

1. Homework may be used in school because of its possible advantages which can contribute to raising and maintaining standards of ethos and achievement.

- (a) Establishing links between the child, the school and home, including extended family sometimes and, potentially, elements of the wider community.
- (b) Increasing the amount of continual parental awareness of at least part of the curriculum which the children are progressing through.
- (c) Reassuring parents; for example, at stages when children may not speak much about school at home. The school blog and 'Sharing Our Learning' events can also be used to support learning conversations at home.
- (d) Providing a forum for reinforcement of concepts already grasped in school, and for rote-learning of multiplication tables, scripts, poems, etc., so that children may be more likely to move towards their potential within school time.

2. Disadvantages also exist

- (a) Families have other commitments. Fitting homework into a family schedule can cause stress.
- (b) Stress can be caused between parent and child and teacher if homework is given out in too great a quantity, or if it is too difficult, or if not enough time is available to complete it.
- (c) There are difficulties and, hence, stresses for the teaching staff in preparing homework, getting it back in time, evaluating it, and considering next steps. Contractual teaching time is better spent in direct, effective interaction with the children in class, rather than preparing, collecting and marking homework.
- (d) The finished material is often not a result of the children's own efforts. Interaction with peers, parents or others may lead to the answers. That has its own social merits, but makes valid evaluation of the results very difficult.
- (e) Different reactions to homework are evident from parents. Many, but not all, welcome it in principle, but with differing degrees of enthusiasm.
- (f) Homes differ in the resources which are available to support the child. These resources include the people as well as the physical resources.
- (g) Homework, if excessive, can isolate young children at a stage when many important social skills are acquired through play among peers. Play also provides some of the physical exercise which young children need and is important for their psychological development.
- (h) There is no legal requirement for children to complete homework or for parents to support it. Homework is outside curricular time.

These disadvantages, considered together, make it very difficult to give relevant material which both adds quality to children's curricular learning and can be done at home.

3. What can be given as homework in order to achieve the potential advantages and minimise the disadvantages?

- (a) **Reading** Pupils will be encouraged to take their reading books home to share with parents/carers. The focussed discussion and tasks linked to the text will take place in school.
- (b) **Learning at Home Challenges** Termly 'challenges' will be issued to pupils. The challenges will cover different aspects of the curriculum.
- (c) **P6&7:** It is recognised that as pupils begin the transition to the academy, they need to learn how to take more responsibility in managing their own time. The P6,7 pupils will be issued with weekly tasks, that will be expected to be completed within the allotted time. 'Personal Study' time is scheduled throughout the week, in class, but pupils may also complete the tasks at home, if they wish.

4. A variety of learning approaches may be used to suit the task and the individuals involved.

Within the above guidelines, the quantity and nature of each task is the professional decision of the teaching staff for the benefit of the children.

All tasks, expectations and time-scales must be explained clearly to the children and, when deemed appropriate, to the parents.

5. The results of homework will not normally be included in pupil profiles because of questions about the amount of support given to each pupil.

6. Communications with parents

Use reading record as general notebook. Encourage parents to contact school staff if there is a problem, particularly of time available to do homework.

This document was reviewed and updated after consultation with pupils, staff and parents.
Reviewed December 2016

Appendices to Monymusk School homework policy

Appendix 1

Holidays during school time

Neither homework nor class material will be given to children who are removed from school during term-time for family holidays. A holiday is a holiday. The children may be encouraged to choose from the following: keep a photographic and postcard record; collect brochures; send postcards; keep a brief, personal diary; and, perhaps, give a presentation on their return to school.

Any gaps in school-based learning due to the holiday will be covered at a pace to be determined by the teacher once the children return to school.

Appendix 2

Absence due to illness

Neither homework nor class material will be given to children who are absent from school due to illness. If children are not fit to be in school, they are not expected to be fit for the effort of completing the school activities at home.

Exception may be permitted in the circumstances of a broken limb which is well on the mend, for example, when a child is not fully mobile, but is not otherwise stressed or physiologically debilitated.

Such an exception would be accepted only through full consultation between teaching staff, parents and the children, and would include, if appropriate, visits by teaching staff to the children in order to support the curricular learning.

The Head Teacher must be kept fully aware of all relevant circumstances and will hold the final decision.

Appendix 3

Activities left incomplete in class time

Staff within Monymusk School aim to nurture an ethos of achievement. Activities given in school should be achievable by each child in the time allocated, whether it be within a day, over a week, or longer.

Incomplete activities, therefore, will not normally be sent home.

So-called catch-up time may be given within time-tabled school time to allow children to complete tasks.

If a need for catch-up occurs repeatedly with a particular child, the teaching staff, in consultation with the child, parents, other professionals, etc., as appropriate, must evaluate the factors which might influence the learning and teaching of that child and take suitable action.