



Working with home Policy

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Consultation/signing group: T and L

What the pupils need to know:

- We will
Help you to learn at home as well as school.
Help you learn important skills at home that will help you be effective in the world.

What every other member of staff needs to know:

- We will
Match home tasks to the needs of individual pupils
Work closely with parents to help with learning at home by providing home visits, social stories etc at home.

What every adult (including parents) needs to know:

- Cromwell High School will
Set homework that will make a difference to a pupils communication, behaviour and independence.
Not overload pupils and families with homework that they may find stressful.



Cromwell High School

Working with home Policy

Aims

The main aim of the policy is to promote school and home working together for the benefit of pupils. There are therefore 2 main parts to our Homework Policy:

- Pupils devoting more time to achieving school based targets through reinforcement at home.
- School working with parents/carers to achieve shared priorities of Personal and Social Development at home.

Introduction

As a special school catering for pupils with a wide range of Complex Learning Difficulties the setting of homework for our students has potentially, many different issues to those of a mainstream school. This policy endeavours to recognise and respect these significant differences. Consultation with parents prior to the finalisation of this policy will ensure that these issues are taken fully into account.

The principle differences are that often our pupils:

- place far greater care demands on parents/carers and
- need much more support in their learning
- need much more direct teaching in the area of personal and social development than many children in mainstream

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The provision of homework in our school will therefore acknowledge and be responsive to these issues. Homework will be flexible to meet both the individual educational needs of pupils and also take reasonable account of home circumstances - whilst retaining the challenge for pupils to learn through homework.

We therefore state that, in general, there is no intention to demand that our pupils do a similar **amount** of homework as mainstream pupils - (the government recommends 3 hours per night in secondary). In most cases this would require an unreasonable amount of time from parents - especially those with high demand for care needs. Nevertheless there will be an expectation that parents/carers will support appropriate demands for homework and assist their children with a similar level of commitment that they would offer to their children in mainstream schools; although the homework may be of a type more easily integrated into family life - such as Personal and Social Development targets. If parents have very strong views on the issue of homework the school will seek to take these views into account.

School work at home

The schoolwork we will set to be completed at home will be well matched to the needs of the individual pupil. This may be challenging academic tasks or it may be that some of it is so natural to the pupil that many parents may already be undertaking such activities – for example; reading together, playing games involving number or, for some pupils, playing in a particular way with toys or other objects. In these circumstances, the main benefit of setting homework will be to ensure that home and school are working together. This will

help to ensure that home is informed of what school would like individual pupils to achieve and conversely, school is informed of the progress that pupils are making through these activities and can build on this progress through complementary activities in school.

There are therefore four main reasons to set schoolwork to be done at home.

- To devote more time to important tasks
- To develop independent working and responsibility for completing tasks where appropriate
- For pupils and parents to share aspects of school work – e.g. reading together
- To better co-ordinate how home and school work together to meet the needs of the pupils

The main priorities for subject curriculum throughout the school is Communication. We will seek to make the homework manageable and enjoyable for both pupils and, where appropriate, any assisting parent/carer.

Personal and Social Development at home

Personal and social development is a major area of our curriculum at school. In negotiation with and the agreement of parents we develop targets for pupils as they grow to help them to mature (whatever their ability). As they get older these include independence skills that may assist them in adult life – e.g. going to college, living in supported accommodation in the community, accessing leisure facilities, making friends.

Many of these skills will have the most significant impact on the pupil's opportunities to experience life both now (being able to behave on visits, at home, road safety, etc) and in future adult life. These are concerns and targets that must be shared with parents and home life if they are to be effective. School will strive to assist parents/carers in improving these skills through work in school. At Cromwell experience makes us realise that working on a task or issue with pupils with Complex Learning Difficulties in the school context can be only part of the solution. If we want the pupils to master a task, or deal with the issue at home, then school and home need to communicate fully with one another to ensure that skills are transferred over and generalised.

Personal and social development targets are set by staff for each pupil every term. These are recorded on the homework sheet.

Section 2 of the Homework policy is therefore concentrated on the role of the school in supporting parents' goals for the progress and development of their children at home.

The aim is that pupils are supported as they grow. People with learning difficulties may take many years to learn basic self-help and independence skills and it is important that parents are aware of the issues and have the help and support to plan and act whilst there is the time. With small safe steps involving calculated and controlled risk, it is possible to lead our pupils to take increasing responsibility for themselves and for the choices that need to be made about them at whatever level of understanding they are capable. They can do this by facing the consequences of their own decisions whilst being guided safely through their mistakes in the school environment. Parents are therefore offered the opportunity to write their own targets for their child's development at home (over a half term) and for the school to support them in the process. School will in turn, comment about how we have supported the target. At Cromwell we see this as an important opportunity to raise issues in discussion and for the school to help parents in a sensitive way through our own knowledge and expertise of the pupils.

Differentiation & Homework for All

Homework is such an important opportunity for home and school to work together that we believe it should be the entitlement of all pupils at our school. However, this will mean different things to meet the widely different needs of our pupils. Often pupils behave very differently at home than at school. Home and school will need to discuss what can reasonably be expected. We hope "homework" will be a valuable opportunity to raise discussion about how pupils behave at home that will both inform their education within school and allow for school to offer advice where necessary. Many of our pupils need help to learn to apply skills in the different environments of school and home and homework gives us an opportunity to do this in a planned, targeted way. Above all, we hope it will allow for a greater partnership between home and school.

Interactive Level

It is particularly important that homework is interpreted flexibly for pupils accessing the curriculum at the *Interactive* level. For pupils with more Profound Learning Difficulties, homework will have to be interpreted as 'work done at home in co-ordination with school'. Examples might be:

- establishing objects of reference for activities at home
- working on a specific target- reaching, holding, turning etc
- gaining joint attention with a bedtime book
- co-operating with care activities
- touching a cup gently to request more drink
- not getting just by reaching but eye contact being insisted upon

Word/Picture Level

This group of pupils, perhaps more than any other, have an even greater need to have structured help to develop and generalise skills learnt at school to the home environment. Examples might include:

- Accessing a book as a sequence of events and a time for joint attention with an adult.
- using PECS symbols
- using TEACCH timetables
- 1:1 correspondence- classroom tasks or putting a spoon at each place setting on the table and returning the remainder
- Matching/simple sorting tasks - classroom tasks or sorting knives and forks
- Turning the pages of a book one at a time
- Written/worksheet tasks of matching/sorting, 1:1 correspondence, sequencing and patterns, pen control, using pictures to communicate etc

Homework for pupils in this access group will have a direct bearing on the pupil's life skills. Classroom/worksheet tasks (including the examples above) are all structured to allow the pupil to progress in the core skills of understanding and accessing the world. It is extremely important that these skills are practised at home and, where they are already done at home, that there is a system whereby the school can learn of the progress made.

Conceptual Level

Teachers will be sensitive to the individual needs of pupils when setting homework for these groups of pupils whilst offering the minimum level of homework specified by this policy. Where appropriate, greater demands of homework will be set - **but** – teachers will remain sensitive to the circumstances of the pupil and their family.

Support for Parents

The school will support parents in their role in relation to homework. Our policy is of ongoing support for parents. Parents/carers should feel free to contact school for help at any time. We also conduct home visits with a communication or behaviour focus.

Long term Absence

Appropriate homework packs will be provided for pupils on long term cultural visits and specialised equipment is loaned wherever possible. Advice is provided to parents prior to the visit on methods of maintaining skills. A named member of staff has responsibility for maintaining contact with pupils who are frequently absent from school for medical reasons. This member of staff will ensure that parents are provided with advice, training and resources as required.

Exclusion for over one day

Where a pupil is excluded for more than one day homework will be set according to the general policy. Where the exclusion is designed to be a non-motivating consequence of behaviour from which the child is intended to learn, due consideration will be taken that the homework is of a neutral motivation and is not overly enjoyable leading to reinforcement of the problem behaviour. The homework itself will not be intended to be punitive.

Equal Opportunities

Homework will be planned, delivered, assessed and resourced in full accordance with the school's policy of Equal Opportunities. Strenuous efforts will be made to avoid any disadvantage arising from sex, religious belief, ethnic or socio-economic background. As far as possible all books and resources will be monitored for gender stereotyping. Effort will be made to secure materials representing the heritage of pupils from each ethnic and cultural background and, of those with disabilities leading positive every day lives.

Date of last review: March 2020