

St Thomas' CE

Home Learning Policy

Intent

Through our home learning policy, we aim to continue to foster a love of learning within all of our pupils, thus developing self-motivated, independent learners. Through parental engagement and effective communication between teachers and families, we encourage all pupils to practise and embed basic skills such as: reading, spelling and times tables at home. Children will also be offered the opportunity to engage in learning activities linked to the broader curriculum which will interest and excite them and continue to open their eyes to the world around them and prepare them for the future that lies ahead.

Expectations for EYFS

The Early Years team will send home a weekly newsletter every Friday to keep parents/carers informed of the different learning that has taken place throughout the week. In addition to daily reading and spellings practice, a home learning task will be uploaded onto Seesaw every Friday and parents are asked to support their children in completing this task. Home learning tasks will always be related to that week's learning and will provide an opportunity for the children to consolidate their learning at home.

Expectations for KS1 and KS2

Reading

Developing confident readers who love diving in to a range of texts is at the heart of our broad curriculum. We believe that the most important home learning activity is regular reading.

In school, reading is prioritised daily, so we therefore ask pupils to read as often as possible (at least five times per week) at home. Suggested reading times are around 10 minutes in Reception increasing to at least 30 minutes by Year 5 & 6. Children will all be provided with banded books, appropriate for their reading level, to read and explore at home. As children progress through KS2, they may be put on to 'Open Read' where they can choose from a wide range of books themselves. It is important the children read a range of texts – from different genres of books to non-fiction texts. We ask that pupils read frequently with adults in their home and record this in their learning journal to develop their fluency and love of reading!

Times Tables

We believe a solid times table knowledge plays an integral part in developing confident mathematicians with an in-depth understanding of a range of mathematical concepts. We therefore use Times Table Rockstars to offer children an opportunity to practice and embed their times table (and corresponding division facts), encouraging quick recall and therefore, improved mathematical fluency. Every child will be given a TT Rockstars login and will be encouraged to access this programme as frequently as possible, recording their practice in their Learning Journals. Children have the opportunity to take part in battles and competitions against their peers and are also able to win prizes such as 'Most Improved'.



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Spellings

Learning key spellings by heart is an important part of reading and writing. We therefore will provide children with list of spellings to learn at home (see below, 'Home Learning Help' for some suggestions on practising spellings effectively). These spellings and corresponding spelling rules, will be explored in school and will make up part of the writing expectations for your child's year group, so children will be given lots of opportunities to apply them in their writing. Each class has a weekly spelling test. These spellings will be continuously revisited throughout the year and may be repeated in spelling lists sent home, as what has not been remembered, has not been learned!

Knowledge Organisers

At St Thomas', we teach a broad curriculum which inspires our pupils' curiosity and thirst for knowledge in a range of subject areas; we therefore want the children to share and develop their knowledge at home. At the beginning of each half term, your child will bring home a Knowledge Organiser for their current history, geography, science, art, French and Religious Education units; these are also available on the Home Learning sections of your child's class webpage. These Knowledge Organisers contain all of the key facts that your child will aim to learn and remember as they progress through the curriculum; these facts will be continuously revisited – not just during this unit, but throughout the year and in years to come! We ask that children continue to practise and retrieve these facts at home, along with sharing their new knowledge with their families. Please see below 'Home Learning Help' for tips and advice on ways in which children can use their Knowledge Organisers at home.

Home Learning Menus

Along with the use of Knowledge Organisers, teachers will set a Home Learning menu for their classes. This menu will give a range of task options which children can choose from to complete at home to further extend or consolidate their learning in either history, geography or science. We ask that children complete at least one task per half term (they can do more if they wish!) and can evidence their learning through Seesaw – they may upload photographs, videos and work to demonstrate all they have been doing at home. We would like children to complete a range of tasks from the menu based on a range of topics. Please see below, 'Home Learning Help' for more information about Home Learning Menus and how your child may plan their learning at home.

Developing Independence and Life Skills in KS1 and Ks2

At St Thomas' we value the importance of preparing children for the life that lies ahead of them. Within our curriculum, we have mapped out a range of skills which we will encourage children to practise and master in order to become more independent. These skills range from learning to tie shoe laces, to money management! We believe that in order for children to master these skills, they need to be practised both in school and in real-life environments; we therefore ask for parents to seek out opportunities to work with their child to practise these skills at home. Your child's class teacher will set a termly 'Super Skills' target with some ideas of how to develop this at home. Children can evidence all of their learning through SeeSaw: this may include photographs of their progress or even a comment or report from themselves or a member of their family. Look out for the termly Super Skills on your child's class newsletter!



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Home Learning Help

How can I support my child with home learning?

Below is a list of ways that you as a parent can show your child that you value their homework and the time and effort spent completing it. The school will also provide clear and regular reminders of their expectation when it comes to homework. As a school we hope that you will find this guidance helpful in supporting your child fully with their homework.

You can show you value your child's homework by:

- Providing a suitable place in which your child can do their homework, preferably with an adult to discuss, encourage and support;
- Making it clear to your child that you value home learning and support the school in explaining how it can help learning;
- Encouraging your child and praising them when they have completed work set;
- Signing and dating your child's learning journal;
- Upload work on to your child's seesaw app;
- Checking your child spends a suitable amount of time on home learning.

How can my child effectively practise spellings at home?

There are plenty of ways to support your child practising their spellings at home. It's great to always start by discussing the meaning of a word: you could try putting the word into a sentence, finding the word in a dictionary or text or even finding synonyms/ antonyms of the word. Once your child knows the meaning of a word and has had an opportunity to apply the word in their own communication, now have a go at practising the spelling!

With spelling flashcards:

- **Pairs:** Create a double set of the words your child is finding tricky. Pick up two cards at a time until they find a pair. Can they verbally spell it out to you?
- **Flip, Read, Letters and Write:** Your child can learn their spellings in 4 quick steps. Have the child flip over a card, read it, spell out the letters and then write it down.
- **Trace, Copy, Recall:** Fold a piece of paper into three columns and label them trace, copy and recall. Write the word in the first column and have your child trace it. Next, get them to copy the word in the next column by looking back at the letters. Finally, get them to fold and hide the first two columns and practise writing the word in the final column.
- **Pocket Cards:** Make small cards to keep in your pocket or bag and when you are walking to school, making breakfast or sitting in the park ask the children to spell the words to you.
- **Stairs:** Write the words as if they are stairs, adding one letter each time: S, Sp, Spe, Spel, Spell

With a computer or tablet:

- **Type it out:** Open up a document to type on. Call out the word for the child to spell. They can then play around with the word; increase the font size, change the colour etc.



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- **Voice record:** Using a recording device have your child spell out the word and get them to listen back.

How can I help my child to develop their reading fluency and comprehension at home?

Encourage reading at home: Could you set up an area in your home which is reserved for reading? Make this area as enticing and welcoming for your child!

Explore a range of texts: Encourage your child to choose a range of texts. Maybe visit a local library and explore the books together! If you are struggling for inspiration, ask your child's teacher for a 'recommended reads' list. Remember -newspapers, magazines and non-fiction texts are just as important and will further develop your child's love of reading.

Ask questions: A child develops their comprehension when they discuss a text. At school, we use reading DOGS and VIPERS to ask a range of questions about texts. See you child's home learning page for 'question stems' to give you some ideas of the right questions to ask!

Don't be afraid to re-read: Books are made to be read again! If you felt your child didn't quite grasp a book, don't be afraid to re-read. This will develop their fluency and understanding!

Be a reader: It is important that children see reading role models. If your child spots you reading, they are more likely to be keen to read themselves! Reading to your child is also a valuable experience as it allows them to be fully immersed in the book and gives you an opportunity to choose a text that they may not have necessarily read themselves. You could even model the reading process and making mistakes; it's important that children understand that even adults can find things tricky at times!

How can we effectively use Knowledge Organisers at home to revise and retrieve key facts?

The Knowledge Organisers your child brings home are full of facts that they will need to learn and remember. Low stakes quizzes are used in school to help children to remember these facts – these quizzes are designed to offer children an opportunity to rehearse these facts in a light hearted and fun way, enabling them to retrieve and consolidate these memories – allowing you child to remember more!

Below are some ways to use the Knowledge Organiser to help your child to remember these facts:

Blank it out: Blank out parts of the knowledge organiser. Can your child tell you what is missing? You could do this with key dates or names.

Which word? You will see a number of STAR words – this is the vocabulary that your child needs to know and understand. Your child should know an action for each word – say the word and see if they can show you the action! Can they explain the meaning of the word in their own words? Can they put the word into a sentence?

Tricky Timeline! There will be a number of key dates your child needs to try to remember. Can you challenge them to create a timeline of these dates? Or even provide them with the dates and ask them to explain what happened at that time.

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Know the facts: Provide your child with a fact from the Knowledge Organiser with some words missing – can they fill in the blanks?

Make notes: The simple task of note taking will offer another opportunity for your child to rehearse their knowledge. Ask your child to use their Knowledge Organiser to take ten minutes to make simple notes. You may want to model this by drawing mind maps or jotting down key words that you spot.

Brain Dump: Hide the Knowledge Organiser and give your child three minutes to jot down everything they can remember from it!

Quiz time: Ask your child to plan a short quiz to test your knowledge on from the Organiser! They can mark your work and give you feedback.

True or False: Give your child some statements from the knowledge organiser, with some incorrect ones in there. Can they tell you which is true or false?

Little and often! Remember – your child doesn't need to learn all of this information at once and may take some time to remember the facts. A short 5 -minute question or task a day is enough to support your child in learning all of the facts. Don't be afraid to repeat the same task and revise the same information – this is important in helping your child to remember.

How do we use the Home Learning Menus? What is my child expected to do?

At the start of each half term, your child's class teacher will set a home learning menu. It is the expectation that pupils should complete at least one task from the menu each half term – children and parents are free to choose from the selection of tasks from the menu. There will be a range of purposeful learning activities for you and your child to choose from some are designed for children to complete independently whereas some may need additional support from an adult and may take a bit longer. Evidence of the children's learning is to be recorded on SeeSaw.

An example home Learning Menu:

1. Create an information text on your chosen subject area.

E.g. Australia

This text should be aimed at a Year Three child and should include a glossary, key facts (including names, dates and important information) and at least three sub-headings with plenty of information. You can present this however you wish E.g. written booklet or PowerPoint presentation.

2. Write a speech about your chosen subject area.

E.g. How did Britain establish a powerful empire?

Use your knowledge organiser to help you to include as much information as possible then record yourself giving your speech.

3. Make a model of a building you have learned about.

E.g. The city of Baghdad

Can you use your knowledge of the city of Baghdad to create a realistic model?

You may even want to record yourself talking about your model and all of the different parts of the city you have included.

4. Research further!

E.g. The Abolition of Slavery



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You could visit local museums (there are plenty in Liverpool!) or libraries to further research your chosen subject area. Try taking a note pad so you can jot down interesting things you have found out. Consider how you could represent the new information – could you create your own Knowledge Organiser with the new information that you have?

5. Plan a lesson.

E.g. The French Revolution

Think back to one of your favourite lessons – what did you learn? Plan and deliver a lesson to a member of your family. Think about the vocabulary you would like them to learn, the new knowledge they need to gain and a short task they can complete following on from your lesson. You could even create a lesson presentation.

Home Learning menus are designed to further extend a child's understanding of a subject but also to inspire them to learn more. We encourage all parents to take this opportunity to learn with their child. Maybe set a couple of days aside each half term to really focus on this project and support your child in demonstrating all that they know!



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