



Johnstown Community Primary School



Home Learning Policy

Revised October 2014



A Sports Council for Wales Initiative
Menter gan Gyngor Clwraecon Gymru



Johnstown Primary School

Home Learning Policy

Aims and Objectives

Our aims and objectives in agreeing and practicing a home/school policy are:

- ② To enable pupils to achieve their full potential through partnership between home and school.
- ② To consolidate and reinforce learning in school and to practice the skills taught in lessons. This learning includes engagement with the community and the world around us.
- ② To have opportunity to reflect and think carefully about their work in a relaxed home atmosphere, thus promoting deep learning.
- ② To help pupils develop the skills of an independent learner.
- ② To instil the school motto “Be All You Can Be” in all completed tasks and to promote lifelong learning habits for the future.

Why is Home Learning Important?

Promoting home learning is a national agenda to break cycles of parents’ non-engagement with the learning process. There is a huge body of evidence (data from research over nearly 40 years) showing that parents’ involvement has a positive impact on the child’s learning.

“A parent supporting a child’s learning is consistently significant in improving the child’s outcomes regardless of the parents’ social class, education or wealth” (Tackling Child Poverty in Wales, a Good Practice Guide for Schools). Home learning is valuable for the following reasons:

- ② It can help pupils to make more rapid progress in learning.
- ② It can allow pupils to develop the practice of working on their own without the constant presence of the teacher or other pupils on the one hand and the external discipline of the timetable, bells, etc on the other. This way of working is vital at the stages of secondary education and after.
- ② Learning at home can provide the quiet and private conditions for creative and thoughtful work of all kinds.
- ② It can allow valuable practice of skills learned in the classroom.

- Ⓢ It can allow pupils to use materials and other sources of information that are not always available in the classroom.
- Ⓢ It can involve parents and others in the pupil's work for their mutual benefit.
- Ⓢ It can give opportunities for long term research and other learning.
- Ⓢ It can form an important part of the pupil's general knowledge.
- Ⓢ This gives pupils valuable experience of working to deadlines and enables staff to monitor and feedback positively.

The Nature of Home Learning

We emphasise the importance of families working with their children a little and often to provide support and challenge during home learning tasks. This is supported by Welsh Government publications "How is My Child Doing in the Foundation Phase?" and "How Was School Today?" which are distributed to parents.

Tasks set vary according to age and themes being studied, but there is parity in the year group.

All home learning is underpinned by a requirement for **daily consolidation of literacy and numeracy skills**, ie:

- Daily reading practice
- Maths and Spelling Award Scheme practice

Verbal/written feedback will be given to children on their home learning. Written feedback is also given to parents at parents' meetings and/or through the Annual Progress Report. At an appropriate age the children will be given grades which reflect effort and outcome.

From Year 1 onwards each half term families can expect a theme based task as well as topical seasonal/current opportunities to undertake learning activities.

The tasks selected by the class teacher is commensurate with the ability of the pupils and feedback is also matched to the child's needs. We follow Estyn recommendations by providing diagrammatic and pictorial representations, non-fiction reading experiences, activities involving not just the home and garden but also the park, the shops and the community.

How Can Parents or Guardians Help with Home Learning?

Estyn Good Practice in Parental Involvement in Primary Schools: *"Parents have an important stake in the education of their children and play a significant part in supporting their children's learning. Effective parental involvement sets aspirations and shapes the child's self-concept as a learner..... Learning outcomes improve when there is a shared understanding between teachers and parents/carers."*

- Ⓢ “Talk a Lot” families enable children to develop good literacy and language skills.
- Ⓢ Help your child organise his or her time to best advantage so that things are not all left to the last minute or even forgotten.
- Ⓢ Try to make sure that there are suitable learning conditions at home and that your child presents his/her learning neatly and properly.
- Ⓢ Take positive and active interest in your child’s learning at home rather than just insisting that it is done.
- Ⓢ Parents are asked to ensure that all home learning tasks and activities are returned to the teacher.
- Ⓢ Let us know if there are problems with home learning that you cannot resolve. Perhaps your child seems to be doing too much, or not enough, or is finding it too easy or too difficult. Contact the class teacher in the first instance who will be glad to help.

Return of Home Learning

The teaching staff will provide good quality home learning activities and advice in line with comment and expectations from Welsh Government and Estyn Inspectorate and to follow school policy. We therefore respectfully ask that completed home learning be given in on time or a good reason provided by the family for not doing so. If home learning is not submitted:

- Ⓢ The class teacher will have a discussion with the pupil to arrange a time when the home learning can be completed.
- Ⓢ The class teacher may contact the family to offer support if required or to negotiate a reasonable arrangement or alternative.
- Ⓢ Teachers may arrange a time during the school day for the work to be completed or offer the pupil the opportunity to join the Mega Minds Home Learning Club.

Helping Parents to Help Their Child

Estyn Good Practice in Parental Involvement in Primary Schools recommends schools *“provide parents with clear information about their expectations regarding the homework policy and set appropriate homework with enough information so parents know how to help..... Successful schools have regular dialogue with pupils and parents about the rationale for the teaching approaches..... Place an emphasis on extra-curricular and out of hours provision as well as extra educational support such as homework clubs.”*

As a school we recognise that some families may need help and guidance to support their child with preparation for school and home learning. We offer the following information and advice:

- ② Class brochures.
- ② Forthcoming events list.
- ② SEN/AEN Clinics fortnightly.
- ② Termly parent/teacher consultations.
- ② Home learning guidance for each year group on the school website.
- ② Home learning packs.
- ② Curriculum evenings and events.
- ② Regular newsletters.
- ② School notice boards.

Home/School Agreement

Our Home/School Agreement is a contract between parent, child and school. It sets out the commitment needed to ensure each child meets with success and that the link between home and school is fostered for the benefit of the child.

Estyn Good Practice in Parental Involvement in Primary Schools:

“.....Providing parents with information and ideas on how they can help their children learn as research shows that giving parents clear structures for helping their child makes a difference”.

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Reference Documents

Welsh Government

- How is my child doing in the Foundation Phase? **[Pages 16 and 17]**
- How was School Today? (Ages 7-11) **[Pages 16 and 17]**
- Education Begins at Home (WG Website)

Estyn – Schools Inspectorate

- Good Practice in Parental Involvement in Primary Schools (April 2009)
[Pages 1, 3, 4 and 9]
- Closing the Gap Between Boys and Girls Attainment in Schools (March 2008)
[Pages 17, 25 and 26]
- Tackling Child Poverty in Wales. A Good Practice Guide for Schools (Second Edition) **[Pages 8, 17 and 23]**