



HOMEWORK POLICY

Introduction

At Greenside we believe that learning at home as well as at school is an essential part of our pupils' education. We endeavour to enlist the support of parents to continue their children's educational programmes at home, particularly to develop effective communication or when the management of challenging behaviour is a priority. Some pupils may be given conventional homework tasks while others may be developing more personal and social routines. Every attempt is made to collaborate with parents to ensure that tasks are appropriate, feasible and enjoyable.

For the purpose of this policy, "homework", is defined as any work or activities which students are asked to do outside lesson time, either on their own or with parents or carers. Whatever the activity, homework should be an enjoyable experience that does not place pressure on the student or the family.

THE PURPOSE OF HOMEWORK

Homework is seen as the process of facilitating students with more complex needs in maximizing their family participation and accessing activities appropriate to their peers.

Homework at Greenside School aims to:

- consolidate and reinforce skills that are worked on in the classes.
- enhance the partnership with parents or carers, involving them actively in their pupil's learning.
- generalise and reinforce skills that are worked on across the curriculum
- increases pupils' participation in the family unit.
- encourage pupils' to develop the self confidence and self discipline needed to study on their own.
- develop a partnership with parents or carers, involving them actively in the children's learning.

HOMEWORK CONTENT

Homework may involve the following:

- Implementing learning targets set in pupil's Individual Education Plans (IEPs) at home and within the community.
- Use of reward programmes to reinforce and encourage students.
- Discussion of behaviour strategies that can be employed in the home setting to alleviate specific difficulties.
- The use of visual cues at home to increase communication and interaction.
- Visiting the same community resources as school to participate as a family and to generalise skills developed at school.
- Reflecting on work completed by the student at school in the home setting, through completed work sent home.
- Using similar activities to those employed at school to enhance curriculum areas such as literacy and numeracy on a practical level.
- Development of self help skills.
- Academic workbook activities which have been initiated at school.

Parents are encouraged to be actively involved in the learning process and activities used at school to promote learning are shared with the parents at conferences as well as at informal meetings. These may involve the use of visual schedules to support home activities. Parents may also have involvement from our Family Support Team or the Communication Therapist, as well as the class teacher and Learning Support Assistants. Class teachers may also make home visits as appropriate to discuss certain issues pertinent to the home situation. Parents are encouraged to spend time in the classes working alongside staff for specific areas of the curriculum.

HOME WORK FOR EARLY YEARS AND PRIMARY DEPARTMENT

In the Early Years we work as closely as possible with the parents of all our pupils to help them use skills learned at school in the home setting and vice versa; at pupil consultation meeting and 6 monthly reviews, specific ways to encourage the generalisation of skills will be discussed.

There is absolutely no compulsion for every child to have homework – indeed many families enjoy encouraging their children through play and activities they plan themselves and for some pupils this is entirely appropriate. Families with young children including a child with learning, behaviour and communication difficulties may not have the time or resources to cope with the additional stress of ensuring homework is done.

There are many ways that school activities can be carried to and from home, e.g. by a child bringing in an object requested for assembly etc. However, some parents enjoy and ask for homework for their child and where possible and appropriate this can be organised by the child's teacher.

Homework can take a variety of forms; it could be regularly taking home a story book from school to share with parents or brothers and sisters; it might be practising pencil/writing or drawing skills using worksheets or booklets from school – whatever it is, homework should be an enjoyable experience and not an activity that puts pressure on the child or the family.

HOMEWORK IN THE SECONDARY YEARS

It is difficult to give a precise amount of time that will be spent on homework because the pupils' needs vary, and family circumstances may be such that the time available is limited. The emphasis will vary according to the needs of the pupil. Therefore for some the emphasis may be on literacy and maths tasks; whereas for others it may cover playing games, finding objects for a topic or assembly or taking part in social routines. Regular reading to or with the pupil is encouraged when possible and may involve reading to the pupil or school sending home a book for the pupil to read to or with the parent or carer.

WHAT ACTIVITIES CAN BE SET BY THE TEACHER?

Short activities provide a very important opportunity for pupils to communicate about what they are learning to an interested adult, and to practise skills in a supportive environment. These may include:

- choosing an activity or playing simple games,
- learning spellings,
- responding to symbols at home,
- helping in the house,
- sitting to have a drink,
- reading together,
- hanging coat up
- going to the toilet,
- all aspects of washing and dressing, choosing appropriate clothes to wear for the day,
- sitting with the carer for a period (30 secs to 10-12 mins) - this may include looking at a book or hand massage as appropriate.

For some pupils the tasks at home provide the opportunity to develop skills of independent learning, for others it is the involvement of parents and carers in joint activities, however brief, which is most valuable in promoting learning.

THE AMOUNT OF HOMEWORK

This will vary according to the needs of the individual and family circumstances. Varying levels of support will be required to support the family in facilitating the learning process. Parents are encouraged to discuss such issues with the class teacher in order that an acceptable arrangement is reached. This does not mean that low expectations are related to students whose behaviour may pose a barrier to successful homework programmes. In such cases homework may focus on adaptations of specific behaviour programmes from class programmes.

MONITORING

Class teachers are responsible for setting and marking homework. Heads of Departments are responsible for ensuring that homework is set in accordance with the policy. The Headteacher is responsible for the review and revision of the policy.