

Appendix A

Homework – A guide for parents

What is the purpose of homework?

Homework will always be a contentious issue; with some people believing that as a school we give too much homework and others thinking that we don't give enough. Our aim is always to find and provide a balance. The purpose of homework as defined in our policy is as follows:

- *developing an effective partnership between the school and parents and other carers in pursuing the aims of the school. This is also, of course, the purpose of home school agreement*
- *consolidating and reinforcing skills and understanding, particularly in literacy and numeracy*
- *exploiting resources for learning, of all kinds, at home*
- *extended school learning, for example, through additional reading*
- *encouraging pupils as they get older to develop confidence and self discipline needed to study on their own, and preparing them for the requirements of the Secondary School.*

Government guidelines on homework give a broad indication of the type of activities and how much time pupils of different ages might reasonably be expected to spend on homework.

For children at primary schools the guidelines are:

Years 1 and 2	1 hour per week
Years 3 and 4	1.5 hours per week
Years 5 and 6	30 minutes per day

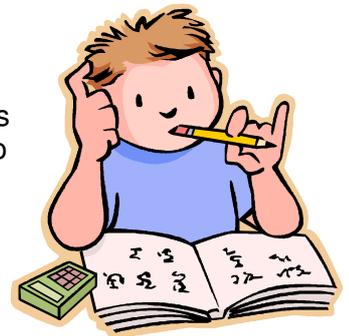
For pupils at secondary school the guidelines are:

Years 7 and 8	45-90 minutes per day
Year 9	1-2 hours per day
Years 10 and 11	1.5 - 2.5 hours per day

The above will include 10 to 20 minutes of reading and, where “per day” is stated this will sometimes be aggregated over more than one day. In other words, a task may be set that takes 50 minutes that may constitute 3 or 4 days worth of homework after reading is taken into account.

However, the guidelines emphasise that it is more important that homework helps your child to learn than whether it takes a certain amount of time. The guidelines encourage schools to plan homework carefully alongside the work children do at school, and to make sure that all activities are appropriate for individual children. As a result some tasks may be differentiated for pupils of different abilities.

Homework will always be carefully explained to the children and will link to skills and activities which the children have been working on in class. Often written instructions will also be provided to assist. Remembering tasks is an important skill for children to develop and they are obviously supported with this. If your child does forget what they have to do they might find it useful to phone a friend or should talk to their teacher as soon as possible. Each year group has a regular timetable for setting homework.



How much homework?

Children should not be expected to spend significantly longer on them than the guide times set out above. Activities may not take as long as the guide times: that does not matter at all as long as they are useful.

At Godinton we organise homework carefully so that children are not expected to do too much on any one day.

What sort of activities should children be doing?

All homework activities should be related to work children are doing at school.

However, homework should not always be written work. For young children it will largely be:

- reading with parents or carers
- informal games to practice mathematical skills

For older children, including children at secondary school, homework may include:

- reading
- preparing a presentation to the class
- finding out information
- making something
- trying out a simple scientific experiment
- cooking
- a game to play
- Year 6 children will also have some revision tasks set as homework in preparation for the Key Stage Two SATs.



As children get older, particularly in Year 6, homework will be structured to help support the transition to Secondary School with emphasis placed on independent study.



Homework for all children will generally follow a set pattern each week. For younger children this means that they are able to get into a routine with homework and will soon get used to when certain pieces of work will be due in.

For children in Years 5 and 6 more independent project work encourages children to develop the skill of managing their time more effectively over a longer period of time.

Should parents help with homework?

Our school is very keen for parents to support and help children with their homework, but there may be times when we want to see what your children can do on their own. It is also important, particularly as they get older, for your children to become increasingly independent in their learning.

However, schools generally take the view that children are likely to get more out of an activity if parents get involved - as long as they do not take over too much.

If you are unsure about what your role should be, discuss it with your child's teacher. They will be pleased that you are interested and will want to help you get the balance right.

Feedback on your child's homework

Schools are expected to make sure that children are given feedback on their homework. It should be given in a way that lets your child know

- how well they have done
- how they could do better

This may not always be through written comments from the teacher.

- sometimes, work will be discussed in lessons
- other times, teachers may give written comments on just one or two aspects of a piece of work

Homework may be filed in subject folders alongside class work and therefore as a parent you may not always see the outcome of a piece of homework straight away.

Children with special needs

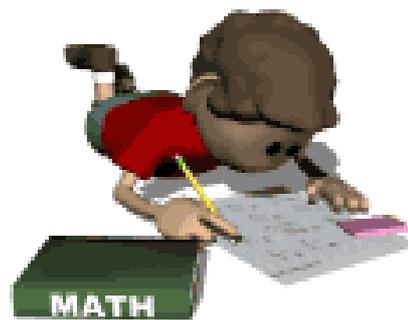
The Government's guidelines include broad recommendations on homework for children with special needs. Schools are expected to consider carefully the needs of individual children and think about how they can best work with parents and carers to support their learning, including their personal and social development.

Teachers are asked to be careful to ensure that children with special needs in mainstream schools are given good quality homework tasks - rather than just finishing off class work. They also work with school's Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (the SENCO) to make sure that the level is right

Ten things you can do to help your child learn outside (and at) school

1. Give your child confidence through lots of praise and encouragement.
 - As a parent, you have tremendous power to strengthen your child's confidence - and confidence is vital to learning.
 - Specific praise focusing on a particular aspect of their work ("I like the way you have...") is more effective than bland, blanket praise.
 - Some people argue that to really do well, children - perhaps all of us - need ten-times as much praise as criticism!
2. Read to, and with, your child as much as possible.
 - The Government is encouraging parents and carers to read to children, hear them read, or encourage them to read to themselves, for at least 20 minutes a day. It is particularly useful for children to see male role models reading – this might be reading the sports pages of a newspaper with dad or granddad or sharing a non-fiction book together.

3. Encourage children to observe and talk about their surroundings.
 - Even young children can be helped to read notices and signs, for example, and understand what they mean.
4. Make use of your local library.
 - Look out for special events and services for children.
5. Visit museums and places you think your child might find interesting.
 - Children now have free admission to major national museums and art galleries.
6. If your children like watching television, watch it with them sometimes and encourage them to talk about what they have seen. They will get more out of the experience.
7. Try to set time aside to do "homework" activities with young children. We don't mind if other members of the family join in too!
8. Wherever possible, try to provide a reasonably quiet place for children to do homework (or help them to get to other places where homework can be done).
9. Encourage your child to discuss homework with you, including feedback from teachers. Practice helping without taking over!
10. Try to help your child to see the enjoyable aspects of homework!



Details of the reading record books which children are given can be found in the Year group welcome letters.