

# Blacklaw Primary School



## Homework Position Statement

Updated Aug 2023

‘Learning at home is the learning which happens in the home, outdoors or in the community. It can take place through everyday activities that families already do and can overlap with aspects of organised or active learning activities’.

(Scottish Parental Involvement Officers Network, 2018)

## Rationale

Homework provides an opportunity for communication between school and home about pupil progress. Home learning tasks provide opportunities for parents/carers to engage in pupil learning and completion of homework enables pupils to develop independence and to take responsibility for their own learning. Effective and purposeful homework tasks can be crucial in developing parent/carers’ support for their child’s learning. Activities for learning at home can be specifically designed to enable parents to engage in their child’s learning and build upon the learning from school.

## Parent views

In May 2022, we held a parent/carer consultation event where we gathered the views of our parent body on homework. Here are some of the responses:



In light of this feedback, staff took time at the beginning of session 2022-23 to review our current homework format to make it purposeful and manageable for the majority of our families. This was monitored through the session, and reviewed again in August 2023.

## Our Aims

- To provide an active, encouraging, enjoyable and purposeful homework programme which develops, extends and supports learning.
- To provide the opportunity for parents/carers to be involved and support their child in their learning in reading, phonics/spelling, maths/numeracy and developing skills across the curriculum through play.
- To provide a clear and consistent homework structure across the school to make tasks easy to manage for families with siblings in different stages.
- To enable pupils to become increasingly independent in managing homework tasks to help them to develop skills for learning, life and work.

## Homework format

Across all stages we hope to make homework streamlined and easy to understand.

Every class will have the same four areas of home learning to focus on:

1. Spelling/phonics
2. Reading
3. Maths/numeracy
4. Big Focus

Classes may send home an overview for you at the start of each term with these four areas highlighted to help parents/carers to understand what their child should be doing for homework.

Homework at Blacklaw Primary in Primary 2 Active Encouraging Enjoyable Purposeful	
<p><b>Reading for Pleasure</b></p> <p><b>Reading</b></p> <p><i>Why?</i> Research shows that reading for pleasure can be linked to children's success throughout their time at school and into adulthood. It helps children use their imagination, gives them insights into the world, and an insight to the views of others.</p> <p><i>What might this look like?</i> Turn over to find some suggestions and feel free to do it in a way that suits your child best. Please use books you have at home, we may also send some home from our class/school library.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Please let us know if you require books home via the school office.</li> </ul> <p><b>Home Reader from class to share at home</b></p> <p><i>Why?</i> This is a chance for your child to share the book with you that they have been working on in class. We hope that you can help at home with reading aloud skills like reading with expression and fluency, using punctuation. (Can you use character voices?)</p>	<p><b>Sounds (Phonics) and Words</b></p> <p><b>Spelling</b></p> <p><i>Why?</i> Phonics is a way of teaching children how to read and write. It helps them hear, identify and use different sounds that distinguish words. Children also need to understand that not all words can be decoded using phonics, we call these 'tricky words' like 'was'. A focus on common words can help with this and this is why we will issue phoneme words and common words each week.</p> <p><i>What might this look like?</i> A 'Sound and Word' envelope will be issued to each child. This will create a bank of taught sounds and words. Please keep the envelope in school bags so that we can issue weekly word lists etc. These small sound and word cards can be used in many ways. Turn over to find some suggestions and feel free to do it in a way that suits your child best.</p> <p>We will provide a jotter for you to keep at home. Please use if helpful and if you need a new one throughout the year, just ask! We do not require these to be handed in.</p>
<p><b>Numeracy/Maths</b></p> <p><i>Why?</i> To help our learners understand and use numbers/maths when solving problems or making decisions in everyday life in different situations.</p> <p><i>What might this look like?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Counting - in 1s, 2s, 5s, 10s</li> <li>*Adding and Subtracting - use numbers you feel confident with.</li> <li>*Days and Months - explore dates, calendars and special events.</li> <li>*Telling Time - Chat about times of day and explore clocks in the environment (digital and analogue clock faces).</li> <li>*Money - Look at coins, name them, make totals, set up scenarios and give out change. (Can you be the shop keeper?)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Big Focus</b></p> <p><b>21<sup>st</sup> Century Families Play Awards</b></p> <p><i>Why?</i> In an electronic, media rich age, children spend up to 6-6 hours a day on screen based activities. As a result, children have less opportunities to engage in active play and family time. We appreciate that technology is a fantastic source of learning, however increasing the amount of time children have to play will have positive benefits for their physical, emotional and social health.</p> <p><i>What might this look like?</i> Turn over to find some suggestions and feel free to do it in a way that suits your child best.</p>

## Spelling and Phonics

### Why?

Phonics and spelling helps all pupils to read and write with confidence. It helps them hear, identify and use different sounds within increasingly complex words. When we read, we break down, or decode, the letters used to represent certain sounds and use the pattern of those letters within a particular word to figure out what the word is (how to say it). Essentially, we are translating a printed word into sound. For spelling, we do the reverse in that we take sounds and convert them into words based upon our phonological awareness and understanding of word patterns. For words that cannot be decoded phonetically, we must learn the spelling of these common/tricky words. As pupils' knowledge of phonemes becomes more complex they will start to explore the origin and meaning behind the words.

### What will this look like in practice?

For most pupils in each class, here is what they can expect for phonics/spelling homework. Please note, this can be subject to change, depending on the needs of each class and

should be seen as guidelines for what you can expect to see on a weekly basis. Please return your child's spelling jotter each week so that the teacher can monitor and resolve any difficulties in good time.

Primary 1	Pupils are being introduced to their phonic sounds every week and will have a phonics workbook to practise letter formation, common word lists and flashcards with their new sounds on them which parents/carers can use to support their child with some active learning.
Primary 2&3	Pupils will have new words to learn each week and will have a sounds and words list/envelope sent home. They can use a range of active approaches to learn their new phonics/spelling words. You can see some examples on page 2 of this <a href="#">HERE</a> .
Primary 4&5	Pupils will have new words to learn each week and will have a sounds and words list/envelope sent home. Their word lists will also be available in class so that pupils can copy their words down for practice at home into their jotter if they wish. They can use a range of active approaches to learn their new phonics/spelling words.
Primary 6&7	Pupils will have a list of new words every week which is available on their Google Classroom and is displayed in class so that pupils can copy their words down for practice at home At this stage, the words will be learned in a 4-weekly cycle that explores affixes (prefixes and suffixes added to root words) or phoneme 'families', homophones or words that can be confused with each other (like which/witch), common/tricky words and other spelling rules. Pupils can use a range of active approaches including finding words within words, creating mnemonics or writing spelling stories. You can find more useful activity suggestions <a href="#">HERE</a> .

## Reading for Pleasure

### *Why?*

Reading for Pleasure is one of the most powerful tools at our disposal to unlock achievement and attainment in our young people. The impact of fostering healthy and lifelong reading habits on mental health and wellbeing outcomes is significant and has never been more necessary. The way reading develops young people's imaginations and capacity for empathy with others is vital in this often-troubled world. Reading for pleasure provides an escape and a lens through which our children make sense of their self, their community and their world. Research shows that reading for pleasure can be linked to children's success throughout their time at school and into adulthood. We are also the first school in East Kilbride to be awarded Reading School Core accreditation from the Scottish Book Trust recognising our commitment to reading for pleasure approaches.

### *What will this look like in practice?*

For most pupils in each class, here is what they can expect for reading homework. Please note, this can be subject to change, depending on the needs of each class and individual pupils but your child's teacher will inform you of any changes that affect homework for your family.

Primary 1-3	Pupils will have reading books sent home by the class teacher and families should try to set aside a little time each day to read together. Parents/carers should read to and with their child as they can learn a lot from adult modelling good reading habits. To begin with, books may have no words at all and as they learn to read in class, their books will become increasingly complex. The books may also have some guidance for parents/carers on the inside covers so check the front and back of their books to get some tips, questions and discussion points to share. You can also read for pleasure using books you have at home and remember to visit our wonderful local library for more challenging texts.
Primary 4-7	Pupils will not bring home their reading books that they use in class as reading activities take place daily and pupils need their text on hand to refer to. They will however have access to books from their class library, our school library and from trips to our local library. They should read daily and can use texts from home. We would still encourage parents/carers of pupils at these stages to read with and to their children. You may even enjoy sharing audiobooks, fact books, magazines, graphic novels or comics together. The more we can build a positive culture of reading around our pupils, the more impact home learning can have on their achievement.

## Maths and Numeracy

### *Why?*

Maths homework develops pupils' mental agility, combining both memory and logic towards solving problems. In regularly completing maths homework, children can strengthen their ability to retain larger amounts of information to solve maths problems. It gives them the opportunity to revise core skills like number recognition, number bonds, multiplication facts and memorise them, allowing them to draw on this knowledge and apply it to increasingly challenging and complex maths and numeracy calculations.

### *What will this look like in practice?*

For most pupils in each class, here is what they can expect for maths and numeracy homework. Please note, this can be subject to change, depending on the needs of each class and individual pupils but your child's teacher will inform you of any changes that affect homework for your family.


Primary 1	Pupils will have number flashcards sent home so that they can practise their number recognition and ordering skills. They will also have a maths sheet to help them to develop their number formation and to continue their work to hone their pencil control and fine motor skills. As their confidence with numeracy develops, their sheet may also help to reinforce counting and addition/subtraction skills taught in class.
Primary 2-7	Pupils will have access to appropriate mental maths strategies booklets (depending on their age/stage) and these will reflect the mental maths skills being highlighted in class. Pupils will not have a maths worksheet sent home each week. Instead we will be encouraging independent learning skills through access to online resources for numeracy and maths. There are a wide range of links via our school website in the Home Learning Links section <a href="#">HERE</a> . All pupils also have access to Education City where they can play numeracy and maths games online and there are also accompanying activity sheets that can be printed at home if you would like more challenge for your child.

## Big Focus

### *Why?*

To encourage creativity and independent study skills we also have one big termly focus for homework. This allows us to share other aspects of in school learning with parents/carers at home beyond the literacy and numeracy curriculum. Our Big Focus can also provide opportunities for our families to engage in active play and to spend quality time together. In this electronic, media rich age, where children can spend up to 6 hours a day on 'screen time', we feel that it is vital to encourage our pupils to 'unplug' and spend time together, learning in a fun and meaningful way. We appreciate that technology can be a fantastic tool to facilitate learning; however, increasing the amount of time that children have to play, research and investigate will have positive benefits for their physical, emotional and social wellbeing.

### *What will this look like in practice?*

<p>Primary 1-3</p> 	<p>Throughout the year, pupils in our infant classes will be working toward their 21st Century Families Play Award. This will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Outdoor Physical Play</li><li>• Junk Modelling/Arts &amp; Crafts</li><li>• Role Play/Dressing Up</li><li>• Go for a walk in nature – what can you see? hear? smell?</li><li>• Visit a friend or family member – have conversations and learn from each other (young and old)</li></ul> <p>A booklet will be sent home to complete during the year as soon as we have these available. All will be explained in these booklets but if you have any questions you can contact Mrs Strathern, via the school office or visit the 21st Centuries Families website <a href="#">HERE</a></p>
<p>Primary 4-7</p>	<p>Pupils will have a termly focus that links to their interdisciplinary learning. This can be some research for their social studies topic and will present them with a challenge to carry out home learning to develop their independent study skills and allow them to find creative ways to present their ideas. This can also provide pupils with an excellent opportunity to manage their time, meeting deadlines and being responsible for completing tasks over a longer period. This also allows for families to fit these tasks in around other commitments outside of school and to have flexibility over when and how to complete this home learning.</p>



# Feedback on Homework

At Blacklaw we recognise that feedback is vital to pupils in order for them to make improvement in their learning.

One efficient and immediate response to move pupils' learning forward is to provide verbal feedback. Giving feedback verbally means that you can clarify and elaborate immediately, therefore ensuring that misconceptions are not embedded, and pupils can act upon the feedback given straight away. Studies have shown that verbal feedback can have a slightly greater impact to overall student progress than written feedback alone.

Pupils will have a jotter home with them to complete work and if they would like some feedback, they can submit their work to their teacher on a Monday. The teacher can then review their work and provide them with meaningful verbal feedback the following day when pupils are given their work back again. This provides an opportunity for discussion between parents/carers and their children about the feedback given. We appreciate that some parents/carers would like to hear feedback directly from their child's teacher about homework and this can be discussed this during parental consultations.

## Online Resources

You can use the QR codes below to quickly access the online links for numeracy and maths and please see your child's class teacher if you need a note of their login for Education City. You can also contact the school office for any issues with access to your child's Google Classroom or with other online resources that your child may need access to.

The graphic features the words "Homework Help" written in a green, hand-drawn font on a set of blue horizontal lines. A vertical red line is positioned to the left of the text. Below the text, there are two QR codes, a central shield-shaped logo with a blue and white saltire and a white flower, and two red circles. The left circle contains the text "Education City Login" and the right circle contains "Blacklaw Website Home Learning Links".