

Priorsford Primary School

Primary 4 - Primary 7 Home Learning Guidelines



September 2024

Home Learning Guidance

At Priorsford Primary School we aim to foster an enquiring mind and a love of learning in all our children. We want to promote opportunities to develop creativity, imagination and independence. In addition, for their emotional and mental wellbeing, our children need time outside school to rest, relax and play.

We believe that learning at home should be meaningful and engaging, with children having a personal choice in what and how they learn. Opportunities for self-directed learning through pursuing personal interests will enable children to develop key skills crucial for their future learning journey - using initiative, developing different forms of communication, solving problems, planning, organising and time management.

We want parents to be involved so that they are aware of the skills and knowledge that their child is developing in school and can support and reinforce this learning.

With these aims in mind, we consulted with parents, staff and pupils to develop this home learning guidance, which provides a level of structure to home learning but also gives flexibility for those families who would prefer a choice in when and how their child learns outside school.

For home learning in Primary 4-7, we use Priorsford Independent Projects (PIPs), where the children have the opportunity to pursue personal choice and interests through self-directed learning. Feedback from parents over the past years has indicated that families would like to see a mix of the traditional form of homework as well as PIPs. Therefore, our approach has a balance between reinforcing concepts already taught in class as well as still providing the opportunity for your child to choose some self-directed, creative learning.

The structure for home learning for P4-P7 is as follows:

Numeracy

Our PTA has funded a subscription for every child to use SumDog, an online maths resource which can be accessed at home. It provides motivating and stimulating puzzles to solve and helps reinforce basic numeracy concepts of addition, subtraction, multiplication, division and learning tables, which will support all aspects of numeracy and maths in class. Your child has access to Sumdog at home using their iPad and will also be given opportunities to use SumDog during their ICT and numeracy sessions at school.

Reading

We aim to foster a love of reading in all our children and want them to choose the type of reading material they enjoy. We have an exceptional school library with over 19,000 fiction and non-fiction books. With the help of parent volunteers, classes are able to visit the library every week and can choose books of their own choice to take home. Teachers are able to check

the books chosen by the children in the library, but we want the children to enjoy whatever books they choose to read.

To support the development of reading fluency, some children in our younger classes may receive separate reading books home for practice.

We ask that parents support your child to read for at least **1 hour** each week. How your child would like to organise their time for this will be up to you and your child e.g. a series of shorter reading sessions or one longer one. The reading can take any form that interests your child e.g. novels, non-fiction, magazines, newspapers, internet articles etc. Parents can also choose to read to their child. You should encourage your child to discuss their reading - making connections, predicting, summarising, asking questions and offering opinions. Specific reading may also be assigned by the class teacher.

Spelling

We have a spelling programme called Read Write Inc. that will form the basis for home learning activities for our younger classes and for P5-P7 as appropriate. Teachers in P5-P7 teach spelling rules and use progressive word lists to ensure that every child is learning these important rules. If parents would like to further support and complement learning in class, we have a list of Priorsford Common Words on our website that can be studied at home over the year. This is a list of 400 of the most commonly used words in writing and reading. The list contains some common, some tricky/irregular words, some words relevant to Peebles and other words that are commonly misspelt, all grouped with the easiest to spell words first, then moving to the harder ones. Teachers will go over in class how to access the correct word lists on the website via the children's iPad.

Set Tasks

Your child may have specific activities linked to their theme or a particular task from the teacher or Mrs Anderson. This task may be, for example, learning a poem, completing an activity linked to a class theme or may be directed at a specific learning need for each child. Please note that your child may not receive any of these tasks or may only receive a short block of work.

Free Choice Independent Home Learning - Priorsford Independent Projects

We would like children to have the opportunity to personalise their learning and so there will be a choice in projects that children can complete over the year. This should be an extended piece of research or learning and should take 3 to 4 weeks to complete. This means that over a short term (eg. Sept - Oct and Oct - Dec) they may complete two projects, whereas in the New Year, terms will be longer and children could complete 3 to 4 per term. The teacher cannot give specific timescales for child-led home learning activities as this will depend on the topic chosen, but the idea of '**quality not quantity**' should guide parents. For those families who would prefer more direction, the teachers will provide suggested activities linked to the topics currently being studied in class.

Time will be given in class to access resources to support child-led learning. Our library will also be open after school on a Thursday if any child would like time to do some personal research work. The teachers will provide opportunities for the children to share their projects and learning with their classmates. Feedback will be given as well as suggested next steps in learning and presentation skills. A record of completed PIPS will be kept in the achievement book with pupil evaluations and next steps, which will be signed and dated by the teacher.

Our learner journeys, available on the school website, give a guide to the general content of class numeracy, literacy and wider curricular activities over the year.

Please remember that home learning should never cause unnecessary stress to either the children or parent/carer. Your children work hard at school every day and should have time outside school to enjoy physical activity, fresh air and outdoor play throughout the year.

**The Benefits of
Outdoor Free Play
on Children's Development**

Mental Health Better moods Decrease in hyperactivity Decreases in symptoms related to anxiety and depression	Physical Health More opportunities for movement Decrease in the likelihood of developing obesity or diseases Development of fine and gross motor skills	Cognitive Health More opportunities to make decisions and problem-solve Increases in creative thinking Children use higher levels of sequencing, planning, organizing
Emotional Health Development of empathy Increases in self-esteem Development of emotional intelligence	Social Skills Increased social interactions Higher levels of sharing, cooperation, helping Decreases in solitary play	Play Skills Increased creativity Development of higher play skills and play types More opportunities for imagination and engagement