



Homework Policy

The Willows Catholic Primary School

VERSION: 26.01

ADOPTED:

NEXT REVISION: September 2029

Version Control

Date of last review:

Date of next review:

September 2029

Review period:

Three yearly

Policy status:

Statutory

Owner:

Headteacher

Version

26.01

Previous Versions

Version	Author	Date	Changes

This policy applies to

The Willows Catholic Primary School

only

With Christ at our heart, we are a loving, caring family where each individual is nurtured in mind and spirit to fully become the person God created. In learning together, we support each other to reach our full potential in a safe and stimulating environment where all are valued and respected.

Contents

1. Rationale	4
2. Our Homework Expectations	4
3. Year 4 – Brass 4 All	4
4. Reading	5
5. Phonics or Spellings	6
6. Times Tables or Number Facts	7
7. No Additional Homework	7
8. Holidays	8
9. Children with SEND	8
10. Equality and Access	8
11. When Home Learning Is Not Completed	8
12. When Home Learning Is Not Completed	9
13. Policy Review	

1. Rationale

At The Willows Catholic Primary School, we recognise the important role that families play in supporting children's learning.

We also recognise that children's time outside school is important. Children need opportunities to spend time with their families, play, exercise, develop interests and rest.

For this reason, our approach to homework is deliberately simple and focused. We do not believe that children need large amounts of additional work at home or that homework should be set simply because it is a particular day of the week.

Our approach is informed by current educational research, including evidence from the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF). The EEF's Teaching and Learning Toolkit identifies a positive impact from homework overall but finds that the impact is smaller in primary schools than in secondary schools. The EEF also stresses that the quality of homework is more important than the quantity and that homework is most effective when it is clearly linked to learning taking place in school.

2. Our Homework Expectations

There are three homework expectations at The Willows:

1. Reading
2. Phonics or spellings
3. Times tables or number facts

These are the areas where regular, short practice at home can support the learning taking place in school.

The exact activity will depend on the child's age and stage of learning. For example, a younger child may practise phonics and number facts while an older child may practise spellings and multiplication tables.

These three areas form our homework offer. Teachers will not set additional written English, mathematics or wider-curriculum homework, projects or worksheets.

Our priority is not the quantity of homework completed. We want children to develop secure knowledge, fluency and positive learning habits through regular, purposeful practice.

3. Year 4 – Brass 4 All

There is one specific addition to our homework expectations for children in Year 4.

As part of our music curriculum, every Year 4 child takes part in the Brass 4 All programme and is loaned a brass instrument. Children are expected to practise their instrument regularly at home so that they can consolidate the skills taught during their music lessons and develop increasing confidence and fluency as musicians.

Learning to play an instrument requires regular practice. Research also suggests that sustained musical training can support aspects of children's cognitive development, including attention, memory, planning and other executive functions which are important for learning across the curriculum.

Instrumental practice is therefore an additional Year 4 expectation because it directly supports the music curriculum being taught in school.

4. Reading

Reading is the most important part of home learning at The Willows.

We expect children throughout school to read at home at least four times each week and preferably every day.

Developing confident, fluent readers has benefits far beyond English lessons. Reading gives children access to knowledge and vocabulary across the curriculum and supports their learning in subjects including science, history, geography and religious education.

Research considered by the Education Endowment Foundation shows that parental engagement can positively affect children's attainment, with much of the evidence concerning home-reading interventions and literacy outcomes.

We therefore ask families to make reading a regular part of their child's routine, aiming for daily reading wherever possible.

The way parents and carers support reading will change as children become older and more independent.

Reception and Key Stage 1

Children should read their school reading book to an adult at least four times each week and preferably every day.

Where children are learning phonics, books sent home will be matched as closely as possible to the sounds and words they have been taught.

Repeated reading of the same book is valuable. It helps children move from decoding individual words towards fluent reading and allows them to concentrate increasingly on meaning and understanding.

Parents and carers should also read books to their children. Children benefit from hearing books that are more challenging than those they can yet read independently.

Adults should talk to children about what they have read, discuss new vocabulary and encourage them to talk about characters, events and ideas.

Key Stage 2

Children should continue to read at home at least four times each week and preferably every day.

As children become fluent readers, they will increasingly read independently. However, parental involvement remains important.

Parents and carers can support older pupils by:

- listening to them read from time to time
- talking to them about their books
- asking them about characters, events and information

- discussing unfamiliar vocabulary
- encouraging them to read a broad range of books
- reading to them and sharing books together.

Reading aloud should not stop simply because a child can read independently.

5. Phonics or Spellings

The second homework expectation is regular practice of phonics or spellings, depending on the child's age and stage of learning.

Phonics

Children who are following the school's phonics programme may be asked to practise sounds, words or other phonics learning at home.

This practice will always relate to phonics that has already been taught in school. Parents are not expected to teach new phonics content.

Regular, short practice helps children develop quicker and more secure recognition of sounds and words and supports the development of reading fluency.

School will provide parents with information about how phonics is taught so that home practice uses approaches consistent with those in school.

Spellings

As children progress, they will be expected to practise spellings appropriate to their stage of learning.

Spelling practice will be linked to spelling patterns, rules or words being taught in school.

In Year 1, children will be given the 'Tricky Words' from the school's phonics programme to learn as their spellings. These are words that are not decodable using their phonics knowledge. Regular practice at home will help children recognise, read and spell these words with increasing fluency.

The purpose of home spelling practice is not simply to memorise a list of words for a weekly test. We want children to remember spelling patterns and apply them accurately when writing independently.

Children may therefore be asked to revisit previously taught spellings as well as practise current ones.

Teachers will adapt phonics and spelling expectations where appropriate to meet individual children's needs.

6. Times Tables or Number Facts

The third homework expectation is regular practice of times tables or number facts, depending on the child's age and stage of learning.

The purpose of this practice is to develop secure and fluent recall. When children can recall important number facts quickly, they can concentrate more effectively on the more complex mathematical thinking required in lessons.

For younger children, home practice may include:

- counting
- number bonds
- addition and subtraction facts
- doubles and halves.

As children progress through school, the emphasis will increasingly move towards multiplication and corresponding division facts.

Children will only be expected to practise mathematical knowledge that has already been taught in school.

Multiplication Tables

Once multiplication tables have been introduced in school, children should practise them regularly at home.

The aim is for children to recall multiplication and related division facts accurately and fluently rather than work through large quantities of written calculations.

The National Curriculum expects pupils to develop increasing fluency with multiplication tables during Key Stage 2.

By the end of Year 4, pupils are expected to know their multiplication tables up to 12×12 .

7. No Additional Homework

Reading, phonics or spellings and times tables or number facts are the homework expectations at The Willows.

The only additional routine expectation is for Year 4 pupils to practise the brass instrument loaned to them as part of the Brass 4 All programme.

Teachers will not routinely set:

- English or mathematics worksheets
- additional written activities
- topic or curriculum homework
- research tasks
- home-learning projects.

This approach allows children and families to concentrate their time on the regular practice that we believe will have the greatest benefit, while protecting children's time outside school for family life, play, physical activity, interests and rest.

8. Holidays

Children should continue to be encouraged to read for pleasure. Families may also choose to continue practising phonics, spellings, number facts or multiplication tables.

Year 4 pupils are encouraged to continue practising their brass instrument during school holidays where this is practical and appropriate.

9. Children with SEND

Homework should be accessible to all children.

Teachers will take account of children's individual needs when setting expectations for reading, phonics or spellings and times tables or number facts.

This may include:

- reducing the quantity of practice
- adapting the activity
- providing alternative resources
- adjusting spelling or mathematical content
- allowing different ways of completing an activity.

A child should not have to spend substantially longer completing an activity simply because of an identified additional need.

Where homework is causing persistent difficulty or distress, parents should discuss this with the child's class teacher.

10. Equality and Access

We recognise that children have different levels of access to technology, books and learning resources, quiet working space, adult support and time within family life.

EEF research highlights the importance of considering these barriers when schools set homework.

A child will not be disadvantaged because their home circumstances make completing homework difficult.

Where online resources are used, school will make reasonable arrangements for children who cannot access them at home.

11. When Home Learning Is Not Completed

We want families to work with school to establish positive learning habits.

Where a child regularly does not meet the school's expectations for reading, phonics or spellings or times tables or number facts, teachers may discuss this with the child and their parents or carers. The same approach will apply to the additional instrumental practice expected in Year 4.

The first response should be to understand whether there are barriers preventing the child from completing home learning and to consider how school can help.

Children should not lose break or lunchtime simply because homework has not been completed.
Homework will not be used as a punishment.

12. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure that the school's approach remains consistent with current evidence, statutory curriculum requirements and the needs of our pupils.