedback or assessments when requested by parents.

### **Children with Special Needs**

Some children may need to have a different programme of home extended tasks planned for them in terms of quantity, frequency and content. In such cases, special arrangements will be made between parent/carer, the class teacher and the Special Needs Co-ordinator.

### **Incentives and Sanctions**

The Home Extended Learning Programme endeavours to promote high standards of achievement for all our pupils in order to enhance the learning process. The involvement in and completion of the tasks should be seen as a reward in itself. However, a range of rewards, including stickers or particular praise written in pupil's Happy Books, will be given to children who show exceptional effort or achievement.

In exceptional circumstances the failure to complete tasks outside school time on a regular basis may mean that some children need to be encouraged to seek an opportunity to complete them at school in order to prevent them from becoming disadvantaged.

### **Expectations**

In order to promote a positive view of extended learning outside school it is essential that all involved are clear about the expectations which should be maintained.

Parents should:

- ◆ Value home extended learning activities
- ◆ Help pupils to meet deadlines by organising their time effectively
- ◆ Provide a suitable/peaceful environment for the activities to take place
- ◆ Give praise for effort given to the completion of tasks
- ◆ Help to maintain the same quality of recording as expected inside school time
- ◆ Encourage the child to seek help/advice from their teacher regarding difficulties with the task
- ◆ Liaise with the class teacher/school should other difficulties arise
- ◆ Respond positively to teacher/school requests regarding home extended tasks

Teachers should:

- Liaise with parents/carers through the agreed channels
- Provide home extended tasks which are enriching, valuable, regular and supportive
- Contact parents early if tasks are regularly not attempted or completed as requested

- Give positive feedback to pupils on their efforts
- Set, Assess and Evaluate pupil's work as indicated in this policy

Pupils should:

- Complete tasks by the given deadlines
- Endeavour to do their best
- Maintain no less a level of response as that expected at school
- Remember to bring completed tasks or materials back to school
- Remind parents/teachers of any changes made to the programme(s)

### **Monitoring and Evaluating**

The implementation and effectiveness of the policy will be monitored and evaluated by the Headteacher and other management team members of the school through sampling pupils' work, discussions with teachers, pupils and parents.

### **Relaxation of the policy**

Particular times of the year in school give extra pressures for pupils, teachers and parents such as: Christmas, off site visits, test times, sickness, holidays during school time etc. During such times any changes in the normal routine or pattern of home extended tasks will be communicated via the diaries or letters from school.

Policy ratified by the Governing Body:

Signed:   
Chair of Governors

Date: 31<sup>st</sup> October 2016