



## **HOMEWORK POLICY**

This school policy has been drawn up following staff and governor discussions, an investigation of practice in other schools as well as a process of consultation on parents' views regarding homework. It reflects the consensus view of the governors and teaching staff.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Homework is anything that children do outside the normal school day that contributes to their learning in response to guidance from the school. Homework encompasses a whole variety of activities instigated by teachers and parents to support children's learning. Children benefit greatly, therefore, from the mutual support of parents and teachers in encouraging them to learn both at home and at school and we see homework as an important way of establishing a successful dialogue between teachers and parents.

### **WE BELIEVE THAT HOMEWORK HAS THE FOLLOWING PURPOSES:**

1. To consolidate, reinforce and extend knowledge, skills and understanding learnt in class.
2. To develop independence in finding out information (investigative and research skills).
3. To provide opportunities for pupils to prepare for future class work.
4. To provide opportunities and support for extended reading for children of all ages.
5. To involve parents and other carers (grandparents, childminders etc.) in their children's learning and school work.
6. To provide opportunities for parents and pupils to enjoy learning experiences together.
7. To provide opportunities for parents, pupils and school to work in partnership.
8. To provide opportunities for the children to talk about what they are learning with their family.
9. To give opportunities for the children to explore the environment and resources, beyond opportunities available in school.
10. To encourage children to understand and perform mitzvohs and develop their middos.
11. To help children become active participants in synagogue services.
12. To develop the children's discipline, organisational and independent study skills in preparation for secondary school.

### **HOMEWORK AT OUR SCHOOL IS DEFINED AS THE FOLLOWING:**

Homework is any task that a child is asked to do at home. It is not necessarily written work. It may consist of reading, learning by heart and reinforcement of class work, research and project work or further practice of skills learnt in class.

Good primary school practice requires that we give credence to children's other developmental needs. Children spend more time at home than at school, and we believe they develop their skills, interests and talents to the full when their parents encourage them to make maximum use of the experiences and opportunities that are also available outside of school. We appreciate the value of extra curricular activities, (sport, music, dancing, drama, other hobbies, etc.) We also acknowledge the important role of play and free time in a child's growth and development. In setting homework we allow space for these so that children have sufficient time to play at home. Our belief is that well balanced, healthy children should be encouraged to develop their particular interests in many of these activities in their own time.

The staff are always delighted to learn about children's successes in other aspects of their lives and seek to recognise and celebrate this in school.

### **WE BELIEVE THAT HOMEWORK CAN TAKE THE MANY FORMS LISTED BELOW**

Homework encompasses a wide range of possibilities. The following list gives just a few examples:

- **English Reading**
  - set from school eg reading scheme books, school library books
  - simple, fun games eg playing matching games with high frequency words
  - children's general reading eg via recommended reading lists and reading logs
  - book reviews
- **Hebrew reading**
  - via school Hebrew reading scheme
  - via sedra/chumash key word vocabulary
  - via the school tephillo reading programme
- **Sedra questions**
- **Chumash Vocabulary**
  - in context with the children's learning (ie vocabulary from the sedra or specific pesukim studied that week, not simply from an alphabetical list)
- **Giving a D'var Torah at home**
- **Revising chumash pesukim learnt in school**
- **Revising other kodesh textual work (Nach, Mishna, Gomorrah)**
- **Mitzvoh / Middoh of the week**
- **Making an item as part of whole school celebration of Chagim eg a model Succah**
- **Ivrit – revising vocabulary; grammar exercise etc.**
- **Worksheets (covering various areas of the curriculum)**
- **Numeracy**
  - investigative activities eg as suggested via the school newsletter
  - learning number bonds and times tables
  - practical eg weighing and measuring
  - written work
  - ongoing *athletics* web based numeracy activities

- **Spelling**
    - a. learning spellings according to the Sounds-Write programme
    - b. learning high frequency words
    - c. Spelling games and activities
    - d. Learning for spelling tests
    - e. Writing target words in sentences
- Children's spelling skills will be regularly assessed through a variety of formal and informal activities.
- **Writing**
    - a. as part of the literacy curriculum eg writing a poem, story, letter etc
    - b. as part of any aspect of the chol curriculum eg writing about the Fire of London
    - c. as part of the kodesh curriculum eg preparing a d'var Torah; analysing an episode in chumash
  - **Informal suggested newsletter activities covering different aspects of the curriculum, in addition to numeracy and literacy.**
  - **Looking for and bringing in objects to school eg autumn leaves; something magnetic etc.**
  - **Investigative**
    - via books at home
    - via visiting the library
    - via internet (the school cannot be held responsible for the content of web sites not recommended by teachers)
    - other eg via family visits to museums
    - via interview eg speaking to parents and grandparents re how life used to be; finding out about your Hebrew name etc.
  - **learning / rehearsing eg lines or a poem for a play / assembly / siyum etc**
  - **preparation of leyning for school davening**
  - **learning material for a test**
  - **playing games which develop children's physical skills eg practising catching a tennis ball**
  - **practising musical instruments**
  - **cooking, gardening, making things**
  - **explaining how things work**

There is much suitable material in most local book shops should parents wish their children to spend more time in structured academic work.

### **HOW MUCH AND WHAT TYPE OF HOMEWORK DO THE CHILDREN BRING HOME FROM OUR SCHOOL?**

We provide a range of homework that is linked to the age of the children. Younger children will complete simpler tasks. As the children progress through the school they will benefit from a wider range of tasks that enable them to prepare for entry to secondary school. We also use the class newsletters to suggest activities from all aspects of the curriculum that children can do at home with their families.

- Most (but not exclusively all) homework activities are part of the kodesh, literacy numeracy and Ivrit curricula.
- Children in all year groups receive sedra questions each week to discuss at home with their family.
- All children are challenged with a home mitzvoh / middoh of the week at Friday Oneg Shabbos assembly. This is explained to parents in the school newsletter. In addition, children may be asked to practise a specific mitzvoh at home, learned in class.
- Reading is prioritised within the literacy and kodesh curricula from the Reception year.
- Numeracy tasks begin with simple number activities, tables and number bond practice and mathematical games. This eventually develops into formal written numeracy tasks as the children get older.
- From Reception, children receive Ivrit vocabulary and grammar sheets every two - four weeks to allow parents to help their children practise at home, the skills being learnt in class.
- From Year One, children are given spelling homework activities, based on the Sounds-Write literacy teaching programme used in school.
- From Year Two, children are asked to complete at least one formal written homework a week. This will usually be literacy or numeracy based but may also cover other aspects of the curriculum. The amount and complexity of these written assignments increase as the children progress through the school.
- From Year Three, children are expected to revise chumash vocabulary and pesukim learnt in class every evening at home (in order not to fall behind).
- Older children who are no longer reading from the school's reading schemes are expected to continue with their home reading and are asked to record this in personal reading logs. We will issue recommended reading lists as a guidance for families.

There is no legal requirement to provide a set amount of homework. However, in our policy we set out a framework which follows the government's homework guidelines which recommends certain periods of time be spent on homework at different stages. This helps to create an expectation and a discipline for regular, independent learning. We recognise that we may need to review the government's recommended homework time guidelines in order to take kodesh and Ivrit homework requirements into account. We gradually increase the amount of homework that we give the children as they move through the school.

We always bear in mind that homework should never be too onerous nor should it create stress within a family.

The table below shows the types of homework sent home in each year group and the average amount of time we suggest that children should spend on their homework. This schedule is subject to change and there may be times when no homework is set eg in instances of staff sickness, school visits, changes to the school routine and timetable etc.

Since children are not exposed to Hebrew reading in their environment as much as they are exposed to English reading (eg via food packets, signs, magazines, television, computer, story books etc) we expect that children should be spending at least 5 minutes a day at home practising Hebrew reading with their parents in order to help them develop and maintain their Hebrew reading skills.

In order to allow for the children's other out of school activities, they will be given at least two nights to complete their homework. We recommend parents give a little time every day for homework rather than an intensive period once or twice a week.

YEAR GROUP	HOMEWORK	SUGGESTED TIME
NURSERY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Class library book</li> <li>• Sedra questions for Shabbos</li> <li>• suggested newsletter activity</li> </ul>	
RECEPTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• English reading</li> <li>• Hebrew reading</li> <li>• sedra questions for Shabbos discussion</li> <li>• Ivrit vocabulary</li> <li>• Suggested newsletter activity covering different aspects of the curriculum.</li> </ul>	5 – 10 minutes a day
YEAR ONE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• English reading</li> <li>• Hebrew reading;</li> <li>• sedra key words</li> <li>• sedra questions for Shabbos discussion</li> <li>• spelling activities</li> <li>• Ivrit vocabulary &amp; grammar</li> <li>• suggested newsletter activity covering different aspects of the curriculum.</li> <li>• occasional research / activities regarding topics or current affairs</li> </ul>	10 - 20 minutes a day
YEAR TWO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• English reading</li> <li>• Hebrew reading</li> <li>• sedra questions for Shabbos discussion</li> <li>• sedra/chumash key words &amp; vocabulary</li> <li>• spelling activities</li> <li>• Ivrit vocabulary and grammar</li> </ul>	10 - 20 minutes a day

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• suggested newsletter activity covering different aspects of the curriculum</li> <li>• once weekly formal written activity (10 – 20 minutes) which will usually be literacy or numeracy based but may cover other aspects of the curriculum.</li> <li>• occasional research / activities regarding topics or current affairs</li> </ul>	
YEAR THREE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• English reading</li> <li>• Hebrew reading</li> <li>• sedra questions for Shabbos discussion</li> <li>• daily chumash revision (starts after Succos)</li> <li>• spelling activities</li> <li>• Ivrit vocabulary &amp; grammar sheets (approx every 2 – 4 weeks)</li> <li>• twice weekly written homework (15 – 20 minutes) – one of these assignments will always be literacy based through either chol or kodesh, the other assignment will usually be numeracy but, may at other times, cover other aspects of the curriculum)</li> <li>• Jewish Literacy Programme review.</li> <li>• occasional research / activities regarding topics or current affairs</li> </ul>	20 - 30 minutes a day
YEAR FOUR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• English reading</li> <li>• Hebrew reading</li> <li>• sedra questions for Shabbos discussion</li> <li>• daily chumash revision</li> <li>• spelling activities</li> <li>• Ivrit vocabulary &amp; grammar sheets (approx every 2 – 4 weeks)</li> <li>• twice weekly written homework (15 – 20 minutes in the week, 20 – 30 minutes at the weekend) – one of these assignments will always be literacy based through either chol or kodesh, the other assignment will usually be numeracy but, may at other times, cover other aspects of the curriculum)</li> </ul>	20 - 30 minutes a day

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jewish Literacy Programme review.</li> <li>• occasional research / activities regarding topics or current affairs</li> </ul>	
YEAR FIVE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• English reading</li> <li>• Hebrew reading</li> <li>• sedra questions for Shabbos discussion</li> <li>• daily chumash revision</li> <li>• spelling activities</li> <li>• Ivrit vocabulary &amp; grammar sheets (approx every 2 – 4 weeks)</li> <li>• twice weekly written homework (20 – 30 minutes) - one of these assignments will always be literacy based through either chol or kodesh, the other assignment will usually be numeracy but, may at other times, cover other aspects of the curriculum</li> <li>• Jewish Literacy Programme review.</li> <li>• written Ivrit homework once a fortnight (approx 15 mins)</li> <li>• occasional project work</li> <li>• occasional research / activities regarding topics or current affairs</li> </ul>	30 - 40 minutes
YEAR SIX	To be decided – summer 2012	40 - 60 minutes

In addition, children may be given additional tasks that could include research work, reading in preparation for lessons, preparation for an oral presentation and traditional written assignments. Sometimes we ask children to talk about a topic at home prior to studying it in school. For example, in the history topic on toys, we ask children to find out what toys were popular when their grandparents were young and, if possible, to bring examples into school to show the other children. Sometimes we ask children to find and collect things that we then use in science lessons. When we ask children to study a topic or to research a particular subject, we encourage them to use the school and local library, the Internet and CD-ROMs.

#### Key Stage Two (Y3 – Y6)

We continue to give children the sort of homework activities above, but we expect them to do more written tasks independently. We set literacy and numeracy homework routinely each week and we expect the children to consolidate and reinforce kodesh and chol learning done in school through practice at home. In addition, we set chumash homework as well as homework that covers other subjects of the National Curriculum. We also set homework as a means of helping the children to revise for tests to ensure that prior learning has been understood.

It is expected that every child does some reading every night, sometimes as a 'sharing' experience with an adult. Reading material may include fiction, non-fiction, magazines etc. It should be a personal choice from books at home or from the school or local library. We will also give recommended reading lists to Key Stage Two children. It is important that parents monitor children's reading. Children in Key Stage Two will be asked to keep a reading log and will, from time to time, be asked to complete a book review as a homework assignment.

Parents are asked to continue to hear their children practising their Hebrew reading at home in Key Stage Two. The Key Stage Two Hebrew reading homework will be via homework tephillo reading practice cards.

Parents of children in KS2 will be sent a homework timetable, showing the days on which a particular subject is set and the time for the completed work to be handed in.

Research work or special project assignments may be set to reinforce topics being studied in school. These could be ongoing over a longer period of time with the emphasis being on research skills, presentation, illustration, time management and punctuality.

Occasionally children may be asked to finish work at home, but this will not form the core part of homework.

In KS2, children who do not complete their homework (and who do not have a reason) will be asked to stay in during the next morning's playtime in order to complete the task. If a pattern of homework avoidance develops, the class teacher will discuss this with the child's parents.

Parents will be advised at the beginning of the school year at the Information Evening of the homework expectations for their children. They will also be given details of ways in which they may be asked to assist their children at home.

### **Homework during school holidays**

Compulsory written homework will not be given during the Succos, Winter, Purim, Pesach or Summer holidays. Additionally, homework will not be set over a weekend if the Sunday is an erev Yom Tov. Reduced homework will be set during Chanukah week. Children are expected to continue with their reading homework during Chanukah. Homework may be set during half term holidays from Year Three.

Over the summer holidays, we will set activities with the aim of helping the children maintain the levels of achievement that they reached at the end of the previous term. This will hopefully avoid the common post-holiday dip. This is especially important in kodesh where children may not have as much general exposure compared to chol. Holiday work set may include Hebrew reading, holiday diaries, book reviews and mini research / project work. Recognition will be given to work completed through public display, awards etc as an alternative to formal marking.

It is expected that all children will continue to read during the school holidays and that parents will ensure that their children have access to appropriate reading material including from the school's recommended reading lists. Children in Key Stage Two will be asked to complete their reading logs during the school holidays.

### **Absent from school**

- Apart from regular and on-going homework assignments such as spelling; times tables; chumash revision etc. children are not given homework when they are absent from school owing to sickness, unless in exceptional circumstances.
- If a child is absent through sickness for a long period of time, we would recommend that the teacher and parent meet to agree what work should be done, and what sort of help can be given to prevent the child falling far behind.
- It is school policy not to set homework for children who are on holiday during school time.

### **HOW DO WE GIVE FEEDBACK TO THE CHILDREN ABOUT THEIR HOMEWORK?**

All homework is marked promptly and feedback is given to pupils. This may take a variety of forms according to the work set such as:

- immediate feedback by parents or carers
- class discussion about the work
- through tests such as tables, spelling, chumash vocabulary etc
- individual written feedback (according to the school's marking policy)
- individual verbal feedback
- pupils reviewing the work done in small groups
- presentation of homework in class and school assemblies
- spoken / written Ivrit activities
- mitzvoh notes from parents to school

The range of tasks set for homework will take into account the aim of keeping the workload of teachers manageable.

Teachers are interested to know how children carried out activities. The homework diary / reading record book is an ideal place for parents, carers and teachers to record any comments. Parents may also comment on whether the homework activity took longer than the expected time allocation. We advise parents not to allow their children to work beyond the recommended time limit in this policy.

### **WHAT IS THE ROLE OF OUR STAFF IN SUPPORTING THIS HOMEWORK POLICY?**

Staff are expected to support the school's homework policy by:

- setting homework relevant to the class current learning
- providing a range of homework tasks and activities, differentiated where appropriate, to consolidate learning in class
- ensuring the children have a clear understanding of the tasks involved

- communicating with parents and keeping them informed of children's progress, projects and topics to be studied and developed, and individual targets for their children and
- providing feedback to the children about the accuracy and quality of their homework.

As with all other matters relating to children, teachers are available to discuss homework with parents if requested.

### **WHAT IS THE ROLE OF OUR PARENTS IN SUPPORTING THIS HOMEWORK POLICY?**

Parents have a vital role to play in their children's education, and homework is an important part of this process. We ask parents to encourage their children to complete the homework tasks that are set. We invite them to help their children as they feel necessary and provide them with the sort of environment that allows children to do their best. Parents can support their children by providing a good working space at home, by enabling their children to visit the library regularly, by discussing the work that their children are doing and by encouraging and praising them when they have completed their work. Other ways that parents can also help their children include:

- taking them to visit museums and places of interest
- hearing them read and encouraging them to read as much and as widely as possible
- setting a regular example of reading and Torah learning at home
- helping with any basic queries and errors, eg a few spelling words or punctuation points or a request to help look something up in a dictionary or reference book
- helping them to practise spelling, times tables etc.
- keeping the staff informed of any changes in their child's circumstances which may affect their learning
- davening with their children in shul

It is vital that parents display a positive attitude to homework and let their children know that they value its importance. It is also important for parents to recognise that it is the children's responsibility (and not that of the parents) to complete the homework. We ask parents to politely pen a brief note of any difficulties, upsets or unusual circumstances in the homework diary or on the piece of work.

Every effort will be made to ensure that homework set is appropriate for individual children and does not demand too much or too little from the children and their parents. However, homework tasks will normally be easier than those undertaken in class in order to encourage independent working.

Whilst parents are encouraged to support their children, it is important to stress that 'formal' exercises should be done without parental assistance. If parents do give assistance at any times they are asked to note this on the piece of work (or in the homework diary) in order to inform the teacher.

It is expected that up to Y4, parents will support their children when they are doing their homework. From Y5, children will be increasingly expected to do their homework on their own.

If a child does not complete their homework within the allotted time and cannot hand it in as required, parents are asked to write a letter to the teacher explaining why the work was not completed.

If parents have any problems or questions about homework, they should, in the first instance, contact the child's class teacher. If their questions are of a more general nature, they should contact the Headteacher. Finally, if they wish to make a complaint about the school homework policy or the way it is implemented, parents should follow the procedure outlined in the school's complaints procedure.

### **WHAT IS THE ROLE OF PUPILS IN SUPPORTING THIS HOMEWORK POLICY?**

We expect pupils to:

- tackle home tasks promptly and with a positive attitude
- take pride in the presentation and content of their work
- be organised so that necessary books and equipment are not left at school or at home
- take responsibility for handing in the completed task on the agreed day

### **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES WITHIN THE HOMEWORK POLICY**

All children have equal access to homework. All teaching and non-teaching staff at the school are responsible for ensuring that all pupils, irrespective of gender, ability, ethnic origin and social circumstances, have access to the whole curriculum and make the greatest possible progress. We ensure that all tasks set are appropriate to the ability of each child. This means that homework may be differentiated when necessary (for example via different spelling lists). Children with additional learning needs will receive tasks differentiated according to their abilities which may be from a different context to the rest of the class. This includes children with Special Educational Needs as well as more able and very able (Gifted and Talented) children.

Day to day monitoring of this Homework Policy and the provision of equal opportunities is the responsibility of the class teachers. The Deputy Heads are responsible for monitoring the consistency, appropriateness and quality of homework.

### **MONITORING AND REVIEW OF THE HOMEWORK POLICY**

It is the responsibility of the governing body to agree and then monitor the school homework policy. This is done via the education committee. Parents complete a questionnaire every summer (as well as prior to an OFSTED inspection). These questionnaires include asking for parents' views about school homework. The Headteacher and Governing Body pay careful consideration to any parental concerns that are raised via questionnaires or at any other time. All staff will monitor the efficiency and effectiveness of the policy regularly.

This policy will be reviewed every year in the summer term until the school is complete through to Year Six. Every summer, the homework for the following year's highest class will be decided and publicised to the parents. During the initial years of the school, this may be reviewed and modified slightly during the following year(s) if it is felt to be in the best interests of the children's learning. Once the school is complete from Nursery through to Year Six, this policy will be reviewed after every two years.

Sara Keen (Headteacher) May 2011

Signed: **Sara J. Keen** (Headteacher)      **Eddy Breuer-Weil** (Chair of Governors)