



# HOMWORK GUIDE FOR PARENTS

Pinehaven School

## Our Way...

Our homework programme has been developed after considerable review, including making use of current research about what works, past experience and feedback from children, parents and teachers.

## Flexibility for Families

We respect that families have different values and expectations with regards to homework and have developed a system that outlines what we believe is essential homework and also provides a range of activities based on our values. This system allows flexibility for families, acknowledging extra-curricular activities many children are involved in outside of school.

## Why do homework?

Our homework programme aims to:

- support the development of literacy and maths skills through practising at an independent level;
- assist children in establishing developmentally appropriate work habits/time management skills;
- enable parents to support their child with work that reinforces their child's learning at school.

## How can you help your child?

There are many things you can do to help your child. The later sections of this document provide you with some detail about how you can assist your child with specific elements of homework. Here are some general tips/reminders that you might find useful:

1. Let your child have a bit of time to unwind after school.
2. Discuss your expectations with your child about how long the homework will take.
3. Feed their brain first – give them a snack and drink before they start.
4. Choose a space that is comfortable and reasonably quiet.
5. Get your child to check that they have everything they need before they get started – don't get things organised for them, make them take responsibility themselves.
6. Show an interest in their work and offer guidance when needed (but don't do it for them!).
7. Don't allow homework to become stressful. If things get stressful and hectic, leave it for the night and pick it up another time.

## Signing off Homework

After review and feedback from parents and teachers, we have a mix of teacher and parent sign off for homework. While we as a school believe the children should be completing reading, spelling and maths homework each week, we also want to allow for different family expectations. Teachers will only sign off reading logs each week, while spelling and maths homework is managed by parents.

**The rest of this document is broken into the following sections detailing the homework and how you can help your child:**

**Pages 2-3 Reading**

**Pages 4-5 Spelling**

**Pages 6-7 Maths**

**Page 8 Values**

## **ESSENTIAL HOMEWORK – READING – Teachers will expect all children to complete**

### **How long should my child spend on reading homework?**

We suggest children should be reading each night (minimum of 5 nights per week). Use the following guide to determine how long your child should be reading for. This is a guide and outlines what we think should be a minimum – depending on the ability and interests of your child, you may lengthen this time, however we suggest you only do that if your child is happy to read on!

Years 1 & 2	5-10 minutes
Years 3 & 4	10 minutes
Years 5 & 6	10-15 minutes

### **Reading Logs – who should do what?**

- It is expected that children will keep a reading log and teachers will check these each week, signing them to indicate this has been done.
- If your child's reading log is not signed, get in touch with us – it may be that your child is not handing it in, or it could be an oversight on our part.
- We will work with your child to provide the material to read and ask that as parents, you follow up that the work is done at home.
- If your child is not handing in their reading log or completing the work, the teacher will remind them, but will not provide a consequence as it becomes too time consuming and some parents don't want us to. It is very difficult to manage the inconsistencies and perceived 'unfairness' around this at school.
- If you need assistance following up (in that you want the teacher to reinforce that the work should be completed), please let your child's teacher know and they will happily back you up!

### **What should my child be reading?**

- Reading at home should be enjoyable and provide 'reading mileage'.
- It should involve reading books that are independent and easy to read.
- Every child will get a reading book each night. Depending on your child's reading level, this may be a book chosen by the teacher or your child.
- Teachers will have independent book boxes for children to choose from, or it may be more appropriate for your child to read a novel or library book.
- Children are encouraged to change their book independently.
- If you are finding your child is not selecting appropriate reading material, please contact your child's teacher, who will happily assist.

### **General tips for helping with reading.....**

- If your child forgets to bring their book home, reading anything is better than reading nothing and if there is nothing that is easy for them to read, read to them!
- Get your child to read aloud to you (even capable readers – read their favourite paragraph).
- Don't expect your child to read perfectly.
- When an error has been made, allow time for the error to be noticed by your child.
- Don't allow the book to be a struggle – take turns at reading the pages if you need to.
- If necessary, look at the pictures to find information to help with the reading.
- Make this a fun experience for everyone.
- Remember, if you are too busy, they can read to a sibling or even read to Grandma on Skype!

### How you can help to introducing a story.....

When settling down to read, it is a good idea to have a chat about the story. If your child is familiar with the story, this won't be necessary. If you feel it is, here are some discussion points:

- What is the title (tell them if necessary)?
- What might the story be about?
- Look through the book before reading and talk about the pictures (discuss detail in pictures such as expressions, actions, background).
- Predict what might happen in the next picture (as you turn the pages).

### How you can help prompt during reading.....

To encourage having a go:	What is the first letter? What sound does it make? What other sounds can you see/hear in the word? Run a finger under that word while you read it slowly. Do you know the ending?
To encourage checking meaning:	You said..... Does that make sense? Was that ok? Are you listening to yourself as you read?
To encourage correct structure:	You said..... Can we say it that way? Does that sound right?
Think about processing:	What could this word be? You solved the puzzle, how did you know?
To check when unsure:	Were you right? What could you check? Does it look and sound right?
When omitting/adding words:	Read it with your finger – were there enough words?

### How you can help to check understanding – what questions to ask.....

It is important to make sure children understand what they are reading. The table below is a useful guide when asking your child questions about their reading.

Question Type	Meaning	Examples
Literal	Information that is given in the text	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What happened when/after.....?</li> <li>• Why did....happen?</li> </ul>
Inference	Information implied but not given in the text	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How did you know....?</li> <li>• Why do you think....happened?</li> <li>• How do you think he/she felt when....happened?</li> </ul>
Vocabulary	Determining the meaning of words in the text	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What does this word mean?</li> <li>• Why was this word important in the story?</li> <li>• What is another word for....?</li> </ul>
Evaluation	Evaluate additional information not in the text	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do you think of the story?</li> <li>• What do you think the author meant when they said.....?</li> </ul>
Reorganisation	Using two or more pieces of information given in different parts of the text	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In your own words tell me what happened in the story?</li> <li>• Tell me the main events in the story?</li> <li>• Can you tell me an event that has happened to you?</li> </ul>
Reaction	Expressing an opinion on information given in the text	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How did you feel when....?</li> <li>• Have you had an experience like.....?</li> <li>• Tell me a time when you felt like.....? Why?</li> </ul>

## **SPELLING HOMEWORK – At the discretion & management of Parents**

### **How long do we suggest your child spends on spelling homework?**

We suggest children should be learning spelling words once or twice a week and the times below are a guide to determine how long your child should spend on spelling. Depending on the ability and interests of your child, you may lengthen this time, however only do so if your child is happy to!

Years 1 - 4

5-10 minutes

Years 5 & 6

10 minutes

### **What words should my child learn?**

There are 7 Essential Word lists, as well as a list of commonly misspelt words that children need to commit to memory. Our aim is for children to learn the essential lists by the time they leave Year 6. These lists are available on the website and parent portal. A hard copy can also be arranged upon request to your child's teacher.

Your child's teacher will ensure you know what list(s) your child is currently working within. We suggest you choose 2-5 words from these lists to focus on each week. Then over the next few weeks, check they have committed them to memory. It may be that you need to spend more than one week on some words.

When working through the lists, it is important they are learnt in order (1-7). When advising you of the list to work on, your child's teacher will be taking into account the spelling in their general class work. Sometimes children can spell a word, but they don't apply this to their written work, in which case they need to continue to practise this for homework. If you have any questions about the spelling words your child needs to learn, or think adjustments need to be made for your child, please discuss this with the teacher.

In addition to the lists, activities on *StudyLadder* will provide your child with opportunities to learn about spelling patterns and rules.

### **General tips for helping with spelling.....**

- Choose a range of spelling activities from the list provided below, don't always use one method.
- When learning words formally, encourage your child to use the LOOK, SAY, COVER, WRITE, CHECK method to spell their words: LOOK closely at the word & SAY it, COVER the word, WRITE it & CHECK to see if it is correct.
- Quiz your child in the car (or other spare moments) to see if they know their words.
- Encourage your child to sound unfamiliar words out.
- Encourage them to 'have a go' when writing unknown words.

### **Spelling Activities.....**

Make spelling fun. Different families like different activities to assist with learning spelling words. Try some of these out (some can be used with spelling words and some are just additional activities that you may like to squeeze in):

- *StudyLadder* is an online resource that your child can log into. Your child's teacher controls the activities they have access to and these will support their learning.
- Kidzone area of our website - <http://www.pinehaven.school.nz/kidzone/>
- Find the words in the paper or magazines.
- Cut out the letters and see how quickly your child can rearrange them in the correct order.
- Say speech rhymes and tongue twisters together.

- Play detective games with words – ask your child to be a detective and find: words that rhyme, begin/end with the same sound or letter, little words in big words (e.g. 'am' in 'pyjamas'), words that sound the same but are spelt differently (e.g. ate, eight).
- Play word games that focus on sounds of words (Scrabble, Boggle, Word Snap, I Spy, Hangman).
- Draw a picture, then write words to label items in the picture.
- Use alphabet stamps and coloured ink pads or felt pens/crayons to make spelling artwork.
- Write a short story that uses all of the spelling words.
- Find the meaning of words in a dictionary and write them in a sentence.
- Write words in a bucket of sand.
- Make secret agent words by numbering the alphabet from 1-26 and then converting spelling words into a number code.
- Make a crossword puzzle or word search from the words in the spelling list.
- Try to find spelling words used in a newspaper or magazine article.
- Make flashcards to help practise spelling words.

## MATHS HOMEWORK – At the discretion & management of Parents

### How long do we suggest your child spends on number knowledge homework?

We suggest children should be learning number knowledge each week and suggest the times below as a guide to determine how long your child should spend practising. Depending on the ability and interests of your child, you may lengthen this time, however only do so if your child is happy to!

Years 1 & 2	1-2 times per week for 5-10 minutes
Years 3 & 4	Twice a week for 5-10 minutes
Years 5 & 6	2-3 times per week for 10 minutes

### What should my child learn?

Place Value and Basic Facts are essential aspects of maths knowledge that your child should be able to recall INSTANTLY. There are 8 stages of knowledge that children need to commit to memory. An overview of these stages is available on the website and parent portal. A hard copy can also be arranged upon request to your child's teacher. There will be other areas of maths your child is learning at school and sometimes these will be reflected in the *StudyLadder* activities your child's teacher selects.

Your child's teacher will ensure you know what stage(s) your child is currently working within. We suggest you choose 1-2 focus areas each fortnight. Then over the next few weeks, check they have committed them to memory. It may be that you need to spend more than a fortnight on some aspects of number knowledge.

### General tips for helping with maths development.....

- Be supportive and have fun – most of the activities using the resources below are game based.
- Talk to your child about their maths thinking. We encourage children to share how they solve maths problems. Remember, there is often more than one way to solve a maths problem.
- Give them opportunities to do maths – maths is everywhere! Regardless of the age or ability of your child, there are opportunities for them to practise their maths.
  - If your child is learning to count, count things together forwards and backwards (e.g. number of stairs in a staircase, cars driving past). Look, read and count the numbers on letterboxes when going for a walk (this is great for skip counting 2, 4, 6, ....)
  - If your child is learning to add, add things (e.g. the number of knives on the table plus the number of forks, cost of items at the supermarket). Ask them questions like “how many more would I need to make 10?” Don't forget to subtract as well.
  - Look for patterns/similarities to categorise in the natural environment. Ask questions about what would be next to keep the pattern going.
- Ask your child what they are doing in maths at school and try to use it in everyday life (e.g. fractions – what fraction of people in our family are children? What fraction of pizza is left/did you eat?) This gives them practise and shows them that maths relates to the 'real' world.
- Some great contexts for maths are:
  - money – counting and calculating – pocket money, banking, shopping
  - measuring – length, area, volume, cooking ingredients
  - travelling – reading numbers on signs, calculating distances and speeds, giving directions, timetables
  - games – Monopoly, Bingo, board games such as Snakes and Ladders

### Maths Activities.....

- *StudyLadder* is an online resource that your child can log into. Your child's teacher controls the activities they have access to and these will support their learning.
- NZMaths is a website that has been developed for teachers and parents. The *Families* section has a number of activities you can do with your child. <http://nzmaths.co.nz/families> From here, you can find:
  - Maths at our house – how you can raise awareness through everyday resource at your home.
  - Number knowledge activities – games depending on which stage your child is on (refer to your teacher's guidance).
  - A Maths Kite – ideas for supporting maths development using different items (e.g. card games, dice games, etc).
  - Other resources – links to other parts of the website that may be of use to you – a great place to go to find out what your child needs to learn.
- Kidzone area of our website - <http://www.pinehaven.school.nz/kidzone/>

## VALUES HOMEWORK – ACHIEVE – At the discretion & management of Parents

### What if I would like more homework for my child?

We understand that for some parents, the essential homework is not enough. This section is for you! The table below outlines some suggested activities for children in relation to our school values – there will be others that you think of!!

<b>A</b>	Accepting Responsibility & being accountable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do an extra job at home</li> <li>• Do your essential homework without being asked!</li> <li>• Make a meal for your family (or help make one)</li> </ul>
<b>C</b>	Courage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learn something new (e.g. how to tie your shoelaces, knitting, building, juggling, etc)</li> <li>• Do something you are a bit scared about</li> <li>• Organise something for your family to do together</li> <li>• Perform something to an audience (e.g. a recited poem, play, song, magic trick, etc)</li> </ul>
<b>H</b>	Helping & caring for others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visit an elderly person</li> <li>• Help a neighbour</li> <li>• Help in the garden, stacking the firewood, washing the car, etc</li> <li>• Do an extra job at home</li> <li>• Care for a pet</li> <li>• Help your teacher with tasks</li> <li>• Prepare the shopping list</li> <li>• Read stories to younger family members</li> </ul>
<b>I</b>	Individual determination to succeed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participate in a club or sports team and set yourself goals to achieve</li> <li>• Set a goal that you can strive towards (e.g. run a certain distance) and then do it!</li> <li>• Depending on your ability, read a novel, or a series of novels by the same author</li> <li>• Plant your own garden</li> <li>• Do a jigsaw puzzle, play board games, etc</li> <li>• Learn how to play a musical instrument – perform to your family/friends/class</li> </ul>
<b>E</b>	Excellence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teach someone something you are good at</li> <li>• Learn a new game and teach it to someone else</li> <li>• Write in your homework book a way in which you have demonstrated excellence</li> </ul>
<b>V</b>	Valuing diversity & individuality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Find out about another person’s culture – what are the similarities and differences to yours?</li> <li>• Think about the people you know, what makes them uniquely different?</li> <li>• Participate in a cultural festival of a culture that is different from your own</li> </ul>
<b>E</b>	Encouraging Respect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grow something from a seed</li> <li>• Care for a pet</li> </ul>

Other activities: review a book (tell a family member or friend about it – what was the best bit and why?); design a game; research a famous person or topic of interest; visit the local library; send emails, letters or cards to family/friends; watch the news and discuss events with your family – prepare a report with the key points and your opinion about news items of interest.