



# SURREY STREET PRIMARY SCHOOL

*Learning for life at Surrey Street where the social, emotional, spiritual, physical and learning needs of every member of the school community are met*

## Homework Policy

**June 2024**

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## **Non-Statutory**

Surrey Street Primary is committed to promoting and respecting the health, safety and wellbeing of all our children and any adults who work in our school

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### Introduction

At Surrey Street, we have a strong commitment to parental involvement and see homework as one way of developing this partnership. We believe that homework can add much to a child's development and attainment and is therefore an important part of their education.

### Aims

Through this policy we aim to:

- Explain the rationale for our approach to homework;
- Ensure that parents understand what homework their child is expected to do;
- Ensure a consistent approach to homework throughout the school;
- Encourage children and their parents to share and enjoy learning experiences;
- Give parents an insight into the work going on in class;
- Use homework as a tool to help continue to raise standards of attainment;
- Keep the focus on practising or consolidating key skills and facts to build fluency (foundational learning); and
- Give children the opportunity to extend their learning in areas of personal interest and stimulate enthusiasm for learning.

### Rationale for our homework approach

Children benefit greatly from the mutual support of parents and teachers in encouraging them to learn both at home and at school. By valuing home-school learning, children are given the opportunity to practise essential skills and to widen their own interests. In addition, homework enables children to develop self-discipline, independence and the ability to take responsibility for their own learning.

However, Surrey Street is not a school at which homework dominates home and school life. We recognise the importance of children spending time with their friends and families or having time to pursue their own hobbies and interests outside of school. We also believe that homework should be enjoyable and manageable for all concerned and that if it becomes a chore or a source of conflict, it ceases to be a constructive aspect of teaching and learning.

We, therefore, have two aspects to our homework:

- practicing key skills and learning essential facts (**foundational learning**) is compulsory
- more open-ended, creative opportunities to reinforce learning from the wider curriculum or to research future topics are optional.

We hope that this approach offers an appropriate balance, enabling parents and/or children to determine how long they spend on homework each day.

There are some aspects of learning (foundational learning) that benefit from daily practice and are therefore ideal for homework. Foundational learning is more structured and therefore easier for parents to support; there is also less scope for children to embed misconceptions when practising foundational learning at home. Furthermore, foundational learning is critical to children's success. It is for these reasons that the compulsory homework is based on foundational learning.

### **What is foundational learning?**

Foundational learning focusses on children achieving fluency in basic English and maths skills, and in core curriculum knowledge. When children become fluent in skills such as reading, spelling and number facts, they are then able to apply this essential knowledge to more complex learning situations. If a child has to consciously sound out words when reading or writing, or work out multiplication facts whilst problem-solving, their working memory becomes overloaded and they will struggle with more challenging aspects of learning, such as comprehension, extended writing, formal algorithms or word problems. Conversely, when basic knowledge or skills are learned to high levels of fluency (known as automaticity), the brain's attention and thinking are freed up to address the more important challenge of assembling and using information.

Research shows that fluency in these foundational skills is associated with confidence and self-esteem that provide a motivational boost to other areas of learning; in other words, children will enjoy learning which is our ultimate aim.

Automaticity develops over time and is more likely to be achieved by frequent short sessions rather than one longer session. This is why we advocate 5-10 minutes- of daily reading, spelling and number fact practice, rather than 60 minutes once a week.

### **Homework routines and expectations**

All children will have a reading book, and reading at home is logged on out online system Boom Reader. In addition, children in Nursery to 6 will have a library book which we encourage you to read for pleasure.

Other homework will be set on Class Dojo every Monday for completion or daily practice that week. Spellings may include learning common exception words; statutory word lists and spelling rules. Number facts practice will be provided either as Number Sense activities via Class Dojo or on NumBots/TTRockstars.

A breakdown of how homework is structured in each year group is provided below. This has been designed to encourage a gradual progression of skills and expectations so that by the time children reach Year 6 they have established a clear routine in preparation for secondary school.

## **Nursery homework expectations**

There is no compulsory homework for nursery aged children; however, we do encourage parents to spend time sharing books with their children daily. In addition, the nursery teacher may provide language development activities for children to complete with their parents at home.

## **Reception homework expectations**

- Daily reading and sharing books; adults to log reading using the Boom Reader app
- Daily phonics activity focusing on sounds and decodable or tricky high frequency words, these will be shared on Class Dojo weekly.

## **Year 1 homework expectations**

- Daily reading and sharing books; adults to log reading using the Boom Reader app
- Daily phonics activity focussing on sounds and decodable or tricky high frequency words, shared on Class Dojo weekly.
- Weekly spellings to be practised daily (from the start of the spring term)
- Weekly number facts to be practised daily

To allow sufficient time for up to 5 minutes of practice for each aspect of the homework, no optional wider curriculum homework tasks are set in Year 1.

## **Year 2 homework expectations**

- Daily reading and sharing books; adults to log reading using the Boom Reader app
- Weekly spellings and number facts to be practised daily
- [Daily phonics activity focussing on sounds and decodable or tricky high frequency words, for those children who are yet to pass the phonics screening check]
- Optional wider curriculum homework focussing on the current half terms schoolwork

Children should aim to spend at least 5 minutes reading each day and at least 5 minutes on spellings practice and on number fact activities.

## **Years 3 to 5 homework expectations**

- Daily reading and sharing books; adults/children to log reading using the Boom Reader app
- Weekly spellings and number facts to be practised daily
- Optional wider curriculum homework focussing on the current half terms topics

Children should aim to build up from 5 minutes to at least 10 minutes of reading each day and at least 5 minutes on spellings practice and on number fact activities.

## **Years 6 homework expectations**

- Daily reading and sharing books; adults/children to log reading using the Boom Reader app
- Weekly spellings and number facts to be practised daily
- Weekly calculation and maths strategies practice
- Optional wider curriculum homework focussing on the current half term topics or researching the following week's topics.

Children should aim to spend at least 10 minutes reading each day and at least 5 minutes on spellings practice and on number fact activities.

## **How you can help your child with their homework**

Below is a list of ways that you as a parent can show your child that you value their homework and the time and effort spent completing it. The school will also provide clear and regular reminders of our expectations. As a school we hope that you will find this guidance helpful in supporting your child fully with their homework.

You can show you value your child's homework by:

- providing a suitable place in which your child can do their homework, preferably with an adult to discuss, encourage and support
- making it clear to your child that you value homework and support the school in explaining how it can help learning
- encouraging your child and praising them when they have completed the work set
- checking your child spends an appropriate amount of time on the compulsory aspects of their homework
- encouraging your child to challenge themselves by engaging in the optional wider curriculum homework activities

Additionally, you can support your child's development by:

- visits to libraries, museums etc.
- cooking with them
- going for walks in local parks or in the countryside
- taking your child swimming
- playing games, e.g. board games, cards, ball games
- watching informative TV programmes together
- providing opportunities for craft activities, e.g. cutting, sticking, sewing, painting etc.
- gardening and growing plants
- using the internet to research something with your child (following guidelines for safe internet use)
- talking to your child about schoolwork, their day, what they have been learning about and how they have been learning

### **How the school helps to encourage homework completion**

We hope that children will find the homework engaging and will therefore be eager to complete it. Outstanding examples of homework are shared through monthly celebration assemblies and are published on the school website. From time-to-time classes and year groups may introduce competitions or other positive incentives to further motivate the children.

If teachers become concerned about a child consistently failing to complete their homework, this is discussed with the child and their parents to ensure appropriate support is put in place.

Homework club is available twice a week for children in KS2.

### **What parents should do if they have concerns about homework**

If you find the level of homework is inappropriate for your child or you are finding it difficult to encourage/support your child to complete the set work, please talk with your child's teacher, who will work with you to try to remedy the situation.

### **Additional homework**

It is our policy not to give homework over the holidays and half term breaks. The exceptions will be where the parent and teacher agree extra work would be beneficial or work is set as revision for children in Year 6.

If a child is struggling with a particular aspect of their learning, the teacher or SENDCo may, with agreement from the parent, send specific tasks home to support that child's learning.

*Remember:*

*Homework is about reinforcing, practising and confidence building...*

*Enthusiasing your child about undertaking homework and modelling the high value of homework to them is of key importance.*

*Make it fun!*