

St Joseph's Catholic Voluntary Academy

Summer 17-18

My child gets too much/little homework.

Homework is an area of school life that always splits opinion. At St Joseph's we believe that homework helps children to practice what they have learnt in lessons, in order to get better at things like spelling and handwriting. It can help teach children how to work on their own and be disciplined with themselves - both skills that are useful later in life. One of the biggest advantages is that it can allow parents or guardians to get involved in their child's learning and have a greater awareness of what they are covering in school.

If your child is struggling with their homework, please speak to your child's teacher, who can offer support and guidance. They can also advise you on what is expected.

For those families who feel they would like additional homework, reading plays one of the biggest factors in a child's attainment and progress. Your child will benefit hugely from being read to, and with.

How are crests awarded?

Our school behavior policy states:

Crests may be awarded for any actions, deeds or attitudes which are deemed noteworthy and may include:-

- Particularly good work/effort.
- Displaying good manners.
- Displaying a caring attitude towards others.
- Staying on task etc.

Each teacher will set rules within their own classroom and following these can result in crests being awarded. If you have any specific questions about how crests are awarded within your child's class please ask the class teacher who will happily clarify.

How are children selected for sporting fixtures?

As we are a relatively small school, we would expect all those who want to participate in sporting fixtures to get an opportunity during their time at St Joseph's. Some fixtures are competitive e.g., the football league, gymnastics competition and therefore children who have shown a particular talent will be invited to participate. For other events, children are asked who would like to attend and letters are distributed to those children. When selecting we would also take into account a child's behaviour within school and attitude towards school PE.

We are very fortunate to have high participation in sport across all year groups and I am very proud of what our children achieve. Again, any concerns about selection please speak to the class teacher who will be able to explain the selection criteria.

There are too many/not enough school trips.

School visits and trips are a valuable part of the school curriculum and often put the child's learning into context. We are aware that these trips are not cheap and in the current economic climate can push family budgets. As a result, we try and limit trips to one per term. In addition, we are very fortunate to have a fantastic PTFA who often contribute to the cost of the bus.

For the residential trips in year 5 & 6, we try to provide parents with plenty of notice so that they can stagger the cost.

Unfortunately, our school budget cannot afford to subsidise the cost of the trips. If you are eligible for Free School Meals then this funding can be put towards trips and visits.

We would like more feedback on our child's progress.

In the Autumn and Spring terms, we hold parent and teacher meetings to keep you up to date with your child's attainment and progress. Following these in the Summer term, the teachers write a review of the year for each child. Throughout this academic year we have been adapting these to try and give you more detailed information about where your child sits in relation to the expected standard and we will be informing you if your child is working above the expected standard. Following the distribution of reports, we will be holding an open event where you can come and look at your child's books and discuss their report.

No end of year report should come as a surprise. If your child has any particular gaps in their learning or we are concerned that they will not reach the expected standard the class teacher will have made you aware during the year.

Class teachers are usually available at the beginning and end of the school day and will happily provide updates if you have any concerns.

How do we ensure parent helpers/volunteers keep pupil information confidential?

We are blessed at St Joseph's to have so many volunteer helpers. Before any person can volunteer we complete an enhanced DBS check and we collect two references. All volunteers are made aware that they should not discuss anything that happens within school, in particular concerning individual pupil's attainment, behaviour etc. with anyone but the class teacher.

There seem to be a lot of date changes.

Following previous parental feedback regarding the notice period given for important dates, we produced the Yearly Planner at the beginning of this academic year. This set out a year to date of planned trips, assemblies and sports days, including PTFA events, to enable parents more time to plan and juggle the work/life balance we all strive to achieve.

We did explain that some dates may be subject to change due to a change in events/priorities or new things arising. This is unavoidable due to the planner having been sent to the printers at the end of the previous academic year.

In terms of date changes for sports event or after school clubs, we do apologise for these amendments and try to keep them to a minimum. Sometimes date changes cannot be helped and where possible we do try and give parents as much notice as possible. In cases where sports events are arranged and hosted by other schools, notification of date alterations is beyond our control.

Who covers the class when the class teacher is not in school?

Most of the cover we need within school is when a class teacher is involved in continuing professional development (CPD). Time out of school is monitored closely and we ensure that any CPD that a member of staff is involved in will go onto have a positive impact on your child's education. As a result we have the expert teachers for Maths and English across out Trust and staff who are trained in middle and senior leadership. We are involved in networks across Affinity Teaching School and are currently participating in teacher research groups.

When a class teacher is absent, due to a course or short term illness, the class is covered by members of support staff. The advantages of this are many:

- they know the children
- they can liaise with the class teacher the day before to plan the work and ensure they understand the activity to be completed.
- they know our behaviour policy and standards of behaviour remain high
- they know all of the school routines, break, lunch, assemblies
- they know who children should be going home with at the end of the day