



Mosshead Family Learning Policy

In session 2017-18, we decided to pilot a new homework/ family learning model and in session 2018-19 we reviewed this and created the following policy. The reason for doing this was because we had engaged with research which suggested the type of homework we were sending home previously would not necessarily benefit pupils' attainment in the long term and because many of our children were not returning the homework set.

There is little evidence to suggest that the traditional model (a compulsory piece of work set and marked by the teacher) impacts positively on children's learning. It is very work intensive for teachers for very little gain. Spending 10 minutes with your child playing a game, practising a skill orally or reading is more effective than sitting your child down to do a worksheet. There are many other valid reasons for not setting fixed homework - The school day is busy and covers the curriculum within lesson time. Homework doesn't work well for children in wrap-around childcare and there is often not enough time to fit extra-curricular activities, family time, daily reading, and downtime into an evening.

The Research/ Policy and Guidelines from Scottish Government and East Dunbartonshire noted below helped to guide our thinking:

'Overall, homework in primary schools does not appear to lead to large increases in learning.' and **'Effective homework is associated with greater parental involvement and support.'** *Education Endowment Foundation*

'Family learning encourages family members to learn together, with a focus on intergenerational learning.' **'It is a powerful method of engagement and learning which can foster positive attitudes towards life-long learning.'**
(*Family Learning Network, 2016*).

The National Improvement Framework, designed to help deliver excellence and equity in education outlines the Scottish Government's position on family learning as follows:

'Family learning encourages family members to learn together, fostering positive attitudes to lifelong learning. We want to improve and increase the ways in which parents, carers and families can engage with teachers and partners to support their children'
The Scottish Government National Improvement Framework 2017

'Learning together', Scotland's national action plan on parental involvement, parental engagement, family learning and learning at home 2018 – 2021 recognises that 'parental engagement leads to better educational outcomes' and that 'family learning has a vital role to play in helping families to learn and develop together.'

East Dunbartonshire Council Education Service's Parental Engagement Strategy recommends that, **'in the primary stages, homework has a family learning approach rather than routine, rote tasks.'** stating that **'Maximising children's learning is best facilitated by parents engaging in learning activities in the home, in tandem with similar critical instructions being received at school.'** (*Crosnoe 2012*)

We carried out a survey about family learning/ homework and had 131 responses. This information is in Appendix 1.

Parents Views

The majority of parents value opportunities to extend their child's learning at home by doing tasks with them, although some parents do not wish to do any type of homework with their child as they feel the other out of school activities they engage in are more valuable. Many of our families have working parents and many of our children attend clubs and out of school activities. Parents appreciate the flexibility within the family learning model. We have developed a model to allow parents to decide the time spent on homework.

Reading

For younger children we will ask parents to work with their child to learn skills for reading e.g. learning initial sounds, practising reading school texts and reading for enjoyment. Older children are asked to read texts of their choice regularly. We have provided access to Bug Club to give all families a range of different texts they can enjoy with their child.

Spelling

We encourage parents to practise common words and spelling sounds at home with their child and provide a choice of activities to support them to do this. Each week we will send home a list of spelling words for children to practise.

Numeracy

At the start of each learning block (August, January, April) we send home some ideas for supporting your child with their numeracy learning. This focusses upon practising basic skills which are essential for many areas of numeracy and maths as well as providing information on the numeracy focus for that block.

Other areas

At the start of each learning block (August, January, April) we send home a grid containing ideas for tasks related to learning in class. None of these tasks are compulsory but all work brought into school for sharing will be valued by the class teacher. We will also share the learning targets with you termly so that parents know the broad learning areas the children will focus on.

Learning Profiles

Children will have learning profiles which will be updated each term. These will provide snapshots of some of their learning. Targets for learning will also be shared through the learning profile. Through the learning profile we will share some of your child's work on literacy, numeracy, health & wellbeing and other areas of the curriculum.

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| Flexible Active Motivational Important Linked Your Choice | <p>Family life is busy! We want to support family learning which can be done at a time to suit you. Some weeks you may choose to do a few activities and other weeks none.</p> <p>Family learning should be active. Active learning engages and challenges children's thinking. Children learn best when they are playing, talking, exploring and investigating.</p> <p>Family learning should be fun! It is important that children learn about things they are interested in. By providing choice we want to increase engagement.</p> <p>Family time is important. Family learning activities have been designed to encourage positive family experiences – playing, talking, sharing. You may decide to engage in alternative family experiences than those suggested by the school.</p> <p>Many of the family learning activities designed by the teachers will link directly with what is going on in class.</p> <p>Family learning will not be marked by the class teacher. Teachers will, however, encourage children to share and celebrate family learning achievements in class. It is your choice what and how many activities you do.</p> |
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Appendix 1

Review of Family Learning/ Homework Nov 18

Parents - Family Learning/ Homework Survey Summary

A survey was carried out to gather parents' views following the introduction of homework/ family learning grids last session. There were 131 responses to the survey.

76% (100/131) felt the new approach supported family learning.

People who felt the new approach did not support family learning made the following comments:

- Families already do lots of these types of activities
- Parents don't have time to engage in activities
- This is more work for parents
- Some parents preferred the more traditional homework
- Some parents want compulsory homework rather than optional tasks
- Some parents prefer their children attend clubs and do other activities rather than homework or family learning tasks
- Parents wanted to know more about what learning is taking place in school

66% (86/131) preferred options rather than fixed tasks. Many people commented that they would prefer no homework.

99% (130/131) said that their children engaged in other learning activities outside of school (sports clubs, social groups, outdoor activities, etc)

76% (100/131) felt very or extremely confident supporting literacy at home. 22% felt somewhat confident and only 2 parents did not feel confident.

Parents suggested the following to help them better support literacy at home:

- Different books to read than the books read in class
- Choice of books to read
- Books to encourage enjoyment of reading
- Suggested books for a child's age
- A book list
- Books with questions/ comprehension
(All of the above is now being provided through Bug Club reading)
- Information sheets/ Info about how children are learning
- Fixed homework tasks/ more written tasks
- Board games library
- Want to know more about what is being learned in school
- Homework over the weekends
- More digital access
- Extra work for children if they are struggling
- Comprehension and interpretation questions – to be marked by the teacher

74% (97/131) felt very or extremely confident supporting numeracy at home. 21% felt somewhat confident and only 7 parents did not feel confident.

Parents suggested the following to help them better support numeracy at home:

- Individual homework to help when children are struggling
- Exemplars of how to do numeracy tasks
- Want to know more about what is being learned in school
- Links to You Tube videos
- Fixed tasks/ prescriptive homework
- Number games/ board games library
- More interactive/ online learning/ digital tasks
- Additional tasks for more able pupils

73.5% of parents felt that the school should provide homework/ family learning options.

Other feedback

- Many comments in the final section were the same as above.
- Some people didn't want any homework and some wanted much more.
- Quite a few people felt that children were too tired at end of school day to do homework and they should just have time for social clubs, sports clubs, etc.
- Some people wanted only optional tasks and some people wanted all fixed tasks.
- Some people really liked the family learning options and some didn't.
- Some people asked that fixed tasks be kept minimal.
- A couple of people wanted weekend homework but others requested no homework at weekends
- Research/ reports were suggested for older pupils
- Quite a few people requested more information about what pupils were doing in class (numeracy, literacy, class topics, etc) e.g. provided through Class Story on Class Dojo
- Homework/ family learning should reinforce learning in class
- Meet The Teacher opportunity at the start of the year.

Pupil Views

| Question | P4 | P5 | P6 | P7 | P4-P7 aggregate |
|---|------|-----|-----|-----|-----------------|
| Positive responses for maths homework | 63% | 66% | 62% | 60% | 62% |
| Positive responses to spelling homework | 68% | 69% | 52% | 42% | 58% |
| Positive responses to reading homework | 70% | 74% | 62% | 58% | 66% |
| Positive responses to research homework | 88% | 78% | 63% | 72% | 75% |
| Thinks maths homework helps in class | 63% | 57% | 27% | 25% | 43% |
| Thinks spelling homework helps in class | 63% | 74% | 37% | 47% | 55% |
| Thinks reading homework helps in class | 58% | 62% | 54% | 45% | 55% |
| Thinks research homework helps in class | 68% | 57% | 50% | 55% | 57% |
| Gets help from an adult | 68% | 81% | 79% | 68% | 74% |
| Spends 60 mins or under per week | 100% | 90% | 92% | 92% | 93% |
| Thinks homework is important | 78% | 90% | 37% | 35% | 60% |

As children progress up the school, there is less enjoyment and engagement in maths, spelling and reading homework

Children have the most positive attitude towards research based tasks (75% overall)

Children have the least positive attitude towards spelling tasks (58% positive response overall)

Almost all P4-P7 children spend less than an hour on homework each week (93%)

The majority of P4 (78%) and P5 (90%) children think homework is important

The minority of P6 (37%) and P7(35%) children think homework is important

In P6 the link between homework and classwork declines

In P7 the link between homework and classwork declines, with the exception of spelling


Our next steps

- Continue the family learning grids. Most parents are in favour of this approach and this is based on research which says that family learning approaches have more benefit than traditional homework tasks.
- Continue to include links between family learning tasks and class work e.g. based around topics/ subjects/ etc.
- Continue to keep fixed tasks minimal – many parents indicated that their child has a lot of after school activities and/ or they struggle for time for homework. Optional tasks are there for those who wish to engage in these.
- Some fixed tasks can be issued as and when required by teachers to support reinforcement of learning in class.
- Inform parents more about what their children are learning in class. This will be done through Twitter/ Dojo Class Stories and Learning profiles.
- HT to work with gp of pupils to look at tracking learning outside of school (e.g. new skills, social clubs, sports, etc)
- Continue to promote Bug Club as a reading for enjoyment/ alternative reading books at home.
- Teachers/DHTs will continue to liaise with parents where there are difficulties with learning and provide some additional support tasks/ activities to help parents support at home.
- Create parent information sheets/ show methods of learning (these will be uploaded to school website).
- Create a family learning/ homework policy

Appendix 2

Examples of Family Learning Grids/ Spelling Activities

The following is an example of a family learning grid which will be issued termly.

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| READ IT! Read from a book of your choice for at least 15 minutes each night. You can use Bug Club for electronic books, borrow a book from the class library or read a book you have at home. | SPELL IT! Practice spelling common words and words with your spelling sound(s) using activities from the spelling menu. |
| FIND IT! This term we are learning about: Renewable Energy, The Caribbean, Who or What Influences Us and The Earth's surface. Find exciting facts about these topics using books, magazines, programmes, the internet etc. | PRACTISE IT! <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Practise your tables and associated number facts. o Practise working with money in shops or on menus by working out totals and change. o Practise common decimal / percentage / fraction conversions. o Measure the length and weight of items in your house. Try estimate before you measure. |
| DO IT! <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Research a famous mathematician. o Design a poster about Renewable Energy. o We think it rains a lot in Scotland, but does it rain more in the Caribbean? Find out and create a graph with the evidence. | DISCUSS IT! <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Chat to an adult about what influenced them as a child. o Discuss ways you could become more environmentally friendly. |
| Family Learning Primary 7  | |
| PLAY IT! Play 'Sumdog' and 'Topmarks' games to keep important skills sharp. www.sumdog.com www.topmarks.co.uk | |

This is an example of suggested spelling activities

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| Sentence Please Write <u>five</u> sentences using a spelling word in each sentence. Underline your spelling word in each of your sentences. | Design a Word Write down each of your spelling words in a different way e.g. squiggly writing, zig zag writing or swirly writing. | Scrambled Words Turn each of your spelling words into an anagram by scrambling the letters. For example: spelling = <u>pinseel</u> |
| Across and Down Write each word across and down. For example: Word a r d | Colourful Words Brighten up your spelling words by writing each word a different colour. | Connect the Dots Write 10 of your spelling words in dots. Then connect the dots by tracing over them with a coloured pencil. |
| Spelling Bee Practise your spelling words in a Spelling Bee style. Spell your words out loud to someone at home. | <div style="display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> ★ <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> P3 SPELLING MENU </div> ★ </div> | |
| Cheerleading Call out the letters of your words. Cheer up high for letters that touch the top handwriting line (t, u). Put your hands on your hips for middle letters (e, o). Cheer down low for low letters (y, j). | Sensory Spelling Have an adult write each spelling word on your back and see if you can work out which word they are writing. | Type your words Using a phone, computer or tablet, type your spelling words. You could also ask an adult to time how quickly you can type them. |
| Time Test Use scrap paper and see how many spelling words you can write down in one minute, thirty seconds and ten seconds. Words must be spelt correctly! | Toss a word Toss (or roll) a ball back and forth with a partner. You say the 1 st letter and then toss and your partner says 2 nd letter and so forth. | |