

Homework Policy

Our aim is to provide an inspiring, well-managed homework programme which helps students to develop the skills and attitudes they will need for successful lifelong learning. Homework should support the development of independent learning skills and form part of the partnership with parents. There is an expectation that students will be reading regularly, widely and independently. Guidance is available from the librarian and from subject teachers.

It is worth mentioning that learning outside the classroom does not just come from homework but also sports and outdoor activities, community volunteering and mentoring. All such activities help students develop the skills required of the successful lifelong learner.

What sort of homework activities should students be doing?

Homework must amount to more than merely finishing off tasks begun at school. All homework activities should be related to work the students are, or will be, doing at school. Homework should consolidate and reinforce skills and understanding and extend school learning.

Homework need not always be written work and can include:

- reading
- preparing a presentation to the class
- finding out information
- making something
- trying out a simple experiment

Homework need not be set in discreet units once a week but can be part of an extended project over a number of weeks.

Planning Homework Tasks

Heads of Department must ensure that homework is an integral part of the curriculum, is planned and prepared alongside all other programmes of learning, and is regularly assessed by the teacher.

When planning homework, the range of tasks should:

Allow students to work at a pace that is appropriate to their abilities;

Encourage independent study skills and reflection;

Enable students to review knowledge and skills taught in class and to develop and pursue new interests;

Allow time for researching information and re-drafting work;

Enable students to cover more subject content than is possible in lessons alone;

Be appropriate for all pupils, especially for those with special educational needs.

Provide extension work for the more able.

Subject teachers should ask for regular student feedback on the length of time homework is taking, both in the case of weaker students and those who may be more diligent than the norm, and adjust if necessary to the time described as appropriate for the year group. Teachers must also ensure that homework is set and recorded in student planners during the lesson and not at the end as the bell is ringing.

How much homework should a student expect to do?

Students should not be expected to spend longer on homework than the total guide times set out below. It does not matter if activities do not take as long as the guide times, as long as they are useful.

Heads of Year set out homework timetables at the start of each academic year. These schedules are published on the school web-site and communicated to parents. Teachers are expected to follow these timetables and set homework in each subject on the allocated night. This ensures that students are not expected to do too much homework in any one day. Heads of Year monitor whether the demands on students are consistent and manageable. The basis for these timetables is as follows:

First Form	up to 30 mins per subject per week, except for Modern Languages, Drama, and Latin which have one or two slots of 15 mins each. <i>*Maximum 90 minutes per day</i>
Second Form	up to 30 mins per subject per week <i>*Maximum 90 minutes per day</i>
Third Form	up to 30 mins per subject per week <i>*Maximum 2 hours per day</i>
Fourth & Fifth Form	1 hour per subject per week. Thus there are 2 one-hour homeworks each night of the week (excluding weekends). <i>*Maximum 2.5 hours per day</i>
Sixth Form	Study at home should average 16 - 21 hours per week during term time, on top of any work done during private study periods in the normal day.

**DCSF guidance*

Assessment of Homework

Homework is assessed in a variety of ways depending on the nature of the task set.

Written work is assessed by the teacher and formative feedback given. This is in the form of written comments and/or marks in the student's workbook. Work is regularly assessed in class, in the presence of the student, and feedback given orally. Where oral feedback is given, the teacher should indicate this in the student's work book, with a date. All marks relating to homework and assessed class activities will be recorded in the teacher's mark book.

(Refer to the Assessment Policy for further information.)

Homework activities vary greatly, and aim to develop a wide range of identified skills. Assessment of these activities may take various forms, and in many cases written or oral comment is more valuable than a grade of numerical mark.

What should students do?

Students must record homework tasks in their student planner, complete the task on the night according to the homework timetable, spend the appropriate amount of time on each task and hand the work in on time. If a student finds that he/she is taking longer than the allocated time for each homework, he/she should speak with his/her subject teacher or form tutor.

Other activities, such as extra-curricular sport and music, are also important in supporting students' studies. Students should communicate with teachers if such an activity (eg performing in a school play

or concert) clashes with an academic task set. For special circumstances, a separate arrangement can be made for handing the work in.

How can Parents/Guardians help?

Parents can help to support learning at home by providing a suitable location, away from distractions, where a student can do their homework. Parents should encourage and monitor homework and inform the school if an issue arises.

For younger students, homework is best done in a quiet place where an adult can supervise. Parents are asked to check each evening that the homework set has been done and to sign the student planner once a week. Any concerns regarding homework should be communicated to the form tutor.

In the Upper School and Sixth Form, students should be encouraged to take responsibility for their homework and work independently. However, parents are encouraged to ensure that the work is done on the night set. Some students will need more help with this than others and, once again, communication with school is essential.

For all students, there may be occasions where they ask for help from parents. If help has been given, it is very useful for the teacher to know this. It allows teachers to adapt the following lessons to re-cap on any concepts that have caused difficulties. Students should write 'help given' next to the relevant section of homework. He/she will not be penalised for this.

Facilities available at school for independent study

The school library is available for all students to use at break and lunchtime. This includes access to computers which is also available in S15 at lunchtimes. The Sixth Form have the library facilities available to them throughout the day, in addition to the Sixth Form Centre which has its own computers. The library is open and supervised from 8am until 5pm allowing all students to work both before and after school.

Homework in the school holidays

Homework should not be set for main school holidays at all for First to Third Forms. It may be set for main school holidays for Fourth Form and above, but it should only be for coursework or revision. It should not be used to catch up on work which should have been covered in class (except where a pupil has missed work through illness and needs to catch up with the rest of the set). Heads of Departments should check that all teachers are using holiday work in this way.

Half term holidays should be ignored for the purposes of setting homework i.e. it is perfectly reasonable to set homework before half term, to be completed and handed in after half term, but it should require no greater time than would be the case during a normal working week.

Colleagues should especially avoid setting extra homework during the fortnight half term in the Autumn Term.

Implementation

Homework policy is promoted throughout the school by the Deputy Head (Academic), and its implementation and effectiveness is reviewed annually. This is to ensure that teachers and parents are completely clear about what is expected of pupils in terms of homework and how it should be organised and managed.

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