

ST TIERNEY'S PRIMARY SCHOOL ROSLEA



HOMework POLICY

What is homework?

In St Tierney's we define homework as any activities which pupils are asked to do outside lesson time, either on their own or with parental support. Homework presents an excellent opportunity for parents to become active partners in supporting learning.

Why do we give homework?

There are a number of important reasons why homework is given.

Homework:

- Is an active and practical way for parents to be involved in their children's learning.
- Allows children an opportunity to reinforce, practice and / or consolidate work introduced in school.
- Helps children to work independently and develop responsibility for their work.
- Facilitates the means of developing research skills and the use of resources which exist beyond the school environment.
- Allows children to engage with their parents in a range of activities.
- Facilitates the development of an effective partnership between teachers, parents and children.

Expectations

- Homework will be differentiated, where necessary, taking into account the range of pupil capabilities in order to provide an appropriate challenge for individual children.
- Each child will have a structured nightly homework.
- Homework for pupils with Special Educational Needs will reflect the different needs and abilities.
- Homework will be clearly explained to children.
- Homework will have a clear focus.
- Pupils will be expected to complete their homework.
- Pupils will check over their homework and where necessary will self-correct.
- Parents are asked to provide a brief written explanation if homework has not been completed for any reason.
- All homework will be marked.
- Children will get written or oral feedback on their work, to help them to improve.

A child who does not complete their homework in full, without explanation from the parent, may be given the homework again during school time receive homework again on the next night. Parents will be informed if there is a persistent failure to complete homework.

Types of homework?

Talking & Listening/Reading

Talking and Listening is perhaps the most important part of English and as a skill comes before Reading and Writing. Please encourage your child to discuss with you what he/she has done at school during the day.

Reading is an essential part of homework and is necessary way of broadening a child's understanding; knowledge and vocabulary. Homework will promote reading for enjoyment and the development of independent reading skills.

Parents can encourage the development of children's reading by;

- Reading to their children, reading with their children and listening to their children read.
- Ensuring your child has their reading up-to-date as outlined in their Reading Schedule.
- Listening to their reading and discussing it with them.
- Taking them to the library and ensuring they have a variety of reading texts, for example, comics, magazines, newspapers, novels, non-fiction etc.

Reading in the Foundation Stage (P1 & 2) & Key stage 1 (P3/4)

Children will be taught their reading book in class and the book will then be sent home.

Parents should read / discuss the book with their child and follow any activities given to the book.

Reading in Key Stage 2 (P5 -7)

By Key Stage 2 the majority of children will have become independent readers and will not need the same one-to-one teacher time. However, Guided Reading sessions will still take place with the teacher in school and close observation of their reading will still be required.

Supplementary Reading Books

Children from P1-4 may receive supplementary reading books, additional to their main reading book, which is levelled to their ability and encourages independent reading.

Accelerated Reading

Children from Primary 3 onwards will all be registered to take part in the Accelerated Reading Programme. Children will choose a book matched to their ability from our accelerated reading library and complete a quiz on the book when they have read it. The programme will calculate your child's progress and move them up reading levels when deemed necessary by the programme.

Extra Reading Material

Library Books: Children will be able to access a wide range of fiction and non-fiction material from their school library and mobile library.

We aim to maximise the amount your child reads.

Spellings

Spellings are also an essential part of homework. The peace and quiet of home is an opportunity for children to get the time to learn their spellings. Each child will have a variety of spelling activities to complete each week which are aimed at helping the children learn their spellings. The main activity is the LOOK, COVER, SAY, WRITE and CHECK (LCSWC method.)

Help your Child to Spell

For each spelling look at it, then say the word and each letter, then cover it, then write it and then check it.

Spellings will be taught in school as part of our Linguistic Phonic Programme.

1. Children from Primary Two onwards will learn spellings. Each day the children will learn the spellings during class time, as part of the Linguistic Programme, with reinforcement and related activities for homework.
2. Parents should use the LOOK, COVER, SAY, WRITE, CHECK method to reinforce spellings with their children as above.
3. The class teacher will record how well each child has grasped the spellings in an informal way - games, orally, whiteboard throughout the week etc.
4. There will also be a formal weekly spelling test from Primary 2 - 7 which will be sent home for parents to sign.

Multiplication Tables and Mental Maths

Children from Primary 2 onwards will receive a Mental Maths target for the week. This may include Times Tables, Problem Solving activities or other elements of Mental Maths. It is essential that these are learned and re-inforced at home on a nightly basis for consolidation.

There will be also a weekly Mental Maths Test from Primary 2-7 which will be sent home for parents to sign.

Mathletics

All pupils from P1 onwards will also be registered for our Mathletics Programme. Children will be expected to complete some Mathletics for homework. The Mathletics Programme will provide students with access to relevant content that will reinforce their mathematical learning. Activities, challenges and content are regularly updated always has something new to learn and fun to do to support learning at home.

Written homework

Written homework is based on work already covered in school. All written homework should be neatly presented and be of a similar standard to that acceptable in school.

Active Learning: In light of the Northern Ireland Curriculum some homework may not be written. Pupils may be required to research topics or bring in items for class discussions or investigations e.g. cuttings from magazines, photographs etc.

As your children progresses through the school they are encouraged to work as independently as possible. In the foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 we expect children will require much help and assistance but this should lessen as the child matures.

A more detailed explanation of homework for the different classes will be given at the Curriculum Information Evenings at the beginning of the academic year.

Grow in Love

Grow In Love is the Religious Education series followed by our school in line with Catholic Teaching. The *Grow in Love* programme contains stories, poems, art, drama and music activities all designed to help your child to learn about God. We want and need you to be part of this learning. From P1-4 your child's *Grow in Love* book is laid out in such a way that there are two pages to be completed each week. Your child will do one of these in school, and you are invited to do the other one with your child at home. KS2 should also include thematic aspects of the *Grow In Love* programme as regular homework activities.

Time Spent on Homework

Although homework is set regularly from the Foundation Stage to P.7, the amount and frequency of homework increases as a child gets older. As an overview, weekly homework activities will/may include: Spellings/Word Practice/Mental Maths/written Literacy and Numeracy activities/Practical learning/Topic or Project work/Grow in Love.

Homework should not cause undue stress to the child, family or the teacher. If parents/guardians have any concerns they should not hesitate to contact the school. Likewise, if an occurrence in the child's home life is preventing homework being completed the school should be made aware of this as soon as possible.

It is suggested that the time spent on homework should be:

- Primary 1 15 - 20 minutes
- Primary 2 15 - 20 minutes
- Primary 3 20 - 30 minutes
- Primary 4 20 - 30 minutes
- Primary 5 30 - 40 minutes
- Primary 6 45 - 60 minutes
- Primary 7 45 - 60 minutes

Recording of Weekly Homework:

Children from P.1 - P.2 are given a homework folder that will contain phonics, high frequency words, reading activities and their nightly homework.

P.3 - P.7 children's homework is recorded in Homework Diaries supplied by the school. These should be signed by parents weekly when homework is completed. Parents should also utilise the "comment" box as another means of communicating directly with the class teacher therefore creates a channel for home-school dialogue. Children are also encouraged to reflect on their learning and record this in their Homework diaries.

Uncompleted Homework:

A child who does not complete their homework in full without explanation from the parent, may be given the homework again during school time or receive homework again on the next night. Parents will be informed if there is a persistent failure to complete homework.

Remember:

- Some children will finish homework quickly while others may require more time. Please encourage those children who are finished quickly to check over their work and if necessary to self-correct. They should then read their library book or reading book.
- If your child is spending too long on homework, please note this on the homework and sign and reassure your child that he / she had completed enough. Each teacher will monitor this and reduce homework if required.
- If for some reason homework cannot be completed, please provide a brief written explanation in the child's homework book or send a note to the class teacher.
- Show an interest in what your child is doing.
- Ask your child to tell you what homework he / she has to do.
- Encourage your child to check over the homework and help your child to present the homework well.
- Praise your child, read stories with your child and listen to your child reading.

Homework and Holidays:

We do not set children homework during school holidays but encourage children to read as much as they can and participate in the reading Challenge which is hosted in local libraries.

Inclusion:

All children have equal access and inclusive rights to the curriculum regardless of their gender, race, disability or ability. It is important that children of all abilities are set appropriate homework. While it is important for SEN pupils to do as much in common with other children, at times they will benefit from weekly homework activities being differentiated according to children's ability. If the completion of a piece of homework is difficult due to home circumstances, parents/guardians or children are encouraged to inform the class teacher so that the school will attempt to make available time or whatever other resources are required to assist the child to complete the task during the school day. An example of this occurring is when a child cannot access the Internet at home for research. St. Tierney's P.S. is committed to creating a climate within which everyone achieves their full potential.

Homework in the context of Covid-19:

Having learned from a parent survey on families' experiences of lockdown and our use of online learning, we have implemented online platforms for homework which will run alongside prepared homeworks, specific to class and pupil ability. Teachers will communicate key weekly homework tasks via Seesaw or Google Classroom depending on the children's class and completed homeworks can be submitted through the same platform.

We will work with families who may be struggling with facilitating online homework and may benefit from the loan of computer hardware to allow pupils to access tasks and teacher instruction.

The main focus of written homework during Covid-19 will be weekly phonics, mental maths, comprehension and Grow in Love. Research and project work on topics may also form part of home learning. Weekly activities will be set through our whole school online Mathletics platform.

Pupils may also access Accelerated Reader quizzes at home during this time.

In line with DE Guidance and school risk assessments, homework packs will not be transported to and from school. They should remain at home for weekly use as directed by the class teacher.

It has been agreed that in addition to homework packs, Guided Reading texts will be issued weekly. These may be from a reading scheme or an Accelerated Reader text depending on class and ability. Texts will be sent home on a Monday and should be returned on a Thursday so that they can be quarantined for 72 hours before being reissued for use by other pupils the following Monday.

In our present Covid circumstances, feedback is not as straight forward as before. For example, it will not be possible to correct all phonics and mental maths completed in the homework packs but these will be assessed through Friday class quizzes.

Teachers will endeavor to acknowledge comprehension and other homeworks submitted and provide a level of feedback, however it is essential that parents monitor homework for corrections before submitting it to the teacher.

It is expected that homework should be completed. If for any reason homework or an element of it is not completed, a message should be sent to the teacher over the online platform being used to explain or to identify a barrier that may have become apparent.

This policy will be monitored and reviewed bi-annually.