



ELTON CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

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11th September 2018

Dear Parents / Carers,

This letter is adapted from one sent out at the beginning of last year regarding our views on homework. I am resending it now to refresh everyone's memory, and so that all our new families understand what "Homework Matters" is, and how and why we decided to adopt this way of working.

Homework

Background

Towards the end of the academic year 2015-2016, all the staff met to discuss our then existing homework policy. There were some aspects which we thought worked well or were too important to neglect, but others which we thought we could perhaps improve upon. We used evidence of the quality and quantity of homework received in the last few years to inform our decision, and also conversations held both formally and informally with parents and children.

We strongly believe that homework should support the acquisition and reinforcement of basic reading, writing and maths skills **without** intruding on quality family time. We hope that "Homework Matters" gives all children the opportunity of developing important life skills in areas which interest them and that it is an enjoyable and shared experience, rather than one done under duress!

Homework Matters

We have called our new homework format, "Homework Matters", and have selected eight areas that we feel are key to the development of the whole child. The first of these is:

- **My Learning Matters** - a focus on reading, phonics/spelling and mental maths tasks which should be completed daily (Y1-6). As teachers we know that short sharp repetitive "blasts" of book sharing/reading (5-10mins daily), mental maths activities (5 mins daily) and spelling (5 mins daily) are the most significant factors in ensuring a child makes continuous and sustained progress. It is most successful if routinely timetabled into the day, (for example, maths in the car on the way to school, spellings immediately after school, reading before bed) as most children respond well to some structure and routine. Cramming spellings and maths in before a deadline will not ensure any long-term recall of facts and patterns learnt.

The other areas focus more on the child as an individual. Each term, the teacher will list a range of activities under the remaining 7 areas, and tell you how many **activities (not areas)** they would like your child to complete. You can then choose from the list, complete the activities in your own time at any point during the term, and bring in evidence (photos, pictures, leaflets, written work if appropriate) which will then be displayed on the individual "Homework Matters" display in each

classroom. Children will receive a point for each activity completed, so those who want to do more can choose to do so. There is no “deadline” other than the end of each term for these remaining areas, so that children who might have other commitments at various points in the week, or who stay with different family members at weekends are not penalised in any way.

The remaining seven areas are:

- **My Family Matters** – activities to help around the house: the kind of things we like and expect our children to do, but don’t always have time to enforce, for example; “Make your bed for a week.” “Empty the dishwasher every evening.” “Read a sibling a bedtime story” “Play a family board game” etc
- **My Lifestyle Matters** – activities which are designed to ensure our children stay healthy, for example; “Take the dog for a walk every weekend.” “Prepare and eat a healthy breakfast.”
- **My Faith Matters** – activities which support an understanding of our faith communities, for example; “Attend a weekly religious service.” “Write a prayer about something you’ve seen on the news.” “Bring in photographs of a significant religious event that you’ve been to.”
- **My Environment Matters** – activities which support an awareness of our resources and environment, for example: “Sort the recycling for a week.” “Walk or ride a bike somewhere rather than taking the car.”
- **My Talents and Ideas Matter** – activities which the child chooses to do in their free time, for example: “Play a piece of music on your guitar for your family.” “Draw a picture of what you had to do to get your last badge at cubs.”
- **Other People Matter** – activities which promote the idea of helping people in the community, or through a charity, for example; “Offer your seat on public transport to someone who needs it more.” “Find out about the work of a charity, and think of ways you could support them.” “Put out the bins of an elderly neighbour.”
- **My World Matters** – activities which promote current news and events, for example; “Design a Paralympic Medal.” “Draw a map indicating the locations of the headline news stories.”

The above are just examples to give you an idea of what to expect. You will have received your child’s individual “Homework Matters” menu this week. Each Homework Matters menu consists of tasks which are appropriate to age and which may link in some areas to their topic. The class teacher will specify how many tasks they would like completed, and occasionally may highlight something they would like you to focus on. We hope that you continue to enjoy this format, but please do feedback to us with any thoughts and comments – we only know what we are told!

Happy homeworking, and thank you for your support!

Yours sincerely

C. Arnold

Mrs Claire Arnold
Headteacher