**GALSTON PRIMARY SCHOOL
HOMEWORK POLICY
2016**

**Introduction Rational**

At Galston Primary School we believe that doing homework is one of the main ways in which children can acquire the skill of independent learning. In line with Curriculum for Excellence and Dyslexia Friendly Schools initiative we strive to ensure that homework is active, manageable and enjoyable for pupils.

We also acknowledge the important role of play and free time in a child's growth and development. While homework is important, it should not prevent children from taking part in the activities of various out-of-school clubs and of other organisations that play an important part in the lives of our pupils to help develop their interests and talents.

**Aims**

* To provide a consistent approach throughout the school
* To enable pupils to make maximum progress in their academic and social development
* To promote co-operation between home and school in supporting each child's learning
* To consolidate and reinforce work in school, and to allow children to practise key skills taught in lessons taking into account different learning styles
* To help children develop good work habits and life skills for the future

**Types of homework (see appendix for examples)**

Homework activities are related to the work pupils are doing in class and dependent on age and stage at school. The activities will vary depending on the needs of the class and teacher, but will usually include:

* Reading Activities- including reading aloud
* Spelling– Written and/or practical activities
* Games or activities to practice literacy, numeracy or other skills
* Preparing a presentation to deliver to an audience
* Research information for a project, using a variety of sources
* Enterprising challenges such as model making, dioramas

**Amount of homework**

Homework is issued weekly, usually on a Monday, and is completed and handed in before the end of the week. As pupils move through the school the amount and complexity of the homework tasks will increase. Where Early Level pupils may have many short tasks, pupils at higher levels may have only one complex task to complete.

In Primary 1- 3 homework tasks should take approximately 15 minutes each night.

In Primary 4-5 homework tasks should take approximately 20 minutes each night.

In Primary 6 -7 homework tasks should take approximately 25 minutes each night.

**Homework Diary**

Pupils are issued with a homework diary; these vary according to the needs of the class and teacher. These show the tasks to be completed and any messages from the class teacher. The diaries are handed in to the class teacher each week with the homework and are checked for any messages from the parent. Parents are expected to sign the diary as seen and to confirm tasks are completed.

**Role of the Class Teacher**

The class teacher will ensure that consistent, regular homework is set which links to the curriculum being taught. The class teacher will provide an explanation of homework tasks and give guidance on how they should be completed. Homework is regularly marked and feedback (oral and written) will be given by the class teacher using the DFS marking code. (See appendix 1)

The Class teacher will monitor completion of homework tasks and record incidents of non-completion. A letter will be issued to the parent when homework has not been handed in on three consecutive occasions. Senior management team are notified of the issue of these letters and will contact home if homework becomes a concern.

**DFS Homework tips for Setting Homework**

* Homework should be set early in the day as pupils are likely to make mistakes if copying from the board in a rush
* Provide enough time for pupils to copy from the board or it might be better to provide homework instructions in the home/school diary or engage the assistance of a trusted ―buddy to scribe for them or to provide them with a photocopy of their diary entry
* A reasonable time limit will be set for the task to be completed
* Homework instructions should be included on hand out or other written slip as pupils with memory difficulties tend to forget what they have to do
* Instructions might be put onto glow or school website if children have access to this
* Homework tasks should be chunked into manageable parts
* Spelling words will be pre-taught prior to setting as homework and focus on one word family or spelling rule at a time, with high frequency words as an exception
* Mnemonics might be made up and pupils encouraged to practice words using multi-sensory tasks instead of just LSCWC and sentences to make spelling much more fun and relevant to their individual learning styles
* Ensure that homework tasks are varied. Many dyslexic children love a design task, making something, collecting items, so try to include something that is more innovative!
* Homework may have to be differentiated so that it is within the child‘s capabilities.

**Role of the pupil**

Pupils are expected to complete and return all homework issued by the teacher. Pupils are expected to complete tasks to the best of their ability and to seek help when they are unsure. Pupils need to know how well they have done and what they could do better. Teachers will provide feedback however, pupils self-assess all homework tasks using the traffic light system to ensure they have an understanding of how they are doing and their development needs.

**Role of the Parent**

Homework allows parents to see what their children are doing and to support their learning. This partnership between school and home is a vital part of successful education. We take the view that children are likely to get more out of an activity if parents are engaged with the learning.

Parents should provide the pupil with a time and place to complete their homework.

If a child has difficulties with a piece of homework, they can discuss it with their teacher; parents may highlight any issues in the homework diary, or arrange an appointment to discuss this with the class teacher.

**Tips and Hints for Parents**

* Keep calm. Dealing with homework can be tricky!
* Try to provide a quiet time and place for homework
* Setting a routine with a visual planner is a good idea, with room for flexibility around after school activities and the need for a ―brain break‖ immediately after school.
* Choose a time that suits both child and other family members.
* Make sure your child is clear what homework has been set, when it has to be completed, and how long it should take.
* Check your child understands what to do – if not, do what you can to help. A best effort will always be appreciated.
* Chunk homework into manageable bits with time for a break in between.
* Use encouragement rather than criticism.
* Do use reward activities for good attempts.
* Mistakes are OK – your child‘s teacher uses homework results to assess understanding.
* Encourage using a timer and a checklist to tick off.
* Don‘t do the homework for your child but do give suggestions and support.
* For written work check with your child‘s teacher what formats are acceptable – bullet points, mind maps, story boards.
* Help your child to edit, self-monitor and check their work as they go along.
* Encourage computer skills.
* Reading practice is very important – for 5 minutes a day – using any material your child likes. This needn‘t be a book – newspapers, comics, instruction leaflets, recipes are all fine as long as the child can recognise some of the words. Use the **5 finger rule** – your child puts a finger on every word he doesn‘t know. Once all 5 fingers have been used up on one page, the text may be too hard for individual reading.
* Keeping a home reading log is a good idea.
* Use paired reading where you and your child read the words together out loud in a relaxed way – the child can ask to take over, or to have a break while you read.
* If homework is becoming a battle or your child is distressed, or avoids homework, try to find out why in a calm low key way, and contact your child‘s teacher for advice.

**Absence**

If children are absent only on the day of issue of homework, it is expected that they will collect homework tasks on their return the next day. For longer absence due to illness we will not send homework home. We would assume the child was too ill to work. For periods of extended absence the teacher and the parent will discuss an appropriate course of action.

Homework will not be issuedIt is not possible to give when parents take holidays in term time. In these cases it is considered the parents responsibility to ensure continuity of the pupils learning and liaise with the class teacher on return.

**Role of SMT**

The SMT will liaise with class teachers where homework has become an issue with a class or individual pupil. They monitor homework regularly to ensure consistency across the school. They will monitor and review this policy on an annual basis.

**Policy Adopted**

This policy was adopted in March 2017

**Policy Review**

This policy will be reviewed in May 2018

Signed-\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Head Teacher)