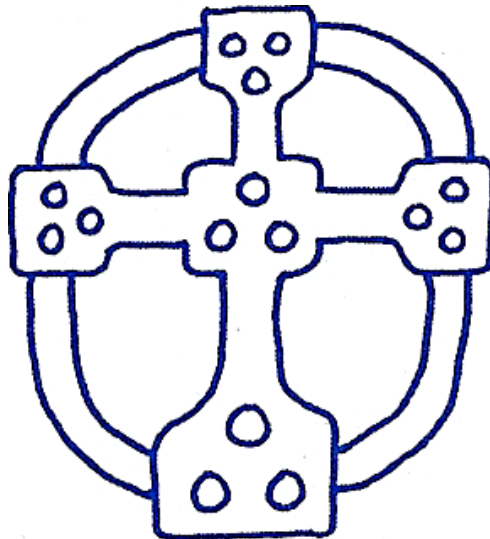


Newbigging Primary School



HOME LEARNING POLICY

Rationale

'Doing homework regularly throughout their time a school has roughly the same benefit as an extra year's schooling.' (SEED)

It is recognised that homework – or home learning – is a fundamental part of the school curriculum. In order for pupils to achieve the highest standards possible, a system for regular, planned homework must be in place. Homework is also integral to fostering a productive and active educational partnership between home and school. At Newbigging, we believe that when schools and families work together, children do better. Home learning is fundamental to promoting this relationship as it can:

- Help parents gain insight into their children's school work
- Provide an opportunity and context for pupil/parent interaction
- Encourage children to become more enthusiastic about their learning
- Develop self-discipline and good work habits
- Help children develop new skills and practise old ones
- Help parents gauge their children's progress

Aims

- To encourage ownership and responsibility for learning in all pupils
- To give parents clear guidance about how they can help and support their children with home learning
- To give encouragement and promote motivation for learning by providing regular, relevant, well-planned homework
- To encourage parents and pupils to understand how they learn and to give recognition for effort and work well done

Aims into Practice

In order for this home learning policy to be effective there has to be an open and collaborative relationship between all the stakeholders – parents, teachers and pupils. Each must be aware of their respective roles and responsibilities. Teachers, parents and pupils all need to work together towards their shared common goal. This mutually, supportive triangle needs to be sustained by frank and open communication. All parties also need to be aware of what others expect of them.

Teachers need to:

- Set home learning tasks that are of the right level and clearly related to area of study
- Mark home learning promptly and give appropriate feedback. This should include encouraging pupil self/peer evaluation
- Be explicit and consistent in informing pupils about what is expected in terms of quality and quantity

Parents need to:

- Know what the school expects of them
- Know what the school expects of their child
- Contact the school if they have any worries

Pupils need to:

- Know what is expected of them
- Ensure that they complete all home learning on time and that it is done to a high standard
- Ask for help if they are stuck or unsure what to do

Reading and spelling home learning will usually be recorded in each pupil's Homework Diary/Home-School Book. Other tasks will be recorded on the Home Learning Task Sheet (Appendix 1). This format gives clear information regarding the task itself and what is expected from pupils and parents. Both formats give clear indications of when home learning is to be completed.

Types of Home Learning

In Newbigging home learning can encompass a wide range of subjects and tasks. Some will be related to the age or stage the child is at, others may be connected to curriculum subject areas and some will cut across age or subject. Home learning can include:

- Reading/Language activities
- Math worksheets/textbook pages/activity tasks
- Spelling
- Practising tables/number bonds
- Social studies/science activities/research
- Expressive Arts/ RME tasks
- French vocabulary tasks

The tasks set vary in style – e.g. memorising, practising skills, writing, model making, preparing a talk/presentation etc..

Throughout each pupil's primary school career, reading and spelling will be consistently set for home learning. Details of how you can help your child's reading are given in the school's information booklets 'How You Can Help With Your Child's Reading'. These are distributed as each teacher considers appropriate. In the early years pupils will also be given phonics practice on a regular basis. During the first two/three years of primary education reading, phonics and spelling will form the main basis of home learning. This will be accompanied by practising number bonds as appropriate.

As each pupil progresses through the primary school the variety and depth of the tasks will increase. As appropriate, pupils will become increasingly involved in the content of their home learning tasks.

Amount of Home Learning

The amount of homework will increase as pupils progress through the school. The following is a general guide for time allocated to homework:

P1-2	approximately 15 minutes per night
P3-5	approximately 20 minutes per night
P6-7	approximately 30 minutes per night

As pupils progress through the school home learning tasks will be set over a longer period of time. Where homework is set on a weekly basis the suggested time allocation should be multiplied by 4 nights. To allow for busy lifestyles homework may be set over an entire week so that those families who wish to can utilise time at the weekend for completion of tasks.

If, at any time, parents or pupils have any concerns about completing home learning tasks on time they should contact the class teacher.

A Positive Approach

If home work is a chore, or becomes a subject of disagreement in the home, it will lessen rather than improve the pupil's desire to learn. The work children do at home needs to be valued by the teachers, parents and the pupils themselves. Praising effort and achievement for tasks completed at home is vital. Positive comments from teachers, parents and, where appropriate, peers should be encouraged.

In the event of homework not being handed in on a regular basis parents will be informed either by telephone or letter.

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Home learning Guidelines for Teachers

All staff at Newbigging recognise the importance of homework as part of the school curriculum. They believe that a consistent approach can:

- Encourage children to take ownership
- Consolidate work done in class
- Create channels for home-school dialogue
- Help children learn how to learn

The school expects that home learning will :

- Be set at the right level for pupils' abilities
- Be purposeful and relevant – when appropriate pupils should be actively involved in deciding content
- Cover a variety of curricular areas in order to sustain pupils' interest
- Ensure there is consistency of content, approach and pace
- Be marked/evaluated promptly either by the teacher or through the use of self/peer assessment, and pupils are given appropriate feedback

It is vital that pupils clearly understand what is expected of them. Therefore teachers must:

- Clearly explain home learning content and make sure pupils know what they have to do
- Ensure all pupils are aware of good practice e.g. neatness, title etc.
- Ensure all pupils know homework must be handed in on time

Teachers should use their own discretion when dealing with an occasional case of home learning tasks being incomplete or handed in late.

On occasions where pupils fail to complete class work in the allocated time, teachers may send this home to be completed. This will be in addition home learning tasks and should be clearly communicated to pupils.

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Home Learning Guidelines for Parents

Newbigging Primary School values the importance parents play in supporting children's learning.

It would really help if you:

- Make sure you know exactly what home learning tasks your child has been given. If you are in any doubt, please contact the school or, if it is well after school hours, try phoning a classmate from the same group
- Try to set aside a regular place and time for your child to do the home learning – e.g. after a snack when your child comes in from school or after your evening meal
- Try to make home learning a time when you work together with your child as an active partner. The atmosphere should be supportive
- Sense if your child is not coping or becoming distressed stop the home learning and contact the school the next day, explaining the difficulty
- When a task is complete feel free to point out any errors and allow children to correct their work
- Gently encourage the reading habit. When your child is reading a page of text ask what your child liked about it and share your thoughts. Express an interest in the books your child reads and take turns to read the passages
- Support your child with written work. Ask if there is anything puzzling and discuss difficulties with him/her
- Play word games, choose books together, support musical and sporting interests etc. – these forms of “home learning” are invaluable. Pupils may be encouraged to undertake mini topics at home if they finish homework quickly and are keen for more
- Contact the school if you have any concerns regarding home learning

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Home Learning Guidelines for Pupils

Teachers are aware of the responsibilities and pressures that some pupils have outside of school. We value the importance of extra-curricular activities and interests and understand that you may live very busy lives after school. In order to help you manage your home learning here are some helpful hints:

- ✓ Make sure you understand what it is you have to do. If you are unsure ask for help as soon as possible from your teacher or parent

- ✓ Try to find a time that suits you best to do your homework. It may be that you need a rest when you finish school, some children work best later in the evening, some like to get it finished straight away. It is best NOT to leave it to the last minute.

- ✓ Make sure you complete all your home learning tasks to the best of your ability. Put effort into the presentation of your work

- ✓ Share your homework with your parents – they will be interested in the work you are doing

- ✓ If you think you are not going to complete your home learning in time talk to your teacher and tell them as soon as possible. Try not to worry about home work – talk to your parents or teacher if you are unhappy about anything

- ✓ Try to do your tasks yourself, being independent is an important step in taking responsibility for your own learning