

DJS HOME LEARNING POLICY

Responsibility for Document:	HT/SLT
Approved Date:	Spring 2020
Review Date:	Spring 2022

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the Mission Statement and Teaching and Learning Policy as together they establish the general ethos of the school. Please also refer to the Home/School Agreement, and our policy on Special Educational Needs and Disability.

At Denmead Junior we strive to create a growth mind-set for learning and life for all our children by using growth mind-set language and behaviours. This encompasses all interactions, between pupils and staff, amongst staff and amongst pupils. In addition we promote the Learning Powers of resilience, reflection (to self-improve), co-operation, curiosity and concentration. In everything that we strive to do and the way that we do it, we promote, model and teach the children the values of Friendship, Understanding, and PRIDE (Positivity, Respect, Inspiration, Determination and Excellence).

Introduction

'Homework' or 'home learning' has been a divisive issue in schools across the country for some time now. Pupils can be reluctant to complete it, parents spend a huge amount of time supporting their children working through it and teaching staff spend time setting and marking it and giving feedback. This document has been written to make clear our beliefs on home learning; our rationale for why we set tasks for pupils to complete, and give guidance for pupils, parents and staff alike. It is not a document set in stone. During daily life in school there will always be exceptions depending on the topic, year group and task. This document however, aims to give guidance rather than rules. Anyone involved in the process of home learning who feels that they are unclear about a particular feature must feel free to speak to their class teacher, line manager or Senior Leadership Team member.

Aims of Home Learning

Our *overall aim* is to make sure pupils leave Denmead Junior School with an effective, confident grasp of their education, demonstrating increased fluency between areas of learning, an ability to solve problems using their knowledge in a variety of situations, as well as a desire to discover more. Home learning can form a vital part in making sure pupils leave our school well equipped for the future, providing it is well constructed and pupils are clear about the intentions.

'It is good practice to use homework to reinforce what pupils have learned in lessons.' John Hattie.

Purpose of Home Learning

We believe that home learning is an effective means by which the pupils can **practise learning out of school, at home** and is an effective way of **including parents in the learning process**.

We surveyed parental opinion in the Autumn 2019 and they agreed with this purpose and also indicated that they believe it can also be used to **consolidate and extend the learning process**. Parents informed us that they also believed that the completion of home learning does help the pupils in **learning discipline, time organisation and the ability to organise themselves** and we also believe that it can help prepare the pupils for the demands of secondary school and beyond.

We also see that a purpose of home learning - particularly topic home learning - is to enable pupils to **learn and explore out of school**, whether that be at home, the library, a sports event, a museum or a landmark and **to extend their learning further than possible in the confines of the classroom**. A classroom is only one place that pupils can use a range of resources while other spaces can offer another dimension to pupil's learning. To encourage the pupils to want to know more about the topic they are studying and to independently research and discover, goes right back to our overall aim at DJS.

We also believe that a variety of subjects across the curriculum should be offered through home learning. To support our belief that 'everyone is good at something' and feed into the encouragement given to pupils across the school with regards to 'growth mind-sets' and 'being brilliant', topic home learning is an opportunity for pupils who are confident in other subjects that may not rely so heavily on academia to show what they are capable of and continue to build their enjoyment for years to come. Subjects including art, design technology, computing, PE and science can be utilised when creating projects, both in their content and in their presentation.

Responsibilities

Class teacher/staff

It is the responsibility of class teachers and staff to make sure that home learning is constructed effectively. With this in mind we need to make sure we adhere to five fundamental characteristics of good home learning (Cathy Vatterott, 2010):

- 1. All home learning tasks are meaningful and that pupils understand the purpose of the task and what makes it meaningful in terms of the whole education (Xu, 2011).*
- 2. Home learning tasks should be designed so that they are completed efficiently but should also require some hard thinking.*
- 3. Topic homework will give the pupils a feeling of greater connection and motivation through the choice of which task to complete.*
- 4. Students should feel competent enough to complete home learning that has been set with their ability level in mind.*
- 5. Home learning should be an inspiring, well designed and clear resource to encourage motivation.*

It is also the responsibility of staff that the return of home learning is acknowledged. This is the case for all tasks except spelling. Reading at home will be acknowledged when staff collect and sign reading records on a weekly basis and topic home learning is acknowledged through the use of positive rewards including house points and four certificates that are awarded in every class for the pupils who show a high level of creativity, inspiration, effort and curiosity.

As there is no research to underpin the practise, we do not believe that sanctioning pupils for not completing home learning is effective and therefore will not do this. We believe that home learning is beneficial and that those who strive to complete it will reap the rewards both during their junior schooling and beyond.

Parents/Guardians

Parents are an extremely important part of the process of home learning. It is the responsibility of parents to encourage their children to complete the home learning task given. Parents can provide their children with a range of sources of information at their disposal or contact the class teacher who will give advice on resources. If parents find that their child is still reluctant or unable to complete their home learning without class teacher/staff support, then it is their responsibility to seek to enrol their child in our after school home learning club.

Pupils

Often the home learning given will be of particular use to the lessons on or around the day given. To make sure that they are getting the best out of every lesson, it is their responsibility to make sure they

understand why they have been given a particular home learning task and exactly what they have to do to complete it. It is also their responsibility that the home learning task gets home in good condition so that it is easier to complete. If they are unsure, then it is their responsibility to ask their class teacher to explain the task again.

Format

Reading

As described in the English policy, the expectations for reading on a weekly basis is at least 5 times per week, for around 10 minutes each time. This will be monitored on a weekly basis by the class teacher through the collection and signing of the Reading Record. These 'Reading Miles' can be collected at school as well as home and can be gained by the pupils having read from a range of sources including novels/short stories, non-fiction texts, web pages, instruction books e.g. cook books, magazines etc.

Spelling

There is currently no set task to complete for spelling home learning apart from the expectation that the pupils will be learning the spellings given that week. However, pupils will be given and should bring home spelling sheets with information on their current spelling list, the spelling rule they are learning and some ideas/games for parents to try with their children. The sheet also contains a look/cover/write/check section which can be completed by the pupils at home or at school. We firmly believe that support from parents at home when learning spellings is vital and would encourage parents to support their children at home with this. For more information on how, please see the school web page for a list of possible spelling games and tasks to use at home.

Times tables

Knowing times tables is an essential tool in mathematics and by the end of year 4 all children should know the multiplication and division facts up to and including 12 x 12.

In school, children will learn these facts in a variety of ways to ensure that they understand the facts as well as having rapid recall. Children can practise these facts further at home through the use of Times Tables Rock Stars. Learning them through songs and games is another way in which to promote greater fluency of these facts.

Some children may be given other facts to learn such as number bonds or directed to practise particular times tables. This will be organised by class teachers.

Topic Home Learning

Topic home learning is set at one piece every half term in Lower School and in Year 5. Children have a range of home learning activities from which they chose one which is their project to complete over the half term period. Pupils will be offered a choice of tasks covering a range of subjects from across the curriculum including English, maths, art, PE, design technology, computing, science and Spanish. These subjects can be used both in the content and in the choice of presentation of projects. Hand in dates are advertised on the termly newsletter.

For year 6 they will also have topic home learning for the autumn term and the second half of the summer term. In the spring and summer first half term they will have home learning tasks that support their SATs revision. This will cover areas of reading, SPaG and mathematics. Year 6s are invited to complete topic home learning of their choice, as well, should they wish to.

Feedback

Feedback is defined as 'information about reactions to a person's performance of a task, which is used as a basis for improvement'. Feedback for home learning depends on the individual topic and task.

For reading home learning, recognition of the effort as well as a giving an opportunity for teaching staff to reflect on the appropriateness of the reading seen is given when the teacher collects the reading records of pupils and awards house points and raffle tickets.

For spelling home learning, children are tested weekly. Pupils use a spelling folder which keeps all previous lists of words, so children and parents can see how well they are mastering their spellings. For maths, the Times Tables Rock Stars programme keeps a record of times, and children and parents can access a 'heat map' to show which times tables they have mastered and which need further practise in terms of speed and accurate recall.

For topic home learning the feedback will come in the form of four certificates awarded to pupils in each class. These certificates are awarded in recognition for high levels of creativity, curiosity, imagination and effort. Class teachers can discuss the success of topic home learning projects when presenting them in class or on an individual basis. Sometimes exhibitions and walk-arounds are arranged so that all the children in the phase have the opportunity to see other children's home learning projects.

Support at School

Support at school is a key resource given to pupils when completing home learning. Not everyone has access to the same level of quality resources and experiences and we believe it is not acceptable that some may fail to produce work they are capable of because of other factors outside school. At DJS we operate a home learning club after school where pupils can come, use the resources and the staff expertise to support the completion of their tasks given.

As well as this, all pupils and parents are encouraged to speak to their class teacher about how they can plan and complete their home learning. It is our belief that when we give out home learning tasks they should be clear and that pupils should understand what is expected of them and why they are having to complete them but if the pupils or parents need to ask questions, they should.