Abbots Farm Junior School

Home Learning Policy

Reviewed and revised: October 2026

Next Review: May 2027

The aims of home learning at Abbots Farm Junior School are to:

- strengthen learning through retrieval and practice
- develop pupils' independence and responsibility
- promote reading for pleasure and fluency
- support mastery of key mathematical facts and spelling patterns
- establish positive learning habits that prepare pupils for secondary education

1. Rationale

Studies show that the impact of home learning in Primary Schools is, on average, an additional 3 months progress per pupil or 6+ months progress per pupil when using digital technology.

Education Endowment Foundation

There is a great deal of very strong evidence that **retrieval practice** is an essential part of the learning process. **Retrieval practice** is the process of calling information to mind that you have been previously exposed to. By using **retrieval practice** as a learning strategy (not an assessment tool), we strengthen our memory. Research demonstrates that this improvement in memory and long-term learning is flexible: it improves students' complex thinking and application skills; it improves students' organization of knowledge; it improves students' transfer of knowledge to new concepts. In other words, **retrieval practice** doesn't just lead to memorization – it increases understanding! **Home learning** is a great opportunity for independent **retrieval**.

Durrington Research School

2. The Scientific Evidence behind Retrieval Practice

Learning is about committing knowledge to long-term memory, not just immediate performance or recall. When paying attention to new information, the brain places this information into the short-term memory. Then, for the information to be made sense of, the brain needs to link this information to prior knowledge. After this, the knowledge must be regularly **retrieved** and rehearsed in order to commit it to long term memory. **Retrieval practice** simply means being expected to remember and recall that same piece of information again and again!

Research shows that **retrieval practice** enables children to know more and remember more. Retrieval practice, and the securing of key facts and knowledge in the long-term memory, creates fluency and automaticity of knowledge, basically an instant recall of key facts which frees up space in the brain to be able to think in a more focused way when applying knowledge to other contexts. Having automatic recall of facts prevents Cognitive Overload. Cognitive Overload is a situation where the brain is given too much information or expected to perform too many tasks simultaneously that it becomes unable to process the information or perform the task.

If children know key maths facts off by heart, their brain does not become overloaded when faced with trying to solve problems and their focus can be on how to interpret and solve the problem. Also, if children develop automatic recall with spelling, their focus can be on the content and quality of what they are writing.

3. High Impact Home learning Activities

According to the Education Endowment Foundation, one of the leading providers of educational research in the UK, home learning that provides instant feedback on answers (for example when using technology) has higher impacts on learning, which we will balance with providing activities on paper to reduce screentime. The EEF also suggests that short, focused tasks (like daily reading or basic maths practice) are more effective than long, complex assignments.

In line with research, home learning at Abbots Farm will therefore be focused on Maths, Spelling and Reading.

1. **Maths**
   Maths home learning will be in the form of times table and arithmetic practice so that children can become fluent in using number facts. All children will also have access to Times Tables Rockstars to support learning their times tables.
2. **Spelling**
   Spelling home learning will be in the form of Spelling Shed games so that children can practice targeted spellings.
3. **Reading**
   Reading home learning will be in the form of independent reading or reading to an adult at home.

4. Quantity of Home learning

Year Group	Maths	Spelling	Reading 4+ nights per week
Year 3	20 minutes	20 minutes	10-15 minutes
Year 4	20 minutes	20 minutes	15-20 minutes
Year 5	20-30 minutes	20-30 minutes	20+ minutes
Year 6	20-30 minutes	20-30 minutes	20+ minutes

Although the times above are a **weekly** suggestion, research shows that practising little and often is more beneficial to learning. Therefore, it would be useful to break the Maths and Spelling sessions up over a

week. For example, a Year 5 child could spend 10 minutes three times a week practising both their Maths and Spelling, rather than completing them in just one block of time.

In addition to the above, Year 6 will have additional home learning in the Spring and Summer term to support them in preparation for SATs and the transition to secondary school.

5. Home learning Incentives

Recognition may be given through house points, certificates, celebration assemblies or raffle tickets for effort, engagement and improvement.

6. Further Challenges

Below are some additional web resources for those wishing to extend their learning further.

English

- https://classroom.thenational.academy/subjects-by-key-stage/key-stage-2/subjects/english-reading-for-pleasure
- https://classroom.thenational.academy/subjects-by-key-stage/key-stage-2/subjects/english-grammar
- https://classroom.thenational.academy/subjects-by-key-stage/key-stage-2/subjects/english-spelling
- https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/subjects/zv48q6f

Maths

- https://classroom.thenational.academy/subjects-by-key-stage/key-stage-2/subjects/maths
- https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/subjects/z826n39
- https://www.rigb.org/learning/activities-and-resources?type=30
- https://www.egfl.org.uk/sites/default/files/maths%20puzzles%20all.pdf
- https://mathsphere.co.uk/resources/MathSphereMathsPuzzles.htm
- https://brilliant.org/daily-problems/

Wider Curriculum

- https://classroom.thenational.academy/subjects-by-key-stage/key-stage-2
- https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/levels/zbr9wmn
- https://pstt.org.uk/resources/curriculum-materials/Science-Fun-at-Home
- https://www.stem.org.uk/primary/resources/collections/home-learning-support

For those wishing to carry out additional home learning challenges linked to the year group Topic curriculum, website suggestions will be provided on the school web page.

7. Roles and responsibilities

Home learning and its role in pupil progress is a shared responsibility and everyone in our school community has an important role to play.

7.1 Role of the teachers

The teachers at AFJS will:

- follow the expectations set out in this policy to ensure that high-impact Home learning activities are set weekly
- ensure all children have logins for TTRS and Spelling Shed
- ensure regular monitoring of pupil times tables knowledge and amend times tables set as appropriate

- home learning will be adapted where necessary to ensure that pupils with SEND can access tasks successfully. Adjustments may include reduced quantities, adapted resources, alternative recording methods, additional support materials, or personalised targets.
- ensure all pupils have regular opportunities to visit the school library and are supported with selecting appropriate books/moving between book bands
- provide opportunities to support children's access to appropriate technology and devices
- where home learning is not completed consistently, seek to understand any barriers and work collaboratively with families to support engagement.

7.2 Role of SLT

SLT at AFJS will:

- have a clear and ambitious vision for providing high-quality, high-impact home learning based on research evidence
- monitor pupil attainment and engagement with home learning activities
- monitor the effectiveness of this policy and hold staff to account for its implementation

7.3 Role of Governors

The Governors at AFJS will:

- monitor the effectiveness of this policy and hold staff to account for its implementation

7.4 Role of Parents/carers

The parents and carers of AFJS pupils will:

- value and give importance to home learning activities
- support children with managing their time/routines to develop good home learning habits
- liaise with school staff where lack of access to appropriate technology is a barrier to completing home learning activities
- liaise with school staff if additional login details are required
- encouraged to discuss texts, question pupils about their reading and promote reading for pleasure and complete pupil reading records

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed **every year** by the most appropriate member of SLT, or if there are any significant changes to school procedures, UK law or Government guidance. Engagement with home learning will be monitored through reading records, completion data from digital platforms, pupil attainment information and feedback from staff, pupils and parents.

9. Links with other policies

This policy should be read alongside:

- AFJS Teaching and Learning Policy
- SEND Policy
- Equality Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Accessibility Plan

This policy is implemented in accordance with the Equality Act 2010