



# Home Learning Policy

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Key Manager: HoDs

Consultation/signing group: Implementation

What the pupils need to know:

We will

- Set any Home Learning at the correct level.
- Make Home Learning enjoyable and fun.
- Set Home Learning that matches our school values such as learning in the community.

What every other member of staff needs to know:

We will

- Work closely with parents on Home Learning set
- Set Home Learning that is closely matched to the individuals needs.
- Only set Home Learning if the pupil would benefit from it
- Be flexible and realise that Home Learning could mean trips out with parents or using communication at home.

What every adult (including parents) needs to know:

Cromwell High School will:

- Work closely with parents
- Be flexible in the setting of Home Learning
- Listen to the family's point of view on home learning.





# Cromwell High School

## Home Learning 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 Home Learning Policy:

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

### Introduction

As a special school catering for pupils with a wide range of Complex Learning Difficulties the setting of Home Learning 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 setting of Home Learning is encouraged.

The principle differences are that 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 and communication than many children in mainstream

The provision of Home Learning in our school will therefore acknowledge and be responsive to these issues. Home Learning 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 Home Learning.

We therefore state that, in general, there is no intention to demand that our pupils do a similar **amount** of Home Learning 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 Home Learning and assist their children with a similar level of commitment that they would offer to their children in mainstream schools; although the Home Learning 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 Home Learning 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 the consolidation of 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. Parents will also be encouraged to work on communication with their child e.g. through the use of PECS. In these circumstances, the main benefit of setting Home Learning 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 are Communication, Literacy and Numeracy. If applicable, the pupil's communication targets will be written on their SALT reports and IEP targets so that parents can work on these at home. We will seek to make the Home Learning manageable and enjoyable for both pupils and, where appropriate, any assisting parent/carer. How much Home Learning is set per week and how often targets are changed will depend on the individual needs of the pupils.

Teachers may wish to set Home Learning for the following reasons:

- a task flowing naturally out of a lesson
- for pupils who are more able to work on their own at home;
- For pupils to work on a communication or personal target that needs to be addressed at all times not just at school

### **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 and at home. 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.

Section 2 of the Home learning 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 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 & Home Learning for All**

Home learning 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 "Home Learning" 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 Home Learning 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. We do many home visits to support pupils and families at home.

### ***Sensory Level***

It is particularly important that Home Learning is interpreted flexibly for pupils accessing the curriculum at the *Sensory* level. For pupils with more Profound Learning Difficulties, Home Learning 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 careactivities
- touching a cup gently to request more drink
- not getting just by reaching but eye contact being insisted upon

### ***Structured 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
- Social Stories
- 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

### **Conceptual Level**

Teachers will be sensitive to the individual needs of pupils when setting Home Learning for these groups of pupils. Where appropriate, greater demands of Home Learning will be set - **but** – teachers will remain sensitive to the circumstances of the pupil and their family in particular in terms of ASC and SEMH needs and the need, at times, to make home learning appear very different from school-based work.

### **Support for Parents**

The school will support parents in their role in relation to Home Learning. Our policy is of ongoing support for parents. Parents/carers should feel free to contact school for help at any time. In addition, we offer the facilities of the book loans from the school library and home visits to discuss progress and next steps within the home environment.

### **Long term Absence**

Appropriate home learning packs will be provided for pupils on long term cultural visits or health absences 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 ( The Welfare Lead) 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 Home Learning 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 Home Learning is of a neutral motivation and is not overly enjoyable leading to reinforcement of the problem behaviour. The Home Learning itself will not be intended to be punitive.

### **Equal Opportunities**

Home Learning 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 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 everyday lives.

### **Feedback to pupils and parents for Home Learning activities.**

Teachers will use the School diary system or the online Class Dojo to update parents on how their child is doing with their home learning. Parents will also get updated at Annual Reviews and Parents Evening. Staff will sometimes conduct a home visit to update on progress and the SALT will write a SALT report to parents. Pupils will get verbal feedback, merits and get their home learning work marked where applicable.

Date of Policy- Sept 2021