

John of Gaunt Infant and Nursery School

Children Working At Home

This policy has been written by the Staff and Governors of John of Gaunt Infant & Nursery School

Aims of the Policy

This policy sets out clearly the purpose of homework.

In general terms these include:

- developing an effective partnership between the school and parents and other carers in pursuing the aims of the school;
- promoting the idea of education as a partnership
- consolidating and reinforcing skills and understanding, particularly in English and Maths;
- exploiting resources for learning, of all kinds, at home;
- extending school learning, for example through additional reading;
- helping children understand that learning also takes place outside the classroom
- enabling children to raise their levels of achievement

Recommended time for homework (Government Guide)

Government guidelines on homework give a broad indication of how much time children might reasonably be expected to spend on homework.

Year Group Time Activities

Nursery and Reception - 40 minutes per week to include shared reading material and bedtime stories

Key Stage One - 1 hour per week to include, reading with parents or carers, handwriting, spelling and informal games to practise mathematical skills

Children should not be expected to spend significantly longer on homework than these guidelines set out. Short activities of different kinds such as simple games, an awareness of phonic sounds and patterns, number facts and of course reading together provide a very important opportunity for young children to talk about what they are learning to an interested adult, and to practise key skills in a supportive environment. In the Governments view, the main focus of homework for children at primary schools should be on literacy and numeracy.

Approaches for Children

Working at home is not new. All children will be expected to read regularly at home. This will be the main part of the homework provided. **Five to ten minutes of quality concentration making it an enjoyable experience for both you and your child is about the right amount of time.**

Children should not spend too long on homework. Free time and play activities are an essential part of the learning process.

Early Years

Every room in the house can provide opportunities for learning experiences for you to share with your child.

Bathroom

Bath times are wonderful for exploring mathematics and science

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- Look at the pattern on the tiles – what do you notice?
- Find and name shapes - is the mirror round or square?
- Explain/discuss why the mirror steams up
- Investigate – make a bubble bigger than mine? How did you manage that?
- Use a variety of toys and containers for counting, filling and pouring

Hall/Stairs

- Count the stairs to go to bed
- Measure - how many 'foot spans' along the hall? Do you agree? Why?
- Look at shoe sizes, types, fastenings, patterns on the sole.

Bedroom

- Say the time for bed, to go to sleep, to get up in the morning
- Read a story or tell a story. Discuss, predict and conclude. State preferences and give reasons. Can you spot any phonics you've learnt?
- Talk about the events of the day. What did you do yesterday? What might happen tomorrow?

Kitchen

- Sort the shopping - the tins and boxes, heavy and light, cheap and costly
- Look at different shapes and sizes around the room
- Set the table - are there enough spoons? How many more do you need?
- Estimate then count how many potatoes are on your plate
- Weigh ingredients for cooking. Make patterns with biscuits.
- Compare - is my biscuit longer/ wider or thicker/thinner than yours?
- Pour drinks - is the cup full or empty, almost full, half empty?

Living Room

- Count - numbers on the T.V, clocks, telephone, newspaper, cards
- Explore the BIG numbers
- Play simple games: playing cards - snap, dice, dominoes, board games
- Complete jigsaws and other puzzles
- Tidy up and count things in – order things in size, shape, colour

On the way to school

- Look at house numbers, car numbers
- Look out for different shapes

Homework Tasks

Nursery

Parents/Carers and children are given a short activity each day to complete in their home/school diary either in the Nursery or at home. Parents/Carers and children are also encouraged to add their own personal experiences including photographs etc. Children may also take a book home every day to share.

Reception

Children are expected to read regularly with an adult – either sounds, words or a book every day. Parents/carers are given short activities weekly to complete in the home/school diary; these are shared and discussed at school.

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Key Stage 1 (Years 1 and 2)

Children are expected to read regularly with an adult and on a weekly basis. A spelling challenge is sent home weekly and children are encouraged to use a look, cover, write, check process. Mathematical investigations and challenges are sent home weekly and outcomes are discussed in class.

Working at home should not be seen as a formal paper exercise carried out by children without the help of adults. We want to encourage adult interaction which is why marking returned work is irrelevant and not our policy. We would encourage the parent to share concerns with the teacher if specific difficulties are identified. Working at home should be seen as supportive to the children's learning and should not interfere with the extra activities, such as swimming, hobbies, clubs and free play which are fundamental to a child's development.

Maths

Children spend time during their maths lessons developing their mental maths skills. This is working out in their heads number patterns and bonds; (from 0 – 10 increasing to larger numbers as they move through school), addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. They should be learning off by heart, and be able to recall basic number facts and work out answers in their head.

Early Years – reciting to 10 and counting reliably up to 5 and 10 objects

Year 1 – reciting in steps of 1, 2, 5, 10 forwards and backwards to 10, 20, 100

Year 2 – as above and begin to learn X2, X3, X5 and X10 tables.

Parents can help at home (in a fun and enjoyable way) by:

- Playing games and quizzes using mental calculation
- Playing Snakes and Ladders, Monopoly, Dominoes and other card and dice games to help understand numbers and problem solving
- Encouraging children to question and talk about how they worked things out
- Counting money in a purse, working out how much things cost, how much change, looking at shopping bills, using kitchen and bathroom scales, measure height and length, learning about time, 24 hour clock, days, months, use the TV guide etc.

English

Reading

Reading is the key to unlocking the whole curriculum. Primary years are so important to the development of reading skills and reading for pleasure. Reading to children and hearing them read is vital for this life-long skill to be fully developed. Teachers hear children read throughout the week as they cover curriculum areas and in particular during literacy. They keep their own records of children's attainment. The home/school reading record/diary is a useful way to show you are hearing your child read and share progress and development.

It is good practice to discuss:

- If they enjoyed the book
- What they liked/disliked

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- Other books by the same author
- What might happen next
- The characters in the story for example what kind of character do you think they are? What makes you think that?
- Why do you think that has happened?
- Developing a story telling voice
- Why are different types of print used? (**bold**, *italics*, CAPITALS)

Reading for pleasure should be encouraged at all times even if your child is a fluent reader. We also recommend that you and your child join the local library and choose books together.

Spellings/Phonics

- Jolly Phonics – taught in the Foundation Stage to help your child learn the letter sounds
- In Year One further information about Phonics will be sent home with advice and guidance about how to support your child
- Parent/Carers will be given games which include some High Frequency words to practise at home
- Children in Key Stage One will be given a weekly spelling challenge

Writing

In the Early Years concentration is on mark making correct formation of letters, by strengthening muscles and developing fine motor skills. Make sand or salt trays for letter practice and mark making, using squeeze bottle outside or using long pieces of ribbon to draw in the air and manipulating plasticene or play dough.

Children need to practise writing for a purpose which can be in the form of:

- Thank you letters, letters/e-mails to friends and relatives and invitations.
- Shopping lists, instructions, notes and recipes
- Stories, news and diaries
- Handwriting practice – **please use lower case letters, not CAPITALS – please use John Bear Handwriting map for guidance about how to form letters correctly**
- Children may like to write letters to John Bear share their independent writing

Playing games such as I Spy, Pictionary and Charades, will help children to develop their speaking and listening skills.

Other Curriculum Information

At the beginning of each term, you will be given a curriculum information letter telling you all about the curriculum areas to be covered in your child's class. Please use this information to spend some time talking to your child about their school day and discuss the things they have been learning. From time to time, tasks will be sent home, which are specifically topic related.

More Working at Home Ideas

- Encourage your child to make collections of things of interest, stamps, money, badges, stickers

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- Composing or writing their own songs, poems, stories
- Drawing, painting, model making and other art forms
- Involving your child in everyday activities such as cooking, shopping, gardening, telling the time, handling money, planning journeys/outings or an evenings T.V. viewing, taking photographs, looking at maps or programming computers, remote toys, the satellite navigational device in your car!
- Visiting museums, art galleries, exhibitions
- Travelling on the bus or trains and reading timetables, bicycle rides or nature walks, hiking, fitness trails
- Using cameras and understanding new technologies, developing computer skills and **supervised safe use** of the Internet

Further Support

The school website which has links to the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) has lots of information and activities to support your child's learning and suggestions of websites which may be helpful. The VLE is regularly updated and includes a weekly update of what your child is learning and activities to support this.

www.johngaunt.norfolk.sch.uk

Summary

- We know that parents/carers are the child's first teacher and we value your input into your child's education
- Talking to your child and enquiring about their day is showing that you are interested and that you place an importance upon their education even if they are reluctant to respond
- Holding a conversation and listening to your child adds to their vocabulary and helps them to communicate with others express their ideas
- Tasks set from school will be mainly around reading
- We must all allow time for the developmental needs of children and value sport, music, dancing, drama, hobbies, free time, play etc.
- Try to spend some quality time talking and listening to your child and include asking them about their learning in school
- As with all other matters relating to the children, teachers are available to discuss working at home with parents

John of Gaunt Infant and Nursery School realises the benefits of working with parents, carers and children and welcomes this partnership.