



## *St Peter's Methodist Primary School*

### Home Learning Policy

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# Home Learning Policy

## Context and Principles

Homework is an important part of the partnership between families and school and builds on children's learning in school. It allows parents/carers (referred to as parents throughout the rest of this document) to support and encourage their child's learning and should be a positive, encouraging experience. This policy has been written in conjunction with the pupils, staff and parents.

At St Peter's, children are expected to work hard during the school day and we maintain high expectations of involvement and achievement. We believe that it is equally important that our children have the time to involve themselves in a range of extra-curricular activities both in and out of school to develop their whole self. They also need time to relax and play.

Any work set by the school to be undertaken at home should therefore be manageable and allow children time to unwind, develop their own interests and hobbies and have fun.

## Aims and Objectives

- Further develop the existing partnership between school and home.
- Ensure children have sufficient opportunities to consolidate, reinforce and extend their skills and understanding.
- Encourage children to work independently and with confidence.

We expect that homework will be presented with as much care and to the same standard as would be expected in class work.

## Homework at St Peter's

**Reading** is the most crucial skill that a child develops and impacts on children's learning across the curriculum. A child who reads widely and with enthusiasm will also develop writing skills more easily and it is vital that children read regularly and with support at home. See appendix 1 for more information.

Younger children need to read to a parent on a regular daily basis. Older children should continue to read aloud to a parent until they are completely fluent and should also be expected to read independently with regular opportunities to discuss the text with a parent.

## Spellings

Pupils in Years 1-6 will have a spellings book in which they will have a list of spellings to learn, at a level appropriate for them, each week for the current term. They must return this book to school each Friday for a weekly test in the back of the book. Further guidance for helping children to learn their spellings is available on our website.

## Times Tables

Children will be told which times tables they are currently working on, and these need to be practised regularly at home. Further guidance for helping children to learn their times tables is available on our website.

## Topic

Each term, teachers will provide a wide range of suggested home learning ideas linked to the children's current topic. These will give the opportunity for learning across the curriculum and families can select tasks which most appeal to their child.

## **THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL**

Teachers send out a termly letter to parents in which they outline the topics to be covered in the term and the expectations for homework tasks. This information will also be available in the class pages area of the school website. Tasks will be appropriate for the ability of the child.

The class teacher will, as far as possible, ensure that children are clear about what they are expected to do at home, so that they are able to communicate this to the parent. This should encourage them to develop a sense of responsibility. If tasks set for work at home are not completed satisfactorily, teachers will discuss this with parents/carers to ensure that children are being given the best opportunity to progress.

The school library is usually open on a Thursday afternoon until 4pm with our Reading Lounge drop in club. Families may borrow books to support homework, browse and borrow from our selection of fiction and non-fiction books or discuss choice of books with our librarian. The children are also able to borrow books during the school day.

On the school website, there is a 'Home Learning' page for each class. We will keep this page updated with spelling lists and topic homework for the term. There is additional information for parents about how best to support their child's learning at home within the English and Maths sections of the class pages of the website.

## **THE ROLE OF PARENTS/CARERS**

Extensive research confirms the importance of parental support for learning. We know that children make the most progress when parents take an active role by spending time on reading each day and supporting and encouraging children to undertake homework to the best of their ability.

We expect parents to ensure that their child has sufficient time and a quiet work place to undertake homework, and to support him/her to understand homework tasks. Older children need to be encouraged to take responsibility for planning their time and working through tasks but may continue to benefit from some support and encouragement.

Children benefit enormously from being able to discuss their learning with an adult. This is not to suggest that parents should spend time altering or correcting their child's work but discussion about the task, how it went and how it might be improved, is beneficial. Positive, constructive comments enable children to develop a better understanding of the learning and raises self-esteem.

## Helping your child to read at home

### 1. Choose the right book using the "five-finger rule."

Have your child open the book to any page in the middle of the book and read that page. Each time she/he comes across a word that they do not know, ask them to hold up a finger. If she/he gets to five fingers before they finish reading the page, the book is too hard. If she/he doesn't hold up any fingers, the book is probably easily accessible for your child and can be used to build reading fluency. If she/he holds up two or three fingers, the book is likely to be at a good level for their reading to grow.

### 2. Use sound strategies to tackle a new word.

- Ask your child to sound out an unknown word. Look at the letters in a difficult word and have your child pronounce each sound, or phoneme. Then see if they can blend the sounds together to pronounce the word.
- Help your child memorise irregular words. In school we call these irregular words 'tricky words'. Explain that words like *where*, *hour*, or *sign* are hard to sound out since they don't follow normal sound patterns. Point these words out when you're reading to help your child learn to recognize them on their own.

### 3. Use the story to help your child learn.

- Ask your child what word or idea would make sense in the plot of the story when they get stuck on an unfamiliar word.
- Encourage your child to look at illustrations, pictures, titles, or graphs to figure out the meaning of new words.

### 4. Give support and encouragement.

- Challenge your child to figure out new words, but always supply the word before they become frustrated.
- After your child has read a story, reread it aloud yourself so that they can enjoy it without interruption.

## **5. Be a good role model.**

- Let your child see you reading, and share your excitement when you enjoy a great book of your own.

## **6. Make reading together a priority.**

- Whether it's 10 minutes every night before bed or an hour every Sunday morning, it helps to set aside a specific time for reading. This kind of special "together time" can go a long way toward getting your child interested in books.

## **7. Create the right atmosphere.**

- Find a quiet comfortable place to listen to your child read. While you don't need to build a special reading nook, it helps to ensure that, even in a busy home, there's a quiet place for reading.

## **8. Make reading fun.**

- Children may not get excited about the idea of quiet time spent curled up on the couch. Why not make it fun by turning reading sessions into impromptu theatre performances? Play around with funny voices to impersonate animals or unusual characters in stories. You'll get to release some tension, and your child will learn to think of reading as fun rather than work.

## **9. Keep reading aloud to your child.**

- Don't stop reading aloud to your child once she/he learns to read by herself. When you read to your child, you let them enjoy books that are beyond their independent reading level and build their vocabulary by exposing them to new words. Reading aloud is also a chance for you to model reading smoothly and with expression.

## **10. Introduce new books.**

- Each year there is one book that seems to steal the hearts and minds of all children. While it may seem like the only book your child wants to read, it's important to remember that there are millions of books that will suit your child's interests and capture his imagination. Our school librarian, your local library or bookshop can help you with ideas.