

Homework Policy

Published: Summer 2023
Review Date: Summer 2024

Aims

This policy aims to:

- Develop a consistent approach to homework throughout the school.
- Make sure that teaching staff, parents and pupils are aware of their responsibilities with regards to homework.
- Ensure that parents understand what is expected of their child.
- Encourage pupils to develop the responsibility and self-discipline required for independent study.
- Embed knowledge and support pupils' learning experiences
- Work with parents and involve them in their child's learning and to keep them informed about the work their child is undertaking.
- Use homework as a tool for raising standards of attainment.
- Extend learning beyond the classroom.
- Give pupils further practise and a deeper understanding of skills, knowledge and concepts learned during the school day.

Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant statutory and good practice guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- DfE (2019) 'Ways to reduce workload in your school(s)'
- Ofsted (2022) 'School inspection handbook'
- Ofsted (2022) 'School monitoring handbook'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Marking and Feedback Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy

Policy

At St James, we have a consistent whole school approach to homework. It is an expectation that our homework policy will be supported by parents and teachers.

We believe that homework should be enjoyable and manageable for all concerned and should reinforce key learning from the classroom, but also allow children to approach learning in their own creative way. This policy reflects both current research on effective homework and responds to pupil and parent views on homework. It aims to address the difficulties with homework raised by parents in our survey completed in January 2023.

Pre-learning, retrieval and independent practice are key elements of our homework policy as this will extend the children's knowledge of the curriculum whilst increasing the children's confidence. Children will be encouraged to recall learning and apply in different contexts across the curriculum.

At the heart of our policy is reading. Reading is the key to success in all curriculum areas. This policy aims to prioritise reading as a daily part of routine to inspire lifelong readers and lifelong learners. As part of this, the reading pledge will be an integral part of the homework system. Children will be expected to read at home, or share a book with an adult, at least 5 times a week.

We believe that technology is very powerful in engaging learners so a percentage of our homework set weekly will be completed online. Research suggests that homework involving digital technology can have a greater impact on children's progress (+6 months progress) and that homework linked to classwork, with instant feedback, is most effective (EEF,2021). Through the introduction of two programmes for English and Maths we aim to provide children with opportunities at home to retrieve knowledge and reinforce learning from the classroom, deepening their understanding. When setting this policy we have considered the research into screen time and have chosen programs that are proven to be highly effective with as little as 10 minutes practice a day.

We are also prioritising the importance of spellings and handwriting in children's progress. Through weekly spelling and handwriting practice, differentiated across the school to allow children to be challenged, we believe that children will develop their skills of spelling in context.

We believe that it is important to give the children the opportunity to shine across the curriculum and value all curriculum areas. Children will therefore have a termly project, which will allow children to creatively present additional learning from across the curriculum. These will be set on the year group newsletter along with additional vocabulary. These tasks will give the children opportunities to learn in different ways and share positive learning experiences with their family. Examples of this may include: Growing a seed and creating a seed diary, completing a traffic survey on their road, baking using measures, creating a sculpture, researching artists and musicians.

Homework to suit all levels and abilities

The interactive homework programs use adaptive technology to respond to the children's strengths and areas to improve, personalising the learning journey through the work. Teachers may also set targeted work for children to complete based on school work.

Pupils identified with Special Educational Needs

Our homework policy keeps children who have Special Educational Needs in mind. By setting homework to be completed over the week, children and families can break tasks into manageable steps, complete in shorter more frequent sessions and ensure that homework is completed at the optimum time for the child. The interactive learning programs ensure that children are accessing activities suited to their strengths and areas for improvement.

Online Platforms

We have carefully selected platforms to be able to support our children with the learning and our curriculum. For creative homework, where children have produced digital presentations, these can be submitted through the Google Classroom Learning Platform.

Increasing expectations to prepare for next stage of education

In preparation for Secondary School, where homework demands increase significantly, our expectations of time spent on each activity increases for both Year 5 and Year 6. We have drawn on popular electronic resources to support us in this, along with providing the children with weekly mental arithmetic questions to complete to show they are developing their understanding of what they read.

In Year 5 and 6 we see the additional purpose for homework is to encourage children to develop the responsibility, confidence and self-discipline to study independently. Our aim is to encourage and support the children to become more independent in their learning and to develop their time management and organisational skills as they take responsibility for ensuring that their homework is completed on a timely basis and to the best of their ability.

Whole school expectations

As a staff, we will ensure consistency on the setting and collection of homework, bearing in mind that many parents prefer to have the option to complete this with their child over the weekend.

Parents will be given a half termly overview of the spelling rules or words along with the handwriting policy.

Children will be expected to hand in a book with these spellings written either in a list, a sentence, a paragraph or a short story, depending on stage of development. The handwriting policy will be shared with parents and we will encourage children to write in their best handwriting for this exercise.

It will be the expectation that handwriting will be joined and cursive in KS2, following our handwriting policy, except where specific need adjustment has been discussed with parents.

Monitoring of homework

All teachers will monitor homework weekly by either collecting in books (spelling and reading diaries) or by monitoring the children's performance on our online platforms. Any problems with the homework will be addressed with the child in school and support will be put in place if needed.

The time requirements for each year group are stated in the table below:

Reception and KS1

	Reading Requirement St James Reading Pledge. Please ensure you record your child's home reading in their reading record book	Phonics	Online Number work	Maths Retrieval work to support learning	Spelling and Handwriting	Termly creative project
Reception	10 minutes of book sharing five times a week.	Little Wandle support sheet				
Year 1	10 minutes five times a week reading or sharing a book with an adult	Little Wandle sheet	10 minutes 2 times a week on Numbots		Words can be written in their spelling homework book.	30 minutes over the term
Year 2	15 minutes reading five times a week or sharing a book with an adult		5 minutes 2 times a week on Numbots	Doodle Maths 10 minutes two times a week.	Children should return their spelling book every week with their spellings written out in sentences	30 minutes over the term This can be presented to the class on paper or electronically through a google classroom upload.

KS2 – Year 3 -4

	Reading	Online Times tables practice	Maths Retrieval work to support learning	Spelling and Handwriting	English	Termly creative project
Year 3	15 minutes reading five times a week.	5 minutes 2 times a week on Times tables Rockstars	10 minutes 2 times a week on Doodle Maths	Children should return their spelling book every week with their spellings written out in sentences	10 minutes 2 times a week on Doodle Spelling / English	45 minutes over the term This can be presented to the class on paper or electronically through a google classroom upload.
Year 4	15 minutes reading five times a week.	5 minutes daily on Times tables Rockstars	10 minutes 2 times a week on Doodle Maths	Children should return their spelling book every week with their spellings written out in sentences	10 minutes 2 times a week on Doodle English	45 minutes over the term This can be presented to the class on paper or electronically through a google classroom upload.

KS2 – Year 5 and 6

	Reading	Online Times tables practice	Maths Retrieval work to support learning	English	Spelling and Handwriting	Termly creative project linked to the wider curriculum
Year 5	15 minutes reading five times a week.	5 minutes 2 times a week on Times tables Rockstars	10 minutes 2 times a week on Century Maths Mental Arithmetic practice 15 minutes	10 minutes 2 times a week on Century English	Children should return their spelling book every week with their spellings written out in a short story or paragraph	1 hour over the term This can be presented to the class on paper or electronically through a google classroom upload.
Year 6	20 minutes reading five times a week.	5 minutes 2 times a week on Times tables Rockstars	15 minutes 2 times a week on Century Maths Mental Arithmetic practice 15 minutes	10 minutes 2 times a week on Century English	Reading comprehension pathway on Century	1 hour over the term This can be presented to the class on paper or electronically through a google classroom upload.

Responding to incomplete homework

We do expect parents to support us with the homework expectation. Appendix 2 outlines other ways in which parents can support children with their learning at home.

If children do not complete their homework, we will implement a tiered approach:

- On the first occasion, we will provide a verbal reminder to the child and explore reasons why this has not been completed.
- On the second consecutive occasion, we will send a reminder text to parents to notify them that homework is not being completed.
- On the third consecutive occasion, we will send a written letter to parents outlining the positive impact that homework can have (See appendix 1)

If there is still no improvement, the class teacher will ask to have a meeting with the parent to consider any support we can put in place to encourage the completion of homework at home.

Support to complete the homework

At St James we believe it is important that all children participate in homework as it provides opportunity to over-learn, reinforce and recall learning which is used throughout the curriculum. If a child is facing challenges with the engagement with homework it is important to raise this with their class teacher who can support and consider reasonable adjustments.

To assist with the completion of homework, parents are encouraged to contact the school if their child does not have a device that can be used. School may be able to provide a device to help. We have selected programmes that are compatible with mobile phone and iPad.

Some year groups may provide weekly homework clubs, which will be optional for children to attend. Sunset Club will also have access to computer technology where children can complete their online learning if they choose to do so.

Feedback to Homework

Research reports that children require instant feedback on successes to have the most effective learning. The online platforms that we have chosen not only feedback to the children directly, but use adaptive technology to adapt the learning journey to prompt children to recover the skills that they are less confident with. They also report to teachers so in class support can be given.

In terms of the spelling and handwriting exercise, the children will bring these books in weekly and a member of the teacher team will mark these. Children in Year 2 and KS2 will also have a dictation exercise every two – three weeks, which will allow the children to use what they have learnt in context.

Topic homework can be handed in to the teacher in paper form, or submitted through our online platform Google Classroom. Children will have an opportunity to present these to the class.

Responsibilities

The Headteacher and governing board will be responsible for:

- Monitoring the effectiveness of this policy.
- Reviewing this policy annually and making appropriate updates as required.
- Discussing with staff the extent to which this policy is being implemented.
- Providing parents with information about homework.
- Informing new parents about this policy.
- Monitoring the effectiveness of inclusivity and accessibility of homework.

Teachers will be responsible for:

- Setting homework that is appropriate to pupils' abilities.
- Monitoring homework regularly and making sure pupils are completing it.
- Communicating with parents if there is a problem regarding homework.
- Ensuring homework takes equal opportunities into account and that the needs of pupils with disabilities are considered.
- Rewarding quality work and praising pupils who regularly complete homework.

Parents will be responsible for:

- Supporting and encouraging their child with regards to completing homework.
- Becoming involved in their child's homework and encouraging their child to have a positive attitude towards it.
- Making sure that their child completes homework.
- Providing suitable conditions and resources for their child to complete homework.
- Informing teachers of any issues that may arise and co-operating with the school to find a solution.

Pupils will be responsible for:

- Taking responsibility for their own learning (where appropriate)
- Having a positive approach towards homework.
- Putting the same effort into homework as class work.
- Ensuring that they have everything they need to complete homework.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Headteacher.

Appendix 1



Dear Parent/ Carer of _____,

We are writing to you to inform you that following our text message sent on the _____, (Child's name)has still not completed their homework for three consecutive weeks.

Regular practice can help children transfer learning to long term memory, boosting academic progress. Research shows that completing their homework, which links to their classwork, could boost progress by up to 6 months. We would very much like your support by encouraging (child's name) to complete their homework at home.

If there are any connection or accessibility issues preventing (child's name) from accessing the online platforms, please do let us know as school may be able to help.

We appreciate your support in the matter.

Kind regards,

Classteacher

Appendix 2

How you can help your child with their homework

Below is a list of ways that you as a parent can show your child that you value their homework and the time and effort spent completing it. The school will also provide clear and regular reminders of our expectation when it comes to homework. As a school we hope that you will find this guidance helpful in supporting your child fully with their homework.

Reading

Regular reading at home, especially reading with parents, should be encouraged. We feel passionately that the most significant thing that you, as parents, can do to support your child's learning is to share books with them on a regular basis. By this we mean reading to your child, listening to your child read and talking about what you are reading. As adults, we are all reading role models – there is lots of evidence that children seeing their parents and adults around them read is a powerful factor in encouraging them to read more frequently.

Early exposure to language is the greatest factor in language development and learning to read. By reading together every day, you stimulate and strengthen your child's language and literacy skills. It is that simple. By reading and talking with your child each day, you bond with them and model the love of reading, which will benefit them in school and throughout life.

Reading Research

Reading builds brains, fostering early learning and creating connections in the brain that promote language, cognitive, and social and emotional development. By reading with your child, you also help cultivate a lasting love of reading. Decades of early literacy research, provide convincing evidence that the interactions young children enjoy at home with their caregivers, especially conversation and hearing stories read aloud specifically play a significant role in academic success and beyond. (www.scholastic.com)

Keep on Reading

While parents have a tendency to stop reading with their children once they read independently, these are the years to continue reading! As you read together, you bond with your child, and help build his or her vocabulary

Engaging Reading

Reading with your children isn't just about reading what's written on the page. By using dramatic voices, pointing to different pictures on the page, and asking your child to predict what will happen next, you're engaging them on many different levels.

Other Homework Support

You can show you value your child's homework by:

- providing a suitable place in which your child can do their homework, preferably with an adult to discuss, encourage and support
- making it clear to your child that you value homework and support the school in explaining how it can help learning
- encouraging your child and praising them when they have completed work set
- signing and dating your child's completed homework to show that it is a true reflection of their best efforts
- ensuring work is complete and returned to school on time
- checking your child spends a suitable amount of time on homework

Additionally, you can support your child's development by:

- visits to libraries, museums etc.
- cooking with them
- taking your child swimming
- playing games, e.g. board games, cards, ball games
- watching informative TV programmes together
- providing opportunities for craft activities, e.g. cutting, sticking, sewing, painting etc.
- gardening and growing plants
- using the internet to research something with your child (following guidelines for safe internet use)
- talking to your child about schoolwork, their day, what they have been learning about and how they have been learning

Remember: Homework is about reinforcing, practicing and confidence building. Enthusing your child about undertaking homework and modelling the high value of homework to them is of key importance. Make it fun!