



Home Learning Policy

(Reviewed and updated July 2015)

Homework is a very emotive subject on which everyone connected to schools usually has an opinion. Some parents (and teachers) feel that homework should be set regularly while others feel equally passionately that it should not. There is an accepted feeling that 'you'll never please everyone.' This policy aims to lay out the benefits and negative aspects of setting homework and to provide a clear statement on our approach to learning beyond the school day.

The case for...

- Homework can be an effective way to reinforce learning and understanding gained in school.
- It can be an opportunity to develop children's self-discipline, responsibility and time management.
- It can extend the message that learning isn't something that just happens in school – rather it is a life-long skill which takes place everywhere and at any time.
- It prepares children for the rigours of homework at their secondary school.
- Learning in a different way, with a different person's support can aid understanding.

The case against...

- Can cause anxiety for children who do not understand.
- Can potentially have detrimental effect on children's attitude to learning and self-esteem.
- Children are entitled to a work-life balance. "Isn't 6 hours of formal learning a day enough?"
- Some children, often those who would benefit most, regularly fail to complete homework as required.
- It is sometimes completed by the child's parent.
- Parents feel unable to assist and may feel like they are the one being tested.
- Parents worry that they are teaching their child to do it 'the wrong way.'
- Additional teacher workload in marking and assessing.
- Children often have clubs or activities and commitments that make it hard for them to 'fit in' homework.
- Does it actually improve learning and a desire to learn and improve?
- Negative aspects above can 'undo' the positive attitude we're working hard to engender about learning.

Existing Practice in Primary Schools

Homework is not a compulsory part of the Welsh curriculum and schools decide the extent and type of any homework set. There is therefore a range of expectations and practices across schools in Wales.

Home Learning

Our school is 'all about learning'; we work really hard to engender a love of learning and encourage pupils to take responsibility for their own learning. They need to be able to motivate themselves to learn, unlearn and relearn in the future as they adapt to change. For that reason we talk more about 'learning' and less about 'work'. Nobody really likes doing 'work'. As a school we have decided that we will not set 'homework' and will encourage learning beyond the school day in the form of 'home learning'. This means that rather than setting a weekly task with a 'hand in' day, we will provide a brief summary of the work covered during the week with some practical suggestions for how parents can help their child to reinforce that learning and understand it in a 'real world' context. We feel this will be less pressure for all and critically, more effective learning and understanding for your child.

Each week, teachers will write a short but focussed update on our new 'Home Learning Blog'. This will have two sections:

- "This week your child has been learning about..."
- "Things you can do at home to reinforce their understanding include..."

Sometimes this guidance might include links to useful or interesting websites. You can visit the Home Learning Blog via the home page of our school website at www.dell.monmouthshire.sch.uk. If you would like to receive this information on paper, please advise your child's teacher.

Reading

We teach children a comprehensive range of skills for reading through our Read Write Inc strategy. They read frequently and regularly in school through our use of class texts; books which drive whole class themes over the course of each term. In addition, children read every day in school and will be listened to once a week by their teacher as part of planned Guided Reading sessions. This is the time where we teach your child a range of the skills and strategies for reading and check how well they are understanding the texts they encounter. Texts are challenging and carefully selected. In Foundation Phase children are given a book to take home on a Friday to read over the weekend and return on Monday. In Key Stage 2, as children become more confident and independent readers, they are able to choose a book from the class library which they can take home to read. This exercise is to encourage them to read for pleasure and enjoyment. However, if as a parent you do not approve of their choice, please feel free to provide another book (which they enjoy) from home or the library. We encourage reading at home and a love of reading for pleasure but do not check that they are reading at home.

In Reception we do not send books home immediately and will introduce words and books to read together later in the year when the child is ready.

We would encourage all parents to spend some time, ideally each day, reading with their child. We'd also suggest that parents read to their child as well as listening to them. Children learn an enormous amount about reading, speaking, storytelling and language by listening to adults reading. Discussing characters, plots and settings helps this process enormously too.

We want to engender a love of reading for pleasure and for information and we don't feel that a 'policed' system away from school, dependent on numerous factors, is the best way to do this.

Spelling

Our Read Write Inc strategy is the core of our approach to teaching spelling and that starts in Reception. This is supplemented through ongoing work on spelling patterns and strategies in English lessons throughout the school. Again, teachers will not send home a weekly list of spellings to learn for a test at the end of the week. We do not believe this is an effective way to learn and remember how to spell words. However, occasionally 'words to learn' may form part of a class's home learning.

Tables

As with spellings, teachers will not send home a list of times tables to be learned for a tables test later in the week. However there are minimum expectations for knowing tables and these are listed below. Of course parents are free to support their child in learning tables as they see fit.

By end of..	Sound knowledge & confidence with (at least) these times tables
Year 2	2x, 5x, 10x
Year 3	2x, 3x, 4x, 5x, 10x
Year 4	2x, 3x, 4x, 5x, 6x, 10x
Year 5	2x, 3x, 4x, 5x, 6x, 8x, 10x
Year 6	2x, 3x, 4x, 5x, 6x, 7x, 8x, 9x, 10x

Occasionally teachers in a year group will send home specific activities for children to undertake or complete but these will not be in the form of a regular task given out on a particular day and to be handed in on another specified day.

“...all about learning”