

Leipzig International School

Primary School – Home Learning Policy



Contents

Document control	2
Aims of the policy	3
Foundation of our policy	3
School motto	3
Our mission	3
Our objectives	3
Our values	3
Important research	4
The science behind learning and their suitability for home learning	4
‘New’ learning	4
‘Consolidated’ learning	4
‘Treading water’	5
‘Drowning’	5
Suitability of these four types for home learning	5
Home learning in our Primary School	5
Amount of home learning for each grade	6
Reading to and with your child	6
German home learning	6
German as an Additional Language (GAL) home learning	6
Details about the types of home learning that are set	7
Reading to and with your child	7
Talk for learning	8
Seesaw activities	8
Guidance for parents	9
Promote a learning culture	9
Support rather than do	9
Breakfast	9
Sleep	9
Other support methods	10
What to do if your child is ‘treading water’ or ‘drowning’ with home learning	10
Catching up missed learning due to illness and personal absences	10
When you should go over the allotted home learning time allocation	10
Home learning during holidays	10

Leipzig International School

Primary School – Home Learning Policy



Document control

Distribution	Primary School
Date adopted	November 2020
Next scheduled revision	August 2022
Author	Primary Principal (PP)
Contributors	Primary School

Version	Author	Date	Changes
1.01	Primary School Principal	September 2019	Draft of newly proposed policy (please note that home learning still took place)
1.02	Primary School Management Team (PSMT)	October 2019	Editing
1.03	Primary School Staff	April 2020	Feedback suggested on all aspects during lockdown, collated, prioritised, provided to PSMT, revisions made
1.04	Management Team	August 2020	Discussions, recommendations, revisions made
1.05	Management Team	November 2020	Further discussions and revisions made, shared with Primary staff, final edits
1.06	Primary School Principal	November 2020	Shared with Parents on Portal. In place for 09/11/20.

Elements of this policy are directly transcribed into the PS Staff Handbook and PS Parent Handbook. Therefore, any updating of this policy will require updating there too – under the 'Home learning' section which itself is found under the 'Reporting on Student Progress' section.

Leipzig International School

Primary School – Home Learning Policy



Aims of the policy

This policy that is both for parents and staff, establishes:

1. A consistent and coherent approach to home learning (more commonly known as homework) that is relevant and beneficial – not just giving it because “that is how it has always been” or “that is how we did it when we were younger”.
2. A progressive vertical alignment of home learning so that our students are prepared for Grade 6.
3. Clear guidance for both staff and parents.

We recognise that the more traditional term **homework** is more familiar with parents and children rather than home learning. The purpose behind referring to this document as a Home Learning Policy is the term ‘work’ can imply that the students are busy rather but not necessarily learning. Meanwhile ‘learning’ emphasises that anything that children are asked to do at home should be focused on learning.

Foundation of our policy

School motto

“Learning to be a citizen of the world”

Our mission

To provide an excellent international education in English, to children of all backgrounds, thereby supporting the regional community and promoting international understanding.

Our objectives

1. We create a safe and stimulating learning environment in which our students can discover and develop their intellectual, physical, social and creative potential.
2. We help our students to be happy, well-balanced, ethical individuals who work effectively and willingly with others.
3. We educate our students to think and act with openness to the perspectives, values and traditions of other cultures and communities.
4. We enable our students to understand and express ideas and information confidently and creatively in more than one language.
5. We employ caring, committed and talented international staff, and provide them with the training, the resources and the environment to further develop their professional skills.

Our values

1. We uphold the principles of equality of opportunity and fair treatment of all individuals.
2. We embrace diversity as an essential part of our learning environment.
3. We respect ourselves, we respect each other and we respect our environment.
4. We value honesty, fairness and integrity.
5. We recognise that we are fortunate and assume our responsibility to make a positive contribution to society.

Leipzig International School

Primary School – Home Learning Policy



Important research

Professor John Hattie is a world-renowned, widely respected researcher who conducted a 20-year study on all educational studies by Professor John Hattie described as the 'holy grail of teaching' by The Times Educational Supplement. The study is believed to be the largest evidence-based study ever into the factors that improve student learning. It involved more than 80 million students from around the world and brought together 50,000 smaller studies.

From it, Hattie found that "positive teacher-student interaction is the most important factor in effective teaching", with 252 influences and effect sizes being researched: <http://visible-learning.org/hattie-ranking-influences-effect-sizes-learning-achievement/>.

The hinge-point to judge the success of influences in order to find an answer to the question "What works best in education?", is **0.4 or greater**.

When researching homework in schools, this is what he said:

*"Homework in primary school has an effect of **around zero**. In high school it's larger¹. Which is why we need to get it right. Not why we need to get rid of it. It's one of those lower hanging fruit that we should be looking in our primary schools to say, "Is it really making a difference?... If you try and get rid of homework in primary schools many parents judge the quality of the school by the presence of homework. So, don't get rid of it. Treat the zero as saying, "It's probably not making much of a difference but let's improve it". Certainly, I think we get over obsessed with homework. Five to ten minutes has the same effect of one hour to two hours... The best thing you can do is to reinforce something you've already learnt."*

Hattie 2014²

The science behind learning and their suitability for home learning

All 'learning' can be defined as either:

- New learning
- Consolidated learning
- Treading water or
- Drowning

'New' learning

This is fuzzy, insecure and unstable and yet is the mainstay of learning within schools. An example of 'new learning' is when students start a new IPC topic and encounter knowledge, skills and understanding that they have never experienced before [Scientific explanation: it happens when a neural constellation in the brain is added to and a new connection is made for the first time].

'Consolidated' learning

This happens when the new learning begins to become more secure and finally becomes automatic and firmly established. An example of 'consolidated learning' is when a student is practising their times tables up to a point where it becomes autonomous. [Scientific explanation: it happens when an existing constellation in the brain fires faster even though it does not get any bigger].

¹ Difference is that in secondary, children are commonly set tasks that are consolidation of tasks done in class.

² BBC Radio 4 interview with John Hattie: "Homework in primary school has an effect of zero".

Leipzig International School

Primary School – Home Learning Policy



‘Treading water’

This happens when children are working on things that are already consolidated. No amount of re-visiting will improve the learning. This is not legitimate learning and should be avoided. Very simplistic examples of ‘treading water’ is asking Grade 5 students who are confident and secure with their mathematical skills, to practise their 2x timetables; asking artistic students who are able to paint their own wonderful pictures, to complete a paint-by-numbers picture.

‘Drowning’

This happens when the level is too high for a particular student and they become confused and disoriented. It may also occur when ‘new learning’ is interrupted such as the introduction of a new teacher with a wholly different teaching methodology or approach. It may also occur when a student is experiencing personal problems, even as simple as a terrible night’s sleep or an awful journey to school. Thus, this reinforces the importance of morning meetings as outlined in the Primary School Behaviour Policy.

Suitability of these four types for home learning

Home learning should be either ‘new’ learning or ‘consolidated’ learning, with the vast majority as ‘consolidated’. This is because most ‘new’ learning is introduced in the classroom, allowing ‘consolidated’ learning activities that support what has taken place in the classroom, to be done at home.

Home learning must never be ‘treading water’ or ‘drowning’.

The risk with new learning at home is that if the level is too high, the learner may be left confused and disoriented without the teacher present to guide them (drowning). Furthermore, parents may not be able to provide the necessary support. Equally, if the level is too low, the learner may be treading water.

Home learning in our Primary School

The LIS Primary School day is considerably longer than that of local schools, particularly those students in Grade 1. Students could arrive at school at 07:00 for morning Hort and then not leave for another 10 hours, at 17:00. Their day may ultimately consist of: breakfast, travel, school, travel, Hort and/or external activities, travel, dinner and bedtime preparation. Thus, to have an expectation that a young child must complete their home learning on such a day is unrealistic.

Given the important research, the science behind learning and our own professional experience, the Primary School’s approach to home learning is to:

- Encourage daily reading to and with your child.
- Encourage ‘talk for learning’ primarily through discussing Seesaw activities and uploads.
- Develop automaticity skills such as times tables recollection.

Most importantly:

- **For home learning to be successful, there must be clear communication between school and home regarding lifestyles and expectations.**

Leipzig International School

Primary School – Home Learning Policy



Amount of home learning for each grade

To allow staff a degree of flexibility in their approach, home learning opportunities are outlined each day or provided at the beginning of the week, so that the students can take multiple days to complete the learning activity or activities. As long as each class within the Grade follows the same methodology for that week, either way is acceptable.

Thus, in light of the recommended research that suggests “*Five to ten minutes has the same effect of one hour to two hours*”, below is a table that represents the amount of home learning for each grade.

Types of home learning	Amount of home learning					
	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	
Reading to and with your child³	10+ minutes per day					
German	None	10 minutes per week	10 minutes per week	20 minutes per week	30 minutes per week	
German as an Additional Language (GAL)	None	None	None	None	None	
Other home learning activities (maximum)	per day	0-10 minutes	0-10 minutes	10 minutes	10 minutes	10 minutes
	per week	0-50 minutes	0-50 minutes	50 minutes	50 minutes	50 minutes

Reading to and with your child

More details found [here](#).

German home learning

Whenever German home learning opportunities are shared, the students will usually be given 5-7 days to return their work. As part of their German home learning, they should be reading in German at least twice a week. In addition to the reading, they will either get tasks on the Anton App, in their workbook or another specific task.

German as an Additional Language (GAL) home learning

With regards to GAL, students have no home learning given the nature of the subject. That being said, we highly recommend apps such as Duolingo (<https://www.duolingo.com/>) for any GAL student/parent. The exceptions to this are:

- Students that want to do extra German learning.
- When students are working on their trial-period at the standard German class and so the GAL Teacher helps them to prepare them for this transition.

³ If your child is enjoying the reading, then please feel free to go beyond the recommended daily levels.

Leipzig International School

Primary School – Home Learning Policy



Details about the types of home learning that are set

There is a wide range of other home learning activities that can be offered. They could relate to maths, English, IPC or anything else being learnt at school. The following are some of the more common activities. Please note that this is not an exhaustive list but does contain information on the most common approaches.

Please note that from August 2021, given that the students are still (re)adjusting to school life, our approach to home learning is as follows:

- During week 1 we encourage daily reading.
- During weeks 2-3 reading continues and other limited items may be set.
- From week 4 home learning will occur as normal.

Reading to and with your child

Children are encouraged to take a book home regularly from the library and classroom for reading, or to read with the very popular online Reading A to Z programme (RAZ kids).

The library is located in room 112 and students have a scheduled weekly period in the library. Amongst the many skills taught to the children, they also have time to browse, read and borrow books. As well as the scheduled lesson, the library is accessible for primary children before and after school and during morning break. **Parents** also are welcomed and encouraged to take advantage of the ample resources and check out materials for their personal and family use. The school's library catalogue is available online at <https://catalogue.lis.school/library/home/news>

Parent participation can vary and may include:

- Listening to your child read
- Taking turns reading
- Asking questions about the story, such as:
 - predicting how the story will end
 - what was the child's favourite part and why
 - characteristics or distinguishing features of the main characters
 - explaining an event in one of the illustrations
 - asking the student to summarize the story
 - relating the story to real-life experiences, if applicable

Reading is encouraged on a daily basis. Studies have proven that reading not only helps develop cognitive skills, but also supports students whose mother tongue is not English when the reading is conducted in the child's mother tongue (since language skills are transferable). **Therefore, we highly encourage parents to help support the development of cognitive and language skills by communicating and reading at home in the mother tongue.**

Leipzig International School

Primary School – Home Learning Policy



Talk for learning

Talk is a part of human development that helps us to think, learn and make sense of the world. People use language as a tool for developing reasoning, knowledge and understanding. Therefore, encouraging students to talk as part of their learning experiences will mean that their educational progress is enhanced. Talking about the ideas being learnt means that those ideas are explored; reasoning is developed and organised. As such, students learn more.

Students can talk more and learn more in a way that makes connections with their prior experience. It is much more than a question and answer session between the teacher (or parent) and their students, in that the students' own language, ideas, reasoning and interests are given more time. Most of us want to talk to someone about a difficult issue or in order to find out something, and teachers can build on this instinct with well-planned activities.

Seesaw activities

Seesaw is a platform for student engagement. Teachers can empower students to create, reflect, share, and collaborate. Students “show what they know” using photos, videos, drawings, text, PDFs, and links. It is simple to get student work in one place and share with families, and nothing is shared without teacher approval. There are a whole variety of activities relating to the learning done in class. Most importantly, some of the many benefits of Seesaw-based activities are that parents having a greater insight into daily school learning and students talk about their learning thus consolidating prior learning.

For more information about Seesaw, please consult the PS Parent Handbook or PS Staff Handbook under the ‘Seesaw (Digital Portfolio for Students and Families)***’ section.

Leipzig International School

Primary School – Home Learning Policy



Guidance for parents

Learning does not only occur during activities offered by staff. Learning occurs all the time. Here is some guidance to support your child with their learning.

Promote a learning culture

- Make yourself available at home to support your child, should they need it.
- Make a 'home learning area' within your home, somewhere quiet with no distractions.
- Ensure home learning is done at home rather than en-route to school (possibly with the exception of 'talk for learning' and reading on any long commutes suited to such learning).
- Communicate any thoughts or concerns that you may have with your child's teacher.

Support rather than do

Give the support that your child needs but do not do the home learning for them. Your child will learn almost nothing from doing this and their teacher will naturally assume they are ready for 'more difficult' activities; possibly resulting in your child experiencing 'drowning' learning.

Breakfast (also outlined in the Parent Handbook)

After a good night's sleep, this is the most important meal of the day so please ensure that your child starts the day properly by providing them with an appropriate breakfast and, preferably, eat your own breakfast with them. According to some research:

- 6 out of 10 children either don't have breakfast or don't eat with their parents.
- 11-year olds who skip breakfast have the reaction time and mental agility of a 70-year old.
- Breakfast eaters are happier people, generally starting the day with a positive outlook. Taking as little as five minutes to relax and prepare for the day with a bowl of cereal and milk really ensures a positive start.

Sleep (also outlined in the Parent Handbook)

Please ensure that your child has enough sleep every night. The [Sleep Foundation](#) recommends the following:

Age	Recommended hours of sleep	May be appropriate	Not recommended
1-2 years	11 to 14 hours	9 to 10 hours 15 to 16 hours	Less than 9 hours More than 16 hours
3-5 years	10 to 13 hours	8 to 9 hours 14 hours	Less than 8 hours More than 14 hours
6-13 years	9 to 11 hours	7 to 8 hours 12 hours	Less than 7 hours More than 12 hours

Leipzig International School

Primary School – Home Learning Policy



Other support methods

- Play together, for example card games, board games, memory games, ball games, quizzes etc.
- Ensure that your child knows all the times tables, starting with the easiest and recognising each step of progress. Try this: www.topmarks.co.uk/apps/hit-the-button (great for the automaticity of times tables)
- Show that you are keeping track of your child's progress in all areas.
- Celebrate their success and help them to get better in areas for development.
- Ask your child's opinions and feelings, listening with interest.
- Make family meal times a sociable event around a table together, perhaps cook together.
- Read together.
- Tell stories and jokes together.
- If you have a home language that is not English, make sure your child knows it too.
- Share your knowledge and experience with your child.
- Take an interest in your child's knowledge and experience.
- Follow the guidance about social media safety as outlined in our Parent Handbook (see section of same name for details).

What to do if your child is 'treading water' or 'drowning' with home learning

As a school, we will always look to offer 'consolidated' and 'new' home learning, differentiating as appropriate. However, this can be quite hard and sometimes we might not be successful. If your child is unable to complete an offered activity, or learns nothing because it is too easy, please email the teacher directly as this communication will help the teacher to offer activities more suitable for your child.

Catching up missed learning due to illness and personal absences

This is covered within the Parent handbook under the section of the same name. The main point to remember is that if your child is unwell or tired please do not force them to do home learning. Doing so often causes more harm than good.

When you should go over the allotted home learning time allocation

Staff offering home learning is not an exact science and there may be times when the learning takes a few minutes more, a few minutes less. This is quite normal and we welcome your support and understanding on this matter.

If your child is enjoying their home learning and they want to spend considerably more time on it (especially when a reading activity), please allow them to whilst also taking into consideration, the factors listed within this document. Similarly, if your child is finding that completing their home learning is a struggle, again, please take into consideration the factors listed within this document.

Home learning during holidays

As it is very important that the students have a rest, no home learning will be set by the teachers over the holidays. However, we still encourage reading throughout the holiday. Just before the summer holidays, we will also send you a guide on what you could cover, called our 'Holiday Learning Hints'.