



Bracken Hill School

Home Learning Policy

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Policy Type: Whole School

This policy is reviewed biennially to ensure compliance with current practice

The Governors of the school recognise that all staff play a vital role in the achievement of high standards and in providing our pupils with the best opportunities matched to their needs.

Introduction

At Bracken Hill School we recognise and value the contribution that learning in the home environment can make to children's education. This policy aligns with the SEND Code of Practice (2015) and Equality Act 2010 and sets out the purpose and benefits of home learning, and the guidelines we follow when setting home learning activities for our children.

Intent:

Our school believes that home learning should:

- Involve parents and carers in their child's education
- Have a clear learning focus
- Give plenty of opportunities for children to succeed
- Be planned by teachers alongside the other elements of children's learning to help continue to raise standards of attainment.
- Consolidate and reinforce a wide variety of skills and understanding in a supportive environment
- Extend in-school learning
- Provide opportunities for parents, pupils and the school to work together in partnership in relation to pupils learning
- Provide children with the opportunity to learn in different settings
- Reflect a range of learning styles and Special Educational Needs
- Develop progressively according to the age of the children
- Encourage children to communicate what they are learning
- Encourage children to develop the self-confidence and discipline needed to study independently
- Where possible, tasks will have a clear learning intention in line with our teaching and learning policy or explanation, to enable every child to succeed with their home learning tasks.

Implementation

Home learning at Bracken Hill School is designed to complement and reinforce learning completed in class. All home learning is linked to classwork and is usually completed in a Home Learning Book unless otherwise specified.

Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2

Explorers

For pupils in Explorers (KS1 and KS2), home learning follows a **Core Word-based model**. This approach focuses on supporting children to develop functional communication skills through the consistent use of high-frequency core words across school and home environments.

Rather than setting weekly tasks or worksheets, each half term pupils are supported to focus on a small set of **core words** (e.g. *go, stop, more, help*). These words are embedded into everyday routines, play, and interactions both at school and at home.

This model is currently implemented for **Explorers in KS1 and KS2**, where communication, regulation, and independence are key priorities for learning and development. More information about our core word program can be found in Appendix 1.

Explorers, Adventurers and Pioneers

For pupils in **KS1 and KS2**, home learning consists of an **optional list of activities** that families may choose to complete at home. These activities are designed to:

- Consolidate and reinforce key skills
- Encourage enjoyment and curiosity
- Support learning through practical, accessible tasks

Families may complete as many activities as they feel appropriate, recognising that home learning must be manageable and flexible for different home circumstances.

Key Stage 3, Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5

For pupils in **KS3, KS4 and KS5**, home learning will consist of:

- An **optional activity list**, *and*
- **Subject-specific tasks set fortnightly**

Subject tasks will be planned carefully so that they reinforce current learning and are achievable for each pupil's needs. Where tasks require adult support, clear instructions will be provided.

General Expectations Across the School

- Tasks should have clear learning intentions and offer opportunities for success.
- Home learning time should not be used for completing unfinished classwork.
- Teachers will ensure home learning remains manageable and differentiated.
- Staff recognise that home learning is not appropriate for all pupils at all times, and family circumstances are always taken into account.

The role of parents/carers

We believe that the support of parents and carers is essential for children to make the most of their home learning opportunities. There are many ways in which parents can help their children, including:

- encouraging and supporting them;
- playing games with them, practising timetables, listening to children read;
- providing somewhere quiet for children to study away from the T.V and other distractions
- providing opportunities for real life experience; talking, shopping, using money, telling the time, cooking, letter writing etc.
- making the experience pleasurable
- find time to work with their child, discuss, encourage and praise their child's efforts
- creating positive learning routines

If there is a problem over Home Learning, we encourage parents to get in touch with the class teacher. Similarly, if we have problems we shall contact the parents.

The role of the headteacher

- To promote this policy by raising its status and importance;
- To ensure that home learning is built into teachers planning;
- To provide supportive guidance for parents;
- To keep up to date with new developments with regard to homework;
- To monitor and evaluate this policy

The role of the class teacher

- To integrate home learning into their planning.
- To set interesting tasks or activities.
- To set home learning appropriate to each child.
- To explain when, what and how the work is to be done so that each child clearly understands.
- To provide feedback in line with the school's feedback guidelines.

The role of the Governing Body

- The governing body has delegated powers and responsibilities to the Curriculum Committee and to the Headteacher to oversee the development of this policy.
- A link governor will visit the school regularly, to liaise with the Headteacher and to report back to the Governing Body;
- The governing body has responsibility for the effective implementation, monitoring and evaluation of this policy

The role of the pupils

- To try and complete their home learning and hand it in on time.
- To listen carefully in class to make sure they understand what is asked of them. To contribute to pupil interviews and pupil questionnaires on home learning for the school to monitor and evaluate.
- To have a go at all their home learning activities.

Impact

The impact of effective home learning should be seen in the progress made by the children, in the deepening of understanding and in the application of skills in a different environment. The impact will also be seen by pupils and parents/carers engaging successfully in home learning and working on home learning together is seen as a positive time for the family.

Home learning in case of emergency

In the event of disruption to formal learning due to a national or local emergency we may be required to support students through remote or blended learning. During these times, school staff will support learning from home, taking consideration for the needs of the pupil/class to include where suitable and appropriate:

- Following the normal class timetable as much as possible
- Providing appropriate activities linked to curriculum content
- Providing pre-recorded videos
- Providing worksheets and physical resources to support learning
- Maintaining regular communication with parents/carers
- Setting practical tasks
- Providing electronic equipment e.g. laptops, iPads where needed

Equal opportunities

All pupils have the right to equality of access to the curriculum. Teachers need to be sensitive to the home circumstances of children. If necessary, appropriate resources may be provided to enable home learning to be completed.

Safeguarding and Online Safety

All digital home learning will follow the school's Online Safety Policy. Parents will be advised on safe internet use.

Monitoring

The Senior Leadership Team are responsible for monitoring the home learning policy. They are also responsible for supporting colleagues in setting home learning, for being informed about current developments in the area, and for providing a strategic lead and direction for the area in the school.

This policy will be reviewed biennially 2027

Appendix 1

What Core Words Are

Core words are common, powerful words that can be used across many situations and activities. They are taught through:

- the spoken word,
- the symbol,
- and Makaton sign,

so that all children — whether speaking or non-speaking — can access and use them in a way that suits their communication needs.

How Home Learning Works

Families receive:

- A list of the core words being focused on each half term,
- The symbols for each word,
- An aided language board to support modelling,
- Three simple, meaningful activity ideas per word that can be naturally embedded into daily routines.

Families are encouraged to model the core words during real-life moments such as play, meals, outings, and routines. There is no expectation for children to speak the words — communication through gesture, sign, symbols, AAC, eye gaze, or vocalisation is equally valued.

Families may choose to share updates through Seesaw, but this is optional and not required.

Why This Approach Is Important

This approach is important because it:

- Supports **functional communication**, enabling pupils to express needs, make choices, and interact with others.
- Promotes **consistency** between school and home communication systems.
- Supports children who are **speaking and non-speaking**, including AAC users and Gestalt Language Processors.
- Reduces pressure on families by avoiding formal tasks or worksheets.
- Encourages **generalisation of skills**, helping children use communication across environments.
- Aligns directly with pupils' **EHCP outcomes**, particularly in communication, independence, and regulation.

By focusing on meaningful, repeatable communication in real-life contexts, this home learning model supports long-term development, wellbeing, and inclusion.