

HOME LEARNING POLICY

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LOSELEY FIELDS PRIMARY SCHOOL HOME LEARNING POLICY

Children learn from the moment they are born – they begin to absorb information and make sense of their world. As well as providing the cornerstones for growth and development: food, comfort and security, parents also provide stimulation naturally through family life, everyday activities, games, rhymes and language that help children to learn. Many of these activities are part of everyday life and for younger children, all these activities are opportunities for exploring and learning.

Parents have an important role to play in helping their child's learning and development at home. However, once a child starts school, it is not always easy to know how best to help them. Thereafter, as children get older it can be easy to forget the strong influence that the home and community still have on their learning and development. This policy aims to outline our school approach to home learning, our rationale which underpins this thinking and examples of ways that school can work with our families to support the whole development of their children during their time with us.

Why learning at home?

Children only spend a small percentage of their waking hours in school. The remaining time is spent at home or in their community and this presents a significant opportunity for learning. What parents do with their children at home is more important than their socio-economic status. Research shows that when children and young people live in a supportive home learning environment, it improves children and young people's attainment and achievement (2018 National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan).

What is learning at home and why is it important?

Learning at home can happen through a range of events including play, leisure activities, fun events, sport, cultural or volunteering experiences. It can also happen through curriculum related activities, homework, reading and sharing books. Activities for learning at home enables parents to engage in their child's learning and build upon the learning from school.

Research shows that about 80% of the difference in how well children do at school depends on what happens outside the school gates and so learning at home is critical for children to learn and develop (Rasbash et al, 2010; Save the children, 2013). At Loseley Fields, we actively encourage our parents into school in order to build relationships and share in their child's learning. Parents having a good understanding about what their child is doing in school, promotes engagement and parental participation in their learning; it encourages talk and so, in turn, improves the language acquisition of their child. We do this through ensuring, for example, all of our topics have exciting beginnings (dress up days, visits or visitors) and also exit activities from the topic which encourages parents into school to see the result of their work or to watch a class assembly. Our bespoke school curriculum is available to parents on the website in order to encourage participation and support.

Home Learning in the Early Years at Loseley Fields.

Developing a nurturing relationship between parent and child helps support their emotional and social development. This can be through responding to their needs but also through smiling, touching, body language and eye contact. Responding in this way has a range of benefits. These include developing problem-solving skills, emotional communication, establishing future emotions, behaviours and helps builds relationships as they grow and develop. Helping parents to learn at home with their child, especially in the Early Years, influences educational outcomes up to the age of 16 (Sammons et al, 2015).

At Loseley Fields we encourage our families, with children in the Early Years, to engage in a range of activities in the home learning environment as part of the everyday characteristics of family life. These could include:

- Time spent reading to children or encouraging children to read
- Visits to museums, theatre or other places of interest
- Taking them to the library or researching topics on the internet
- Gardening
- Baking
- Outdoor learning and sports
- Singing songs, nursery rhymes or playing musical instruments
- Playing role play type games
- Playing with letters and numbers at home. Using a pencil to make marks on paper (early story writing)

We know from research that regular involvement in these types of activities impacts on their acquisition of language. The number of words that a child knows when they start school impacts on educational outcomes. Children with poor vocabulary at 5 years are four times more likely to struggle with reading at adulthood and three times more likely to have mental health issues (Language as a Child Wellbeing Indicator, 2017). The more that children experience these home learning experiences the wider the vocabulary they will possess.

Homework

‘Schools whose pupils do homework tend to be more successful’ (Education Endowment Foundation, 2017).

Homework is considered to be tasks given to pupils by their teachers to be completed outside of the usual lessons. Such tasks can include literacy, numeracy and activities to develop enquiry and problem solving.

Our experience tells us that homework is viewed very differently by different parents, some wanting their children to be given lots of work to do at home whilst others feel that home should be about spending time with family. We recognise that homework can often be an additional source of stress for families and so we ensure that all ‘homework’ tasks set relate to prior learning undertaken by the children at school and so therefore act as a reinforcement and revision of previously learnt skills and knowledge; the quality of the task set is more important than the quantity of work (Education Endowment Foundation, 2017).

What does this all mean for the children of Loseley?

At Loseley Fields we believe that learning at home should consist of a balance of all of these types of tasks in order to develop well-rounded young people prepared for the next stages of their educational journey.

As a result, our expectations for the children’s **weekly homework** will consist of the following activities:

1. **Daily reading to an adult (minimum of 10 minutes).** We ask parents to sign their child’s reading record when they have read with their child. Likewise, we ask teachers/ teaching assistants and volunteers to record when they have heard the children read at school. The reading record should be used as a two way means of communication.
2. **Daily phonics / high frequency words/ spellings (minimum of 10 minutes).** We ask parents to practice a little each night. Older children will undertake regular checks of their spellings in school.
3. **Weekly math arithmetic recall activities eg. Times tables, counting activities.** We ask parents to practice a little each night. Older children will undertake regular checks of their mathematical fluency in school.

In addition to this, children will have a choice of **home learning tasks** to complete each half term which will be a mixture of homework style tasks, home learning style tasks and citizenship activities which encourages the children to undertake tasks for the community benefit eg. Doing shopping for an elderly neighbour.

Each half term the children will be given home learning tasks to choose from, giving families the choice as to how much weekend time to spend on home learning activities and when they complete them. Homework will be photographed and uploaded onto Seesaw for the teacher to provide feedback. The children can upload these across the half term when all are completed. Homework tasks will be marked by staff demonstrating the value placed on their completion.

Termly Home Learning Tasks – Year Group:		
Term: Autumn / Spring/ Summer	Topic Title:	
Homework – Literacy <i>Tasks will be matched to child's ability and will reinforce previously taught skills/ knowledge.</i>	Homework - Literacy	Homework – Literacy
Homework – Maths <i>Tasks will be matched to child's ability and will reinforce previously taught skills/ knowledge.</i>	Homework – Maths	Homework – Maths
Homework – Topic <i>Tasks will be matched to child's ability and involve finding out something linked to the class topic.</i>	Homework - Topic	Homework – Topic
Home Learning Activities <i>Task will involve activities that are fun to do with parents eg. Baking task, nature walk etc.</i>	Home Learning Activities	Home Learning Activities
Citizenship Tasks <i>Tasks will involve doing something which gives back to the community to encourage the notion of 'giving when they get nothing in return'.</i>	Citizenship Tasks	Citizenship Tasks

Support for Homework

Support for homework is available to parents via the school website or by speaking to class teachers for advice. We offer workshops in the early years to help parents understand how to hear their child read and teach phonics at home. The following websites may be of help to parents:

<https://www.teachertoolkit.co.uk/2018/05/14/parents-homework/>

<https://www.topmarks.co.uk/parents/why-is-homework-important>

<https://childdevelopmentinfo.com/learning/homework-help-4-tips-for-parents-on-how-to-make-homework-fun/g5.umlfv>

<https://www.dailyteachingtools.com/homework-tips.html>

<https://www.understood.org/en/school-learning/learning-at-home/homework-study-skills/homework-strategies>

This policy has been written in full consultation with teachers, governors and parents