



Sullivan Upper Preparatory Department

Homework Policy

1 Introduction

1.1 It is the policy of the Preparatory Department that all pupils should receive homework in the belief that it is useful in consolidating and extending the work done in the classroom. In addition, it strengthens the educational partnership between parents and teachers and provides a means by which parents can monitor their child's progress. Homework is anything that children do outside the normal school day that contributes to their learning in response to guidance from the school. Homework encompasses a whole variety of activities instigated by teachers and assisted by parents, to support children's learning. For example, a parent who spends time reading a story to their child before bedtime is helping with homework.

2 Rationale for homework

2.1 Homework is a very important part of a child's education and can add much to a child's development. The government made clear its commitment to homework in the 1997 White Paper, 'Excellence in Schools', where homework was seen as 'an essential part of good education'. We recognise that the time and resources available limit the educational experience that any school by itself can provide; children benefit greatly therefore from the mutual support of parents and teachers in encouraging them to learn both at home and at school. In the Preparatory Department we see homework as an important way of establishing a successful dialogue between teachers and parents. One of the aims of our school is for children to develop as independent learners. We believe that homework is one of the main ways in which children can acquire the skill of independent learning.

2.2 Homework plays a positive role in raising a child's level of attainment. We also acknowledge the important role of play and free time in a child's growth and development. While homework is important, it should not prevent children from taking part in the wide range of out-of-school clubs and organisations that play an important part in the lives of many children. We are well aware that children spend more time at home than at school and we believe they develop their skills, interests and talents to the full only when parents encourage them to make maximum use of the experiences and opportunities that are available outside of school. Perhaps a good way to think about homework is the way you think about medications or dietary supplements. If you take too little, they'll have no effect. If you take too much, they can kill you. If you take the right amount, you'll get better.

3 Aims and objectives

3.1 The aims and objectives of homework are:

- to enable pupils to make maximum progress in their academic and social development;
- to help pupils develop the skills of an independent learner;
- to promote a partnership between home and school in supporting each child's learning;
- to enable all aspects of the curriculum to be covered in sufficient depth;
- to provide educational experiences not possible in school;
- to consolidate and reinforce learning done in school and to allow children to practise skills taught in lessons;
- to help children develop good work habits for the future.

4 Types of homework

4.1 We set a variety of homework activities. In the Foundation Stage and at Key Stage 1 we encourage children to read by giving them books to take home to enjoy with their parents. We give guidance information to parents to help them achieve the maximum benefit from this time spent reading with their child. We also ask Key Stage 1 children to learn spellings or mathematical tables as part of their homework. Sometimes, we ask children to talk about a topic at home prior to studying it in school. For example, in the history topic on Toys, we ask children to find out what toys were popular when their grandparents were young and, if possible, to bring examples into school to show the other children. At other times, we ask children to find and collect things that we then use in science lessons, and occasionally we ask children to take home work that they have started in school when we believe that they would benefit from spending further time on it. When we ask children to study a topic or to research a particular subject, we encourage them to use the school and local library as well as the Internet.

4.2 In Key Stage 2 we continue to give children the sort of homework activities outlined in paragraph 4.1 but we expect them to do more tasks independently. We set literacy and numeracy homework routinely each week and we expect the children to consolidate and reinforce learning done in school through practice at home. We also set homework as a means of helping the children to revise for examinations as well as to ensure that prior learning has been understood. Our goal is to prepare our older children for transition to secondary level of education, where they will receive multiple homeworks from a number of staff with assorted due dates, therefore we practise aspects of this in Preps 6 & 7 in particular.

5 Amount of homework

5.1 We increase the amount of homework that we give the children as they move through the school. We expect Foundation Stage children to spend approximately 10 minutes a day doing homework; this may well include 'reading' or discussing a book with a parent. We expect children in Key Stage 1 to spend approximately 20-30 minutes per night on homework and children in Key Stage 2 to spend approximately 40-50 minutes per night, inclusive of reading.

5.2 We give children from Prep 4 onwards a school diary where they, or the teacher, record the homework, and where parents and teachers can make relevant comments as appropriate as a means of communication.

6 Pupils with special educational needs

6.1 We set homework for all children as a normal part of school life. We ensure that all tasks set are appropriate to the ability of the child. If a child has special needs, we endeavour to adapt any task set so that all children can contribute in a positive way. When setting homework for pupils who are named on the register of special needs, we refer to the Individual Education Plans (IEPs). Differentiated homework assist with, and is appropriate to, each child's individual level of ability.

7 The role of parents

7.1 Parents have a vital role to play in their child's education and homework is an important part of this process. We ask parents to encourage their child to complete the homework tasks that are set. We invite them to help their children as they feel necessary and provide them with the sort of environment that allows children to do their best: a good working space at home which is quiet and not impeded by television noise and the like; by enabling their child to visit the library regularly; and by discussing the work that their child is doing so they are familiar with their child's attempts at homework and aware of any difficulties the child may be experiencing at a particular moment. Should parents believe homework is taking too long or their child is having too much difficulty with it, we would ask them to contact the child's teacher to discuss how this can be rectified. Parents can sign off on a homework and indicate a reason why on a 'post-it' for their child's teacher. A longer time over a weekend may be useful for appropriate types of homework and this can be facilitated through the class teacher. This also be a useful point for further discussion at an individual parent/teacher meeting.

Time spent:

- listening to your child
- talking to your child
- reading to your child
- explaining to your child
- and encouraging your childis time well spent!

7.2 We ask Prep 4 to 7 parents to check the home/school diary regularly, at least once a week, and to sign it as requested. Teachers in KS2 may use this book as a means of information/ home-school liaison.

7.3 If parents have any problems or questions about homework, they should, in the first instance, contact the child's class teacher. Should parents still express concern about homework, they should contact the Head of Prep.

8 Monitoring and review

8.1 It is the responsibility of our staff to agree and then monitor the school homework policy. The policy is also monitored by the Prep Committee of the Board of Governors.

Appendix of individual class homework practices:

Prep 1: Due to the nature of Foundation Stage, homework and any practices the children get outside the classroom with regards to additional reading, word practice, topic preparation and the like are always worthwhile, but not statutory. All practices do however assist greatly in a child's development. Currently, we spread homework over a weekend as the nature of the work is ongoing. We would ask that it is not done all at once but carried over the time for best effect. Homework goes out on a Friday and is returned on a Thursday. Time spent should be approximately 10 minutes.

Practices include:

New reader on Mondays and Wednesdays (to be read nightly)
Letter formation booklet to be completed each Half Term
New words weekly
ICT: Mathletics/ literacy/numeracy link as appropriate
A fun reader goes home each Friday
Phonics and maths as appropriate

Prep 2: This is the second year at Foundation Stage and whilst the principle of homework remains the same in that it is given out on a Friday for the following Thursday, expectations are that homework starts to assume a slightly more significant arrangement. Time spent should be approximately 10-15 minutes.

Practices include:

New reader on Mondays and Wednesdays (to be read nightly)
A supplementary reader changed on completion
10 of first 200 high frequency words per week for sentence practice in Terms 1 & 2
Phonics and maths (differentiated work as appropriate)
Topic work - writing
ICT: numeracy/literacy link as appropriate & Mathletics
Spellings to learn in Term 3 with maths facts nightly

Prep 3: We are now at the beginning of Key Stage 1. For the first half of the academic year homework reflects Foundation Stage practices regarding the giving out of homework with a weekend for completion. For the rest of the year this changes to more set periods for homework to be due. We do this to start to bring children in line with practices needed in Prep 4 onwards to help prepare our children for both Key Stage 2 and transition. Extended times to allow for working parents over a weekend are available - please discuss this with the class teacher as the need arises. Some types of non-specific/non-differentiated work is also given in advance for forward planning purposes and to assist with busy home schedules. Children are expected to spend approximately 20 minutes on homework.

Practices include:

Monday - Thursday school reading books

Monday, Tuesday & Wednesday - differentiated spellings (6, 7 or 8) & number facts nightly for revision on Thursday prior to testing on Fridays
2 x open-ended investigation type maths homeworks per Half Term, given in advance with due dates for individual completion regarding assorted tasks
Occasional topic-based projects with longer time periods again given in advance with assorted due dates

Term 1:

General written homework given out on a Monday and back on the following Monday with examples of work including: maths topic-based; ICT on-line educational games work; Mathletics; and topic research

Terms 2 & 3:

Written homework is given out on Mondays and due back on Fridays, with extension over the weekend as per needs.

Examples of work include the same as Term 1 areas plus a short literacy based homework in preparation for work practices in Prep 4

Prep 4:

With the move to Loughead House to join Preps 5, 6 & 7, and in order to prepare for academic challenges ahead, as we are a Preparatory Department of a Grammar School, homework becomes more "time" factored. This is due to the need for differentiation in children's work and homework often depends on what has been accomplished by each child on a daily basis. Therefore, most written homework cannot be given in advance of children's learning, as happened previously in the Foundation Stage, as they have now become too specific. We also need children to do the homework for the next day so the teacher can best help with individual progress. Children are expected to spend approximately 30 minutes on homework.

Practices include:

Mondays: Spellings differentiated 6/8; number facts; reading; written task (*writing or grammar)

Tuesdays: Spellings; number facts; reading; written task (*maths)

Wednesdays: Spellings; number facts; reading; written task (*comprehension)

(*Written tasks in communication and maths are alternated weekly for balance of subjects)

Thursdays: Revision of week's spellings & number facts; & reading

New personal reading challenge monthly eg colour a country each time you read of 15 minutes

ICT homework set half termly (6 weeks in advance) with one allocated per week, returned each Monday

Mathletics activities set weekly

Prep 5:

We are now at the beginning of Key Stage 2 and core skills are being built upon. Therefore, parental support will be very significant in helping children to incrementally improve. Homework should take around 30 minutes. Reading plays a particularly significant part in children's lives and should be the additional aspect of homework time.

Practices include:

Mondays-Wednesdays: spellings differentiated 6/8; tables revision/ number facts

Mondays-Thursdays: reading 20 minutes per night

Mondays-Wednesdays: written homework each night taking approximately 20 minutes

Thursdays: revision of spellings and number facts for Friday test

ICT: Mathletics is ongoing year round

Personal reading log and Folens (mental maths) goes out on Mondays and should be returned on Fridays

Group reading tasks vary

Reading challenges operate throughout the year, replacing the personal reading log

Prep 6:

This is the year before children sit the AQE/GL testing for admission to Grammar Schools and, as we need to cover a considerable amount of work for such testing, there is an importance given to homework as a means of assisting this preparation. Homework, not counting reading, should be approximately 30 minutes. Children should target 120 minutes of free choice reading per week

Practices include:

Mondays - Wednesdays/Thursdays: Spellings & maths facts nightly for Friday testing

Tuesdays: Comprehension - given in advance where possible

Wednesdays: maths

Thursdays: grammar or World Around Us

Spelling workbook - one unit per fortnight (handed in at the end of the 2 weeks)

February - June: written homework may be given to keep children abreast of classwork, either in numeracy or literacy - short weekend homework also offered in this time frame

Prep 7:

Children sit their AQE/GL Transfer Tests in Term 1 with the following practices and suggestions to help with their individualised progress. Homework times will fluctuate depending on needs; 30-40 minutes would be a good average (not including reading):

Practices include:

Term 1:

Class novel reading set pieces nightly

Word meanings to build up vocabulary linked to class novel

Spellings and vocabulary

Assorted maths and literacy booklets, as per needs, set by two teachers with assorted deadlines

Term 2:

Weekly ICT research homework linked to WAU topic

Spellings and vocabulary activities

Weekly literacy writing task

Weekly mental arithmetic or problem solving tasks

Term 3:

Revision and study skills homework to encourage and develop skills needed for Y8 and beyond (following parental input re practices in the Prep which could be useful for Y8 work)

Rolling WAU project work over 6 weeks (class and home based)

Literacy homework linked to class novels

Spellings and linked vocabulary activities

Weekly mental arithmetic or problem solving tasks