

WALTER HALLS PRIMARY SCHOOL

HOMEWORK POLICY

Reviewed – April 2023

Next Review – April 2025



RATIONALE

Walter Halls bases as many decisions as possible, connected with teaching and learning, on evidence-based research. This enables all of our staff to spend their time undertaking work that has the best impact on children's progress. It ensures, as far as possible, that time isn't wasted on activities and ideas that do not help our children to learn and progress with their learning as much as they could do.

Time is precious and our children only get one chance with their education; we need to make sure that our children are spending their learning time doing the best possible things. We also need to ensure that young children get the rest they need, ample outdoor time and time to build other hobbies and interests, away from school work.

With this in-mind, we have based this homework policy on research undertaken by The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF). EEF is the leading source of educational research which has a comprehensive toolkit for educational professionals to draw from, to read evidence-based research on multiple topics connected with primary and secondary education, and to easily see what impact various initiatives have on our children's progress.

<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit>

What does EEF say about Homework?

Some key points about the impact of homework on children's progress are:

- Homework in secondary schools has a greater impact on progress compared to primary schools (+5 months vs +3 months)
- The quality of the tasks set is far more important than the quantity – evidence shows that the impact diminishes as the time spent on homework increases
- The best impact is seen when homework tasks are an integral part of the learning that is happening in the classroom, and not just an 'add-on'

What does that mean for how we should approach homework at Walter Halls Primary School?

- Teachers and children should not be spending a lot of time preparing and undertaking homework tasks in a primary setting. Time is better spent on quality provision in the classroom during the school day.
- The tasks set should be 'short and sweet' to ensure impact doesn't diminish – more is not better, in the case of homework.
- Concentration on learning tasks – especially outside of a school setting – can only be sustained for twice the child's age in minutes. So, for a Year 6 child this is just over 20 minutes. For a Year 1 child this is only 10 minutes. All primary-aged children should be spending no longer than half an hour on homework each time they are set some. The exception to this would be reading for pleasure or being read to by an adult.
- Tasks set should directly relate to daily learning, matched to their year group. We must focus on core knowledge that can and will be applied on a daily basis within school. In a primary setting this would be: reading skills, spellings, times tables facts and handwriting skills only.
- We acknowledge that secondary schools may set a greater amount of homework from a wider range of subjects. To help our children prepare for this change of approach, homework set in Year 6 may consist of slightly longer tasks or a wider range of subject areas.

EXPECTATIONS BY YEAR GROUP

<u>YEAR GROUP</u>	<u>HOMEWORK EXPECTATIONS</u>
Early Years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading is the main focus of any home learning activity. • Reading diaries should be used by adults at home and school from F2-Y3 • Learning 'Woodland Words' and recognising them by sight
Year 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading is the main focus of any home learning activity. • Reading diaries should be used by adults at home and school from F2-Y3 • Learning 'Woodland Words' and recognising them by sight and then practicing writing them down
Year 2 – Year 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading • Reading diaries should be used by adults at home and school from F2-Y3. From Y4-Y6 they are not used and are replaced by a range of reading skills activities supported by adults in school. • Spelling practice • X tables practice • Handwriting practice (when needed or linked to spellings) <p>Year 6 may set some additional pieces of homework, from time to time, to support children's transition into secondary school and to support their end of Key Stage SATs testing</p>
Additional family projects	<p>From time to time, a whole school family home learning project may be shared via Class Dojo. This will be matched to our school values learning or to a national event that we want children to learn more about. This is entirely optional to take part in and can be done collaboratively with all family members. Individual year groups may choose to set optional family project work at different points in each term too.</p>

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Teachers will:

- Ensure that regular homework is set which matches the above criteria and matches the time-expectations that evidence shows us is most helpful.
- Remind children of their homework tasks and ensure any homework is adjusted to meet different learning needs.
- Teachers will raise the profile of homework with their class, especially the importance of reading at home regularly.
- Not mark or give detailed feedback on every piece of homework – this is not shown to have high impact on learning in the classroom and only adds unnecessary workload.
- Not issue consequences in school time for unfinished homework – this will be discussed and encouraged with the adults at home.

Parents and carers will:

- Ask their children regularly about any homework they may have been given and be clear on the year group expectations for this from the start of the year.
- Promote and support reading at home for 10 minutes daily – a support guide can be seen in **APPENDIX A**
- Aim to sit and help their children with any homework set.
- Stick to the suggested time limits of any homework task so that it is not onerous or counter-productive for the child's learning and concentration.

- **Not request additional homework tasks to be set by the teacher – research suggests that this is not going to be the way to improve your child’s learning or motivation to learn during their time at primary school.**

Children will:

- **Try their very best with their homework every week and ask an adult if they are stuck.**
- **Read every single day for at least 10 minutes at a time.**
- **Make sure they get plenty of playtime, outdoors time and spend more time on hobbies and interests than they do on their homework, whilst at primary school!**

(Written by: Emma Beardah, Headteacher, in conjunction with senior leadership team)

APPENDIX A – Helping your children with 10 minutes daily read

A 10 minutes daily read can be done in a variety of ways that suit different ages, ability and needs. We want children to love reading at Walter Halls and ploughing through a book every night for 10 minutes doesn’t suit all children or situations.

Here are some tips and strategies that can be used to help support the 10 minutes daily read expectation at Walter Halls.

- **Take turns:** Take turns to read a sentence, a paragraph, a page. This will help children to realise that sentence construction differs and take note of punctuation.
- **Read and discuss your voice** This enables children to hear expression, emotions, pace, how punctuation should be ‘read’. If you read a part quickly, ask them why you read it quickly, same for loudly, quietly, nervously etc
- **Read ‘real life’:** Read instructions, recipes, leaflets, newsletters, cereal boxes, signs on the road, information boards etc
- **Read and Respond:** Ask your child to read a paragraph or page to themselves and then ask them questions about it. Can they summarise what they read? Can they retrieve information? Can they tell you who is feeling what and why?
- **Read aloud to...:** the dog, the cat, a sibling, a teddy.
- **Predict the rest of...:** the sentence, the chapter, the book. When a sentence ends on the next page, before turning, ask them what they think the end of the sentence will be. This will tell you how engaged they are with it and where you’ll see links to other books that they have read.
- **Scavenger hunt on a page:** Can you find: an exclamation mark, an adjective beginning with P, a simile, a question? This is a good scanning skill.
- **True or false?:** Tell them a statement based on what they are reading and they have to find out if it is true or false. Eg the boy has red hair. The witch regrets casting the spell.
- **Story map:** Can your child draw a story map of the book that they have just read?
- **Draw what you see:** Read a bit of the story, can your child draw the character or the setting based on what you have just read with them or to them?
- **Tell me in 3:** Summarise after reading what has happened on that page, in the Chapter or about a character. Can they tell you in 3 sentences? 3 words?
- **Discuss the book:** Is it similar to any others you have read? Why did the Author choose that simile? Would you give it that title? Did you feel like anyone changed in the book? What would you do if? Who would you recommend it to?