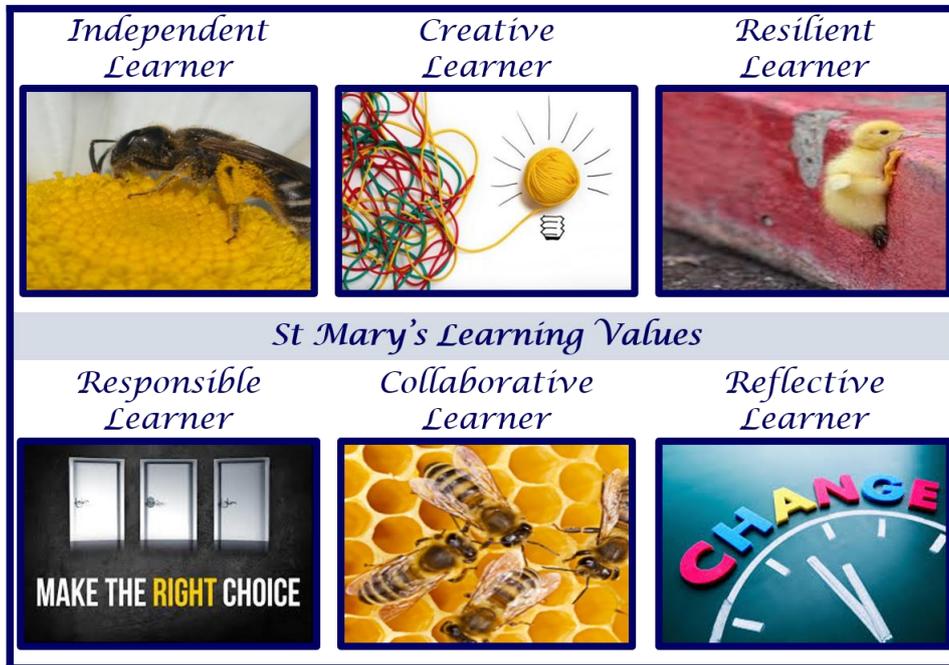




St Mary's Catholic Primary School Home Learning Policy [November 2018]

At St Mary's Catholic Primary School we focus on our Mission Statement to Pray, Learn, Love and Enjoy along with our six key Learning Values to help children with their present and future learning:



Our aim is to work in partnership with parents and carers to help support children in their learning. We know that it is important to help children recognise that learning is about having a go, trying things out, learning from each other and from our own mistakes. It is the discovery of new facts, the acquisition of new skills and relating them to those already known and to the world around us. Most importantly though, we want our children to understand that learning carries on throughout the whole of our lives, the more we practise and use our skills as children and as adults, the better we will get.

“Education is about forming the human person, equipping him or her to live life to the full”

Pope Benedict XVI's address to teachers and headteachers, September 2010

Home learning is always a difficult policy to get right in any school. Some parents would prefer a relatively large amount whilst many others are not committed to any formal home learning at all during the primary phase. There is also growing evidence from educationalists on the relatively minimal and sometimes negative impact home learning can have on a primary aged child.

Some of the most recent research (including international research and that from the Education Endowment Foundation) also agrees:

- that overall, homework in primary schools does not appear to lead to large increases in learning;
- that effective homework is associated with greater parental involvement and support;
- that the broader evidence base suggests that short focused tasks or activities which relate directly to what is being taught, and which are built upon in school, are likely to be more effective than regular daily homework;
- that the purpose of homework should be made clear to children.

At St Mary's we believe that the most important home learning tasks throughout the school are

- reading and discussing a book with an adult regularly
- learning number bonds and multiplication tables by heart.

Each child is likely to have received a differing amount of help to complete any work at home and therefore it will not be subject to deep marking by the teacher or used for assessment purposes.

~ Pray ~ Learn ~ Love ~ Enjoy ~

The following table gives an idea of what to expect in each age range at St Mary's school

<p>Foundation Stage <i>Red Class</i></p>	<p>Home learning tasks are focused on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reading or sharing a book each night and when appropriate, learning phonic sounds and tricky words and handwriting skills.
<p>Years 1 & 2 <i>Orange and Yellow Class</i></p>	<p>Home learning tasks each week may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • daily reading and talking about the book • sometimes learning to spell words/sounds • practising mental mathematics strategies (quick fire calculations e.g $3 + 4$, $7 + 2$, then e.g. $9 - 3$, $8 - 4$ and then on to basic tables of $\times 0$, $\times 1$, $\times 2$, $\times 10$, $\times 11$, $\times 5$) • optional additional practical or research task related to the learning journey
<p>Years 3 & 4 <i>Blue and Green Class</i></p>	<p>Home learning tasks each week may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • continuing daily reading and discussion with an adult of a wider variety of texts • practising a spelling skill • learning quick recall of multiplication tables – all tables up to 12×12 • sometimes practising a mathematical strategy or an English skill • optional additional practical or research task related to the learning journey
<p>Years 5 & 6 <i>Indigo and Violet Class</i></p>	<p>Home learning tasks each week may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • continuing daily reading and discussion with an adult of a wider variety of texts • practising a spelling skill • continue practising quick recall of multiplication tables and their related facts of all tables up to 12×12 (e.g if $12 \times 8 = 96$ is known, children should be able to quickly work out the answer to the question $96 \div 12$ or $1 \cdot 2 \times 8 =$) • sometimes practising a mathematical strategy or an English skill • optional additional practical or research task related to the learning journey

How can I help?

In General

- Read *with* your child on a daily basis; don't only ask your child to read to you, share the reading material together.
- Ensure that you have resources such as pens, pencils, paper, rulers, scissors, glue, a dictionary and a calculator at home.
- Home learning can happen in many contexts, so go out and about – learn together!
- Extend learning in school by using appropriate websites, library resources, museum visits, etc.
- Help your child find a suitable place to engage in the home learning tasks set by the class teacher.
- Switch off the television whilst home learning is underway but do let your child listen to music if s/he finds it helpful.
- Ensure your child has a break and perhaps something to eat after school before starting on home learning.
- Be interested and be on hand to talk to your child about what s/he has learnt so far.
- Help your child to become an independent learner. Explain how to look up information or find a word in a dictionary rather than simply giving an answer in order to get the task finished.
- Do not write out sentences for your child to copy; instead encourage them to sound out words when writing. Try not to overly focus on the spelling of more difficult or uncommon words as insistence on correct spelling can limit your child's vocabulary choices and they may start to only choose to write the words that they are aware they know how to spell.
- Do insist on correct spellings of words you know they have learnt for previous home learning.
- Help your child and show support, but try not to confuse your child by showing them methods that they do not fully understand or are not ready for. (Maths methods that we use can be seen in our calculations policy on our website or by looking at related lessons in MyMaths.)
- Discourage your child from copying or simply printing out multiple website pages when s/he's asked to do research tasks. Talk about the information together, work out the key facts and help your child to write these down as their own brief notes.

- Be positive about your child's attempts. If you have concerns about his/her progress, make an appointment with the teacher.
- Encourage your child and praise them when they have completed the task.
- Do not let home learning become a chore. Make it a special time that you both look forward to.

Reading

Teachers say that reading at home is the most important way that parents can help their child in their learning and progression across the whole curriculum. Make sure your child has regular reading practice and check they understand what they read. Here are some more tips on helping your child with reading:

- When you read to your child, make the experience interactive – it is so important to ask questions about the story, the pictures and what they think of the characters.
- As their reading skills grow, gradually let them turn the tables until they are reading to you but still be prepared to continue reading to them at times too.
- Use dictionaries together for difficult words - a picture dictionary can make exploring language more interesting.
- Read a range of texts, not just from the school reading scheme. Enroll your child at the local library so they can try a range of new books regularly.
- Keep an eye out for the themes that catch your child's imagination at school - and help follow it up with more reading.
- When you come across an unusual or funny-sounding word, help your child find out what it means; perhaps you could write it on the fridge door with magnetic letters.
- As your child gets older, encourage them to pick up other books around the house to boost familiarity with 'grown-up' language. Suggest a reading list and encourage your child to write down thoughts on the books they have read.

Writing

Writing is a skill that will often start to develop a little after beginning to read.

Encourage young children to use letter sounds rather than names to sound out words they wish to write.

As children start writing they will often concentrate on the initial sound of the word only.

Keep saying the words slowly, stretching the sounds out so that your child hears every one and can make a good attempt at writing it down.

Capital letters are only used at the beginning of a sentence and for names; encourage children to use lower case letters the rest of the time.

An empty page can be very off putting. Give your children real reasons to write at home and different media to do it on:

- Baths crayons
- Sponge letters in the baths
- Magnetic letters on the fridge
- Chalk and chalk board, or chalk on the patio or pavement
- Postcards
- Shopping lists
- Label a drawing, plan or map
- Captions for photographs
- Birthday, Christmas, or thank you cards
- Reminder messages and notes around the house and on the calendar

Maths

Successful learning depends on having problem solving skills and thinking logically as well as the ability to read and write.

Primary school children have a daily maths lesson, but an easy way to boost their skills and motivation is by showing them how useful number skills are in almost everything we do.

Remain positive yourself – e.g. do not give children an easy opt out by telling them that you hate maths.

Encourage fun in maths:

- getting children to measure their height and working out how much they've grown
- on car journeys - playing number-plate games, adding and subtracting with road signs, thinking about speed by dividing distance by time
- at the shops - weighing fruit and vegetables, budgeting with pocket money, working out the relative value of products by comparing prices and weight
- in the kitchen - with weighing and measuring, and temperature and timings
- making models and origami shapes
- learning number bonds to 10 and 20 for quick recall e.g. 7 plus what equals 10? $6 + 2 = ?$
- learning quick recall of multiplication tables to 12×12 as whole number sentences e.g. 6×7 is 42 rather than reeling off the answer in order
- learning related division facts e.g. $42 \div 7$ is 6 and $42 \div 6$ is 7
- make a game out of putting little problems to your child and letting them reason things through, prompting as little as you can. For example, while cooking ask them to work out ingredient amounts if a recipe is doubled. Praise your child for trying, even if they get stuck or get things wrong.

Other Learning

Remember that learning at home does not have to be prescribed by the teacher and may include: listening to music, attending a club, playing a board game, visiting a museum, going swimming etc., all of which are invaluable developmental activities. Children also need time after school to play, socialise and engage in child type activities and to rest.

New experiences and discoveries are always stimulating and they do not have to be expensive or elaborate:

- if you go for a country walk, try collecting leaves of different shapes, looking for insects or signs of wild animals, talk about why metal goes rusty or lichen grows on one side of trees (if you don't know the answers to any questions posed, look them up together)
- introduce your child to simple map-reading using a road atlas or map of your area
- on holiday, be aware of all the things that are different to home - buildings, accents and languages, clothes, food, customs, and so on
- find out if there are clubs in your area which will interest your child - try the local library or leisure centre for information

Feedback on your child's homework

In line with our feedback policy, home learning work will be discussed in lessons or teachers may comment on just one or two aspects of a piece of work. Children are also encouraged to look at each other's work and find areas to praise and areas to develop.

Reviewed: *November 2018*

To be reviewed again: *November 2021*