



Horsmonden Primary School

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Headmaster

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A Policy for our Home-School Partnership

Parents are encouraged to be in partnership with the school to enhance the opportunities for their children.

(from the aims of the school)

This home-school partnership policy is intended to provide a framework for parents, governors and staff on which all parties can work in seeking to enhance the quality of school life for our children.

The aims of our home-school partnership are:

- ✓ To encourage a shared commitment to the success of the individual child.
- ✓ To create an atmosphere of understanding, openness, respect and consideration in home-school relations.
- ✓ To help parents develop a positive role in complementing and supporting the work of the school in educating their children.

An effective partnership is needed by:

- **Parents** for them to have more knowledge of what is happening in school and a clearer perception of their responsibilities and the opportunities available to them.
- **Teachers** for them to build on positive contributions of parents to assist in educational tasks and opportunities.
- **Children** who will benefit from the knowledge that teachers and parents are working together on their behalf to recognise, support and encourage their achievement and progress.

Several key factors have contributed to the good relations between parents and the school and the production of this document:

- ❑ The value placed on parental help in pupils' learning.
- ❑ The responsibility placed on pupils through shared expectation in developing independence and good behaviour.
- ❑ The level of pastoral care and interest in the children and the subsequent knowledge accrued by staff about children as individuals.
- ❑ An annual report, based on information compiled through the year, highlighting individual successes and targets written for children as individuals.
- ❑ The efforts made by the school to maintain an open door policy and maintain good communication with parents.
- ❑ The process of parents, teachers and the children themselves contributing to the setting of targets at the end of topics.
- ❑ The opportunities to share children's successes through class assemblies, Special Mentions and productions.

- Opportunities for parents to share their views on issues concerning their children as well as whole school issues through the annual parental survey and child's report feedback.
- The social life of the school community.

The partnership needs to have evident strategies in order to succeed in its aims. The two-way exchange of information is supported by publications from the school, the school website, a text messaging service, activities within school and, most importantly, face to face communication.

The School Website has become the largest single source of information relating to the school. It is updated regularly and to view it log on to www.horsmonden.kent.sch.uk.

The Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) is where you can keep in touch with particular elements of your child's learning and class activity. Each child has a login and personal learning targets for children in Years 2 to Year 6 are shown within their personal pages.

The School Prospectus is often the first link we have with parents. It has been carefully designed to give parents an insight into the ethos of the school as well as valuable information on the day to day running of the school. The prospectus is contained electronically within the school website but a paper version can be obtained upon request.

Newsletters are posted electronically each week, offering a range of information from dates for diaries to details of developments in school. The number of letters is kept to a minimum, to ensure parents receive worthwhile documentation and hopefully give it the attention it deserves.

The Starting School Meeting offers a range of practical information to assist parents whose children will be joining the Reception Class, including a welcome letter, 'Starting School' booklet, reading guidelines, a parental checklist and practical advice all aimed at giving a smooth start to school.

Assemblies and productions provide an opportunity to see the children in a larger group. Children in the Reception Class are welcomed in a special assembly close to the start of term at which they are presented with a book to commemorate their start in school. Each term, each class leads an assembly to which parents are invited. At Christmas, the Infants take part in a production of their own and Year Six write their unique production in the Summer Term. The whole school joins in the Carols by Candlelight service, which is held at St Margaret's Church.

The "Give Us One Hour" Evening provides the first formal opportunity of the year for face to face contact. It is at this evening that teachers get the chance to share their aims for the class during the coming year and give advice on how this can best be supported at home. A written letter is provided for parents who are unable to attend the evening.

Parent Consultation Evenings are held in the Spring and Summer Terms, where children's work is discussed on a more formal basis. The Summer Term discussions follow the distribution of children's reports.

Inclusions. From time to time, children experience challenge in their learning or behaviour. This necessitates some type of intervention and they are added to our Special Educational Needs Register. Parents are fully informed should this be the case and being placed on the register means that actions to support your children are fully documented to give you plenty of information on what is happening and progress being made as a result. Mrs Jodi Hacker is the school's Inclusion Manager and is willing to give advice upon request.

The Annual Parental Survey gives parents the chance to put in writing their views on a whole variety of the work of the school. In addition to a questionnaire, there is the chance to write about what you consider to be particular successes as well as areas you would like to see further developed. All responses are read by the Headmaster and Governing Body, providing a valuable summary of parental views as well as linking directly into the school development plan.

In addition to the more formal opportunities we provide, parents are very welcome to talk to teachers about their child's progress. Most importantly, parents are very welcome to regularly pop into their child's class to look at work and displays. Parent consultation evenings only provide two opportunities in an academic year – please don't wait, but involved throughout the year.

Two organisations within the school provide the opportunity for parents to become more directly involved with the running of the school:

The Governing Body consists in part of elected representatives from within the parents. They play an important role in communicating the parental viewpoint in all issues connected with the management of the school.

The Friends of Horsmonden Primary School provides social and fundraising activities for the whole school community. All parents are members of FoHPS and each year a committee is elected to plan and co-ordinate a variety of events.

Homework

Homework refers to any work or activities which pupils are asked to do outside lesson time, either on their own or with parents and carers. All homework should have a purpose, which in general terms should include:

- ❑ Developing an effective partnership between the school and parents in pursuing the aims of the school;
- ❑ Consolidating and reinforcing skills and understanding;
- ❑ Extending school learning. For example through additional reading;
- ❑ Encouraging pupils as they get older to develop the confidence and self-discipline needed to study on their own;
- ❑ Developing their independent study skills;
- ❑ Providing opportunities for children and their families to work together;
- ❑ Developing skills of the older children to assist them in secondary school.

The Government, in 'Homework: Guidelines for Primary and Secondary Schools' emphasises its view that homework should consist mainly of literacy and numeracy tasks. However, with the narrowing of the school curriculum, we are determined to maintain a broad and balanced curriculum, which means developing the broader knowledge base of children using homework as a tool. An increasing amount of homework is now set on line within our Virtual Learning Environment, enabling children to log on to complete tasks and parents to see the on line assessments on a regular basis.

For Infant children, homework should largely consist of regular reading sessions with parents. The home/school reading record helps to keep the flow of communication between all those who listen to children read. Other literacy and numeracy tasks include spellings and multiplication tables.

In addition to these regular tasks, children are given homework gradually increasing in its demands, linking life outside school to learning within as well as helping to prepare them for secondary education. Tasks are published with a time allocation and it's important to try to stick with this as it helps us evaluate your child's effort and attainment alongside developing their independent learning skills.

Generally speaking, set homework will avoid finishing off tasks, but this may be appropriate additional homework for those who don't keep on task during school lessons.

The Government has specified time allocations, which it sees as appropriate for each age group:

Year Groups	Time allocation
Years 1 & 2	1 hour per week
Years 3 & 4	1.5 hours per week
Years 5 & 6	2.5 hours per week

Planning for Homework

Setting the right type and amount of homework for a range of children is challenging. It is important to plan tasks that will enhance children's learning, not cause unnecessary heartache and failure at an early age. For children with special educational needs, we aim to need to be cater sympathetically, allowing for an element of challenge without the need for excessive time. All planning should allow for:

- A clear focus of task;
- Plenty of opportunity for success;
- Development of social skills as well as academic where possible;
- Variation in style – not just written assignments;
- Be manageable for teachers for marking and allowing purposeful feedback.

The Parents' Role

Parents have a vital role in ensuring the success of our homework policy. Where at all possible, children need:

- A reasonably peaceful place to do their homework;
- An understanding that parents value homework and are supportive of the school;
- Encouragement and praise when they have completed their homework.

Where children lack the vital skills of self-discipline, it is vital to get the school involved and work at a solution together, rather than create a stressful atmosphere for every homework task.

If some children may be placed at a disadvantage because of home circumstances, we may be able to organise a quiet place within the school by prior arrangement enabling them to undertake homework at lunchtimes or after school and, if necessary, providing them with use of the computer suite.

In Conclusion:

Research shows time and again that children who are most successful in school are those who are well-supported at home. It is estimated that the level of home support makes up to 40% of the influence upon success, so it's important that we use this as effectively as possible in supporting your child. The results of the 2009 annual survey showed a rise in satisfaction across the board, with the biggest area of improvement shown as the home-school partnership. During the academic year 2009 – 2010, we are keen to build on this in ensuring your children get the best possible benefit from the combined efforts between parents and the school.

We want this year to be your child's best ever year in school. Help us to make it happen through your support, interest and feedback.