



**HILL OF FEARN PRIMARY SCHOOL**  
**HOMEWORK POLICY**

**March 09**

Research evidence shows that homework does have a positive effect on learning.

**"Where children were set homework, were encouraged by parents to do it and had it regularly marked in school there was a steady and consistent association between that and the level of performance."**

(Research carried out by Strathclyde University)

We recognise that in its broadest sense homework is any kind of learning which takes place out of school. However, for our purposes we will consider homework to be:

- ❖ Work set by teachers and completed at home in a given time.
- ❖ Work which reflects or develops class work and has clearly understood expectations regarding standards.

**AIMS**

Through setting homework we aim to:

- ❖ Encourage independence and good learning habits.
- ❖ Consolidate work taught in school and therefore raise attainment levels.
- ❖ Encourage and provide opportunities for parents to become involved in children's learning.

In addition we feel that homework will provide opportunities for:

- ❖ Assessing progress.
- ❖ Making use of a wider range of resources
- ❖ Building pupil confidence by discussion of work with parents.
- ❖ Providing for parents a specific learning activity in which they can closely participate with their children.

**MAIN FEATURES OF HOMEWORK TASKS**

The content of the task set may vary from stage to stage and at different times throughout a session but should always be:

- ❖ Explained by the teacher and clear expectations set as to standard and presentation of work
- ❖ Clearly understood by the pupil and closely related to ongoing class work.
- ❖ At an appropriate level of ability for the child.
- ❖ Reflect a variety of activities although generally concentrating on basic skills.
- ❖ Marked promptly with some feedback given.

Parents are encouraged to discuss homework tasks with class teachers and head teacher should any problems arise. The use of the homework diary to communicate between home and school can be used as a first step to support this.

**AT THE EARLY STAGES** typical tasks will be

- Discussion using pre reading books
- Reinforcing new words - often using a game
- Practising pages of reading
- Reinforcing sounds
- Practising writing
- Simple maths activities
- Finding out something or bringing in items for a class activity
- Spelling games.
- Reading for enjoyment

**AT MIDDLE STAGES AND UPPER STAGES** typical tasks will be:

- Reading for enjoyment - record kept up to date and used by child, parent and teacher
- Spelling games
- Reinforcement of maths e.g. tables, telling time
- Research e.g. gathering information for class project
- A variety of follow up work in all curricular areas, including topic related and current affairs research, book reviews, preparation for an individual presentation,.

Again research suggests that a variety of homework is given and the homework given over each week will reflect this. In the middle and upper stages homework will be given out at the start of the week to be returned by Friday. This should allow the children to develop the ability to organise and plan their homework around the other activities they take part in after school.

**SPELLING** - we are participating in the Highland Literacy Project which uses games for the learning of spelling words. Words will be given out near the start of the week with instructions for games to be played at home. These will be similar to the games which the children will play in school daily.

Spelling lists will consist of six words from a spelling scheme to teach letter patterns, two words from common word lists and two words which will be taken from each individual child's writing.

**READING** - in the early stages children will be practicing the reading which has been taught in school that day and clear instructions are given for this in the Highland Literacy Programme.

In the middle and upper stages children will be encouraged to read for enjoyment for a period of time each evening. In addition to this they may have work to do on their core reading book to support the work done in school. Again further information about this is available through the Highland Literacy Project.

**MATHS** - Maths homework will be given each week and will be largely used to reinforce work being done in school or to give extra practice. This may be in the form of a worksheet, a game or a page from a textbook.

**OTHER CURRICULAR AREAS** - in addition to reading, spelling and maths another piece of homework will be given each week. This may be based in any area of the curriculum and there should be a variety of tasks given.

Extra work may also be given, with the parent's agreement if a child has been ill or off school for some time and is anxious to catch up. Working with the pupil, parent and teacher there may be agreed extra work to develop a particular skill or to give extra practice if there is a stumbling block in learning.

### **FREQUENCY AND LENGTH OF TASKS**

We are conscious of the fact that many of our pupils are involved in activities in the evening which are valuable to their education and overall development and well being. Therefore, you should find that homework set should take no longer to complete than 15 to 20 minutes for the early stages including reading and 30 minutes for the middle stages and 30 - 45 minutes and upper stages per night, not including reading for enjoyment.

### **HOW CAN PARENTS SUPPORT OUR HOMEWORK POLICY**

1. By ensuring homework is done while your child is alert.
2. By trying to provide a calm atmosphere with as few distractions as possible.
3. By discussing the work with your child and working along with him/her, especially at the early stages.
4. By checking that the quality and presentation is of an acceptable standard and **signing** the homework diary, doing this personally and not delegating to older brothers and sisters. Using siblings to help is valuable but the final check should be with a parent or carer.
5. By noting in the homework diary if your child is struggling with tasks or is taking longer than expected to complete tasks
6. By discussing any problems arising from homework with the teacher or head teacher.
7. By extending the work when appropriate perhaps by supplying a relevant book, visiting the library, using the internet together or a place of interest connected with the work.

**ABOVE ALL BY SHOWING INTEREST AND PRAISING GOOD EFFORTS.**

### **HOW CAN TEACHERS SUPPORT OUR HOMEWORK POLICY**

1. By ensuring clear explanation of homework tasks and expectations in terms of standard and presentation
2. By making sure that the work set is relevant and appropriate to the ability of the child.
3. By using professional expertise to set interesting, stimulating and varied work.
4. By keeping a record of homework given to ensure a good variety and a balance across curricular areas
5. By ensuring that homework is marked promptly and that homework diaries are used as a communication tool for home and school.
6. By liaising effectively with pupils and parents about the content of the homework.

### **HOW CAN PUPILS SUPPORT OUR HOMEWORK POLICY**

1. By making sure they know what is expected of them before they leave the school at the end of the day.
2. By continuing to do their very best work at home as well as at school.

3. By talking and listening to their teacher and parent so that there are no confusions or worries or frustrations.

### **STANDARDS OF PRESENTATION**

We consider homework to be important and therefore expect it to be taken seriously by the pupils, staff and parents.

All written homework should be written neatly with headings underlined and work dated. If it is on a piece of paper the child's name should be clearly displayed. By signing the homework you are acknowledging the effort of your child and your satisfaction with the effort he or she has put into their homework.

Class teachers will remind pupils before leaving the school that homework should be in the bag, etc. A final question to make sure all know what they are doing for homework will be given.

We understand that home circumstances may make it impossible for work to be done occasionally. If this should arise please write a brief explanation, if appropriate, to the teacher in the homework diary or by convenient method for you.

We recognise that at times it may be difficult for a child to complete their homework and the reasons for this should be noted in the homework diary, however if this is a frequent occurrence then the following steps will be taken:

- ❖ The class teacher will emphasise why the work is being set and why it matters and may offer another chance to complete it at home.
- ❖ Pupil will be given the opportunity to complete homework at breaktime/lunchtime.
- ❖ Pupil *may* be asked to complete homework during Golden Time.
- ❖ If incidents are frequent the head teacher will discuss the matter with the pupil and appropriate action will be taken. Parents will be informed and asked to support the school by seeing that the work is done regularly.

### **SUGGESTED 20 MINUTES READING IN MIDDLE AND UPPER STAGES**

Pupils and parents should agree on suitable reading matter for the sustained 20 minute daily reading session.

Suggested reading materials:

- ❖ Novel / Non fiction book
- ❖ Newspaper
- ❖ Internet fact finding mission
- ❖ Magazine

Parents should oversee the reading and depending on the age and stage of the pupil hear a part of the book aloud to praise and encourage the child. All pupils should be asked about the reading for example, what has happened in the story tonight? What did you find out about sharks? Tell me more about the character in the story. Do you think the picture in the book matches with the author's description? etc.

We acknowledge that learning takes place through out our daily lives - at home, at school at play and in the environment. Our policy is for parents, staff and pupils to continue their learning and become confident individuals.

Developed through consultation with: pupils, Parent Council and staff March 2009