**Introduction**

The school policy for homework was developed and agreed by the whole staff and has taken account of parent consultation in July 2012. It has the full agreement of the Governing Body and was approved and ratified by the Governing Body during the Autumn Term 2012.

It will be reviewed on an annual basis.

**Aims**

Through this policy we aim to:

* Ensure that parents/carers are clear about what their child is expected to do.
* Ensure consistency of approach throughout the school.
* To use homework as a tool to help continue to raise standards and achievement.
* Improve the quality of the learning experience offered to pupils and to extend it beyond the classroom environment.
* Provide opportunities for parents/carers, children and the school to work together in partnership in relation to children’s learning.
* Encourage pupils and their parents/carers to share and enjoy learning experiences.
* Reinforce work covered in class by providing further opportunities for individual learning.
* To practise or consolidate basic skills and knowledge, especially in Numeracy and Literacy.
* Encourage children to develop the responsibility, confidence and self-discipline needed to study independently.
* To prepare Year 6 pupils for the transfer to secondary school.

**Rationale**

At Dowson we have chosen to create opportunities for children to self-direct some of their learning through homework by adopting a learning log methodology. This method of home learning has many positive features which ignite children’s enthusiasm and intrigue for topics and allows them to take their learning in a direction which interests them. Through these project style tasks, they will have opportunity to practise the many skills of research, selection and presentation as well as being creative.

The basic idea of a learning log is that the children are given a two page spread in their books to cover the theme given. They can extend this space with fold outs, pop ups, pockets etc. as much as they want and in any creative way they choose. Pictures, diagrams, tables and charts can be included alongside the text that they write or print out (although we discourage just lots of printed text from internet searches!)

Whilst the learning log style of homework fosters a love for learning and subject areas / themes and allows children time to practise and apply key skills, we recognise the vital importance of ‘the basics’ in contributing to and in fact underpinning the whole of children’s achievement. Therefore children also have spellings and number facts for quick recall set as part of their homework cycle and the expectation is that they learn these by heart; they are tested as part of the cycle as a method of checking their learning success but teachers also look out for the application of these skills in day to day lessons in order to ensure they are secure.

We also recognise that Learning Logs require a lot more parental support for younger children whereas we would expect the older children to become increasingly more independent with their learning in preparation for High School. Therefore, the type and nature of homework changes as the children travel through the school.

**The Homework Cycle**

The homework cycle at Dowson Primary School will usually be 3 weeks. This will consist of a two week period in which children will be set, complete and hand in their homework tasks. The third week will be a chance for teachers to test any facts or spellings set and also to mark the homework tasks or learning log and where learning log is the homework, share these with the children’s peers for their appreciation, reflection and comments which we consider an important part of the learning process. A feedback sheet will then be completed, including test scores and comments regarding the tasks / logs. This will then be stuck in the children’s books along with their next homework tasks. Homework through this cycle will always be set on and due in on a Friday wherever possible.

In addition to the homework cycle, children of all ages are expected to read daily. Younger children should be supported by reading aloud to and discussing their books with an adult. Older children should still have opportunities to read aloud to an adult regularly but they are also expected to read silently for sustained periods of time independently and with longer texts. As part of reading practice, children, particularly in Foundation Stage and Key Stage One, may be sent home with flashcards containing key words for them to learn by sight.

Finally, in the later stages of Key Stage 2 – and in particular Year 6 – there may be times when children are given homework in addition to their learning log. This could be additional reading for research, a Literacy or numeracy based task for further consolidation of classroom learning or homework linked to intervention groups or revision for end of Key Stage tests. The duration for these tasks will be set by the adult issuing them but would usually be more than one night. It is crucial that children at this age learn to take responsibility for their homework and additional tasks and deadlines in order that they begin to prepare for homework of this nature at High School.

**Homework Tasks**

Listed below, for each year group of Dowson Primary School, is an outline of the homework that will be set and activities that this might include. This is by no means an exhaustive list and is open to constant change depending on the needs of the class or individuals, although many of these tasks and activities will be used on a regular basis. All homework tasks and activities will have a clear purpose and assist pupils in the process of their academic development. It is expected that key facts for recall are kept ‘on the boil’ once learned in order that they remain secure.

All year groups have relevant spellings to their learning stage and key number facts to learn in every cycle. These are tested as part of the cycle and fed back to parents/carers.

**In addition to this:**

* Reception and Year 1 – letter or number formation practice, writing a piece of ‘News’ each cycle
* Years 2 and 3 - 1 learning log per half term and other cycle(s) to have activities with a sentence structure, punctuation, grammar, reading comprehension and/or maths calculation focus.
* Years 4 and 5 – 2 learning logs per half term and teachers can select if/when to add activities with a sentence structure, punctuation, grammar reading comprehension and/or maths calculation focus.
* Year 6 - As Years 4 and 5 but with additional activities with specific SATS foci and revision as and when necessary and with varying lengths of deadline.

**The Role of the School Staff**

* To provide an explanation of homework tasks to parents/carers when necessary and give guidance of how they might assist their child. This will be done through the homework setting sheet where there is space for guidance and examples.
* To ensure that homework is set consistently using the cycle and guidance set out in this policy.
* To ensure any homework is purposeful and links directly to the curriculum being taught.
* To reward and praise children who regularly complete homework tasks.
* Provide a homework club for children who wish or need to use it.
* To guide children who may not be completing homework or need support / quiet space for their learning, to use the homework club that school provides.
* To expect children to complete unfinished homework during play or lunchtimes and ensure they communicate this with parents/carers.
* To test the spellings and maths facts that the children were expected to learn.
* To mark homework and provide time for pupils to share their learning logs.
* Give feedback to pupils including test scores and with a balance of what is done well in the homework and what could be improved.
* Liaise with parents/carers and / or SLT where there are concerns regarding a child’s homework.

**Role of the Head Teacher and Governing Body**

* To check compliance of the Policy.
* To meet and talk with parents/carers when appropriate.
* To discuss with staff how far the policy is being successfully implemented.
* Inform new parents/carers to the school so that they are aware of the home/school agreement and what it entails.

**Role of Parents/carers/Carers**

* To sign a home school agreement dealing with homework.
* To support the school by ensuring that their child attempts the homework.
* To provide a suitable place for their child to carry out their homework.
* To encourage and praise their child when they have completed their homework.
* To encourage their child to read regularly from a range of fiction and non-fiction texts and listen to them read regularly – daily wherever possible – particularly for younger year groups.
* To become actively involved and support their child with homework activities.
* To make it clear that they value homework and they support the school by explaining how it can help learning.
* To liaise with school regarding their child’s homework or any concerns they have.

At Dowson Primary School we are very keen for parents/carers to support and help their children with homework. We take the view that children are likely to get more out of an activity if parents/carers get involved as long as they do not take over too much. As stated earlier in the policy, there are times when we will want to see what children can do on their own. It is particularly important, as they get older, for children to become increasingly independent in their learning. If a parent is unsure about what their role should be, they should discuss it with their child's teacher.

**General**

* Homework is not given during holiday time. However, it is expected that children continue to read regularly and keep ‘on the boil’ number facts and other key skills learned during the term or year so far.
* If children are absent due to illness we will not send homework home. We would assume the child was too ill to work.
* If a child is absent for a length of time e.g. with a broken leg, the teacher and the parent will agree what should be done, how it should be marked and what sort of help needs to be given. **In such circumstances the teacher should consult the** **Head Teacher first.**
* It is not possible to give homework when parents/carers take holidays in term time.
* Parents/carers/Carers who have queries about homework should not hesitate to make an appointment to see their child’s class teacher.

Set October 2012

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