



Learning at Home Policy

At Sitwell Junior School, we want children to understand that they are always learners. We believe children should be encouraged to read, write, perform arithmetic, better understand the world around them in terms of civics, science, and the arts, and develop their people skills – their emotional intelligence. As well as being a key driver within school, this encouragement should be part of everyday family life outside of school and this policy provides developmental guidance for parents in order to achieve this.

Learning at Home – Where to Start?

At Sitwell Junior School we believe that children's learning is strongly influenced by the home. Your interest and involvement in your child's learning and education is more important than anything else in helping your child fulfil their potential. As parents, you are the people who are travelling with your child on their lifelong journey, from the day they are born to the time they become an adult.

As a starting point through family time and discussion with your child you can:

- promote your child's social-emotional and character development;
- spend more time directly interacting with your children in enjoyable ways;
- show how much you value the importance of education and effort;
- monitor your child's use of and exposure to electronic media;
- continue your child's learning in as many ways as possible during everyday household routines.

With this in mind, there is no formal timetable of 'homework' for children at Sitwell Junior School. **We only ask parents and carers to commit to reading with your child for around 10-20 minutes every day.**

Our school policy is Learning at Home

The time you spend with your child away from school is very important to you both. This is when you can be relaxed and enjoy 'time off' together. By making the most of this time, you can also support your child's learning. Any time you spend with your child enjoying yourselves will enhance their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development along with all of the Sitwell 7 Values:

- Respect
- Relationships
- Responsibility
- Resourcefulness
- Risk Taking

- Resilience
- Reflection

By spending time helping your child to develop these values, you will provide him or her with a role model, showing that you appreciate learning and that learning is important for both children and adults alike. These times are much more important to children than we sometimes realise.

Learning at Home – Family Time

There are lots of ways you can enjoy family learning time together, many of which you probably already do, for example:

- playing a sport together e.g. swimming, cycling, football, chess;
- enjoying a meal together at home sitting round the table, discussing things and exchanging news;
- going out for the day e.g. to a museum, to the cinema, to a zoo;
- watching a favourite television programme together and talking about it;
- turning the television off for the evening and reading, talking, looking at photographs, listening to music, or watching family videos;
- enjoying walks together locally or out in the countryside;
- looking after the garden and growing plants, vegetables, flowers;
- shared hobbies;
- playing computer games together.

Learning at Home – Reading

Any reading you can do together with your child will help him or her in several different ways:

- it really helps you to get close, physically and emotionally;
- your child has your whole attention while you are reading together– very important for his or her self-confidence and self-esteem;
- you can help your child appreciate the pleasure of reading;
- you can help him or her with any difficulties;
- you are providing a good role model – an adult who likes to read.

For ideas to help your child with their reading, see the ‘10 Tips on Hearing your Child Read’ information sheet.

Learning at Home – Maths

All of the children are issued with a username and password for the website www.mymaths.com This website is used in maths lessons to support learning, and the children can access all of the activities at home. If the children want to do extra practice at home, they are free to choose any activities to complete should they so wish.

Learning at Home - Projects

One way of getting involved with your child’s learning is to work on a specific project or topic. Projects for each Year Group are published half termly. Children will come home with a list of ideas for a Project from their class teacher for you to help with or you can come up with an idea of your own linked to the half term’s topic. Some examples of topics include:

Learning at Home - Looking at your world together

All children need to know who they are and how they, and their family, fit in to the world around them. Sitwell Junior School is a multicultural school and children and their families are a rich resource for learning about other cultures. Learning about and participating in celebrations (e.g. Christmas, Eid, Diwali, Rosh Hoshannah, Chinese New Year) opens children's minds to the wider world in which they live.

Learning at Home - Special educational needs

Children on the Special Educational Needs register may be given extra support or additional resources to help with Reading and Projects.

Year 6

During the Spring Term, Year 6 children will be set tasks to complete at home to help them prepare for the SATs tests, this usually takes the form of a booklet that is purchased for the children by school.

This policy will be reviewed annually by a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

Parental Guidance for Helping your Child Learn at Home

Ideas for Learning at Home

These ideas are aimed at supporting parents and carers in helping their children to learn at home. Some of these ideas may seem common sense and obvious, but we have put together these simple guidelines so that you can be confident they are 'doing the right thing'.

Reading

- Read yourself. Show a good example by talking about the reading you do at work and at home. Let your child know that reading is an important part of your life.
- Keep books safe. Make your child their own special place to keep their books in their bedroom.
- Visit your library – it's free to join. As well as taking out story books, use visits to the library as a time to find books and CD ROMs about your child's hobbies and interests.
- Make time to read. Set aside a time for reading for the family – after school or before bedtime. Encourage independent reading but don't be afraid to still tell a bedtime story.
- Don't just read books. Encourage your child to read newspapers, TV guides, comics and magazines. Ask your child to find out information from the Yellow Pages, the Internet, cookery books, etc.
- Let your child read with younger children. Encourage them to read to other members of the family.
- **Keep in touch with school. Make sure your child has their reading book and reading diary in school every day** and try to make a regular time slot to hear them read.
- If English is not your family's first language, you can buy dual language books. You can talk about books and stories in any language.
- When they are reading to you:
 - Be positive. Praise your child for trying hard at their reading. Let them know it's alright to make mistakes.
 - Give them time. Let them try to sound out the word before you tell them what it is.
 - Let them read to the end of the line before correcting their mistakes. It doesn't matter if you have to tell them the word sometimes.
 - Spot words inside words. Help them to spot words they know within larger more complicated words.
 - Let them read their favourites. Don't worry if they only read one kind of book. If they are really stuck, ask the librarian or teacher to suggest something else they might like.
 - Make the story come to life. Encourage your child to read with expression. This will help them read more fluently.
 - Ask lots of questions about the story. What would you have done if you were.....? Does this book remind you of anything that has happened to you? Can you guess what is going to happen next?
 - Use a dictionary. Buy a simple dictionary and use it to check the meanings of new words.

If you are interested in finding out more about what to read with your child, try one of these websites:

www.booktrust.org

www.readingrockets.org

www.literacytrust.org.uk

Mathematics

A key part of every Maths lesson in school is mental arithmetic, so practising at home is helpful. Children must get used to solving problems in their heads, rather than using a calculator.

- Play games with your child: throw two dice and multiply the numbers and then move on to multiplying the sum of two throws by the sum of another two throws. Try to get some pace into the game.
- Play snakes and ladders, darts, dominoes and other games that depend on numbers, counting, calculation and scoring. 'Battleships' is a fun way to use graphs.
- Talk about pocket money with your child. Help him or her to add it up week by week, and work out whether he or she can afford a particular toy or treat.
- Shop using money and calculate change.
- Capitalise on hobbies. If your child is car-mad, talk about relative engine sizes, fuel economy, speed and performance. If they have a favourite pop group, get them to compile a list of statistics such as the number of weeks each single is in the charts. Watch and play sports that involve scoring, timing, counting, measuring.
- Add number apparatus to your child's toy collection - counters, a purse full of change, dice, dominoes, a tape measure, ruler, pack of cards, timer, different shapes - and use them to make mathematics come alive.
- Be creative. Ask your child to look out for patterns and shapes on floors, wallpaper, plants, animals, buildings - anything from the arrangement of tiles in the kitchen to the markings on the cat. Draw objects made entirely of triangles, rectangles or squares: make 'butterfly' pictures by painting on one half of the paper and folding it over so that the image is mirrored. Make mobiles by suspending objects from coat hangers and ensuring they balance.
- Think about time. Look at clocks, both digital and analogue. Estimate how long a certain activity will take to do and see if you are right! Work out how long it is until the next mealtime. Play games: how long is a minute, starting from now?
- Think about calendars and dates too. Make a timeline that includes the birthdays of each member of the family and work out how far apart each one is. Use different units: months, weeks and days, even hours, minutes and seconds. Add other important events, such as a family holiday, and encourage your child to count down to the big day.
- Cooking is great for helping your child get to know simple weights and measures. An old-fashioned set of balance scales is ideal. Count out spoonfuls of ingredients. Let your child help you set the timer and count down to teatime! Later on, this is a good way to introduce the idea of ratios and proportions, too. Bear in mind that your child will be learning the metric system at school, so try to measure amounts in grams and kilograms.
- Use learning games on educational websites for example:
<http://www.topmarks.co.uk/maths-games>

Looking at your world

- Produce a cultural calendar together, marking family birthdays, religious holidays, cultural festivals, days of remembrance and national holidays
- Celebrate special days together by playing music, writing poems, reading stories, making cards or painting a picture. Special days could be religious or cultural celebrations, or simply an anniversary of something special to your family, such as the day you moved to your home.
- Enjoy a special meal together on a certain date, either to mark an event, or perhaps to try food on a festival day from a culture that is different from your own.
- If your child is invited to a religious or cultural celebration that you don't observe in your family, such as Easter Sunday, Eid or a Bar Mitzvah, help them find out more about the celebration and why it is important.
- If you are going to a local carnival or traditional fair, find out about its history – how and why it started.
- If a charity has a special event, such as wearing pink ribbons or poppies, talk together about what the charity does and why people contribute to charities.

The above ideas have been collected from many different sources. There are lots of websites available to help parents:

www.bbc.co.uk/schools/parents

www.direct.gov.uk (follow links)

www.parentscentre.gov.uk

www.parentlineplus.org.uk

www.literacytrust.org.uk

For more ideas please see the school's website:

www.sitwelljuniorschool.co.uk