

Homework Policy

Reviewer: SH February 2024
Education Committee: March 2024

Next review by: July 2025



1. Introduction

This policy is the result of ongoing discussions between Heads of Department and within departments and it is reviewed regularly. It is intended to meet the concern that we cannot expect students to become independent thinkers and learners if we overload them with homework.

2. Why give homework? What is the purpose of homework?

CONSOLIDATION, PREPARATION, EXTENSION, DEVELOPING INDEPENDENT THINKING....

- To extend work or discussion in class, stimulate further interest and allow time for independent research. *In order for students to develop a keen intellectual curiosity we must allow them time to pursue their own research*
- To encourage students to develop the practice of independent thinking, learning and study
- To develop perseverance and self-discipline
- To allow consolidation and application of factual material; to practise and develop skills learnt in the classroom
- To enhance learning and the understanding of issues
- To allow students time to review and learn grammar, vocabulary and key facts effectively
- To make use of secondary sources that are not readily accessible to all students simultaneously in the classroom, e.g. library resources
- To allow time for the evaluation and reflection of work covered in class
- To prepare for the next lesson
- To allow greater challenge for the more able students, while giving those who need more consolidation the time and opportunity for further practice of what they have learnt in class
- To stimulate family discussions and encourage home school communication
- To extend the time available for learning
- To encourage, and give time for, independent reading.

Homework will be set regularly according to the homework timetable. However homework will not be set simply for the sake of it, but only when it serves a useful purpose. The purpose of homework should have been made clear to students by the member of staff setting it, as should the method by which it will be assessed. Homework should always be achievable within the time allocated and be differentiated as appropriate, either by varying the level of difficulty of work set or by expectation of outcome. Homework should enhance learning, encourage the development of important skills and work habits, and give students the opportunity to explore a variety of learning techniques.

In the Lower School the emphasis should be on homework being enjoyable and thought-provoking; in Middle School and Sixth Form it will inevitably become more examination focused, involving revision and practice of examination questions and techniques as public examinations approach.

Please note that we want to encourage students to develop and maintain a wide range of interests.

3. What skills do we want students to acquire and develop through homework?

- Development of investigative, creative and thinking skills

- Development of research skills eg. selecting and editing relevant information
- Development of critical skills such as reading, analysis, logic and evaluation
- Development of organisational and time management skills; the ability to prioritise learning tasks; self-discipline
- The confidence to work independently
- The ability to reflect on their own learning and appraise themselves
- Communication skills
- Development of intellectual curiosity

4. What type of homework do we set?

There will be a great variety depending on age and stage; these are just some examples, by no means exhaustive:

- Reading
- Extended writing
- Research as preparation for discussion in subsequent lessons or to extend work covered in class
- Thinking: time given to reflect and formulate opinions
- Learning, practising or consolidating work done in class (eg. vocabulary, grammar)
- Collection/analysis of data or information
- Watching and summarising relevant TV programmes, documentaries, public lectures
- Contribution to online discussion forums – internal or external
- Problem-solving activities and investigations
- Essay plans
- Self and peer evaluation using a mark scheme
- Design of a revision aid
- Preparing for a debate or presentation
- Listening exercises (MFL)
- Timed examination practice (Middle School and Sixth Form)
- Referencing and researching the work of artists

5. How do we assess homework? How do we ensure that our assessment methods do not lead to excessive time being spent on homework?

- Avoid over-reliance on grades and marks in the Lower School, giving comments instead. Ensure constructive feedback on homework – praise what a student has done well and explain how she could improve further
- Have clear assessment objectives and explicit criteria and share these with students when setting homework
- Set an appropriate quantity of homework, set a word limit and/or time limit; possibly model a similar exercise in class first in order to ensure that it can be completed in the allocated time and that students understand what is expected
- Encourage more peer and self assessment – this gives ownership of criteria used
- Ask students to write questions and mark schemes themselves
- Avoid setting project work unless lessons are also used and time spent is closely monitored
- Encourage students to write time spent on homework at the end of their work, ensuring that this information is quickly available to subject teachers
- Verbal feedback in class encouraging discussion

We expect students to put their mobile phones out of sight when doing their homework. We will be supporting them in developing appropriate use of their school-issued iPads for some, but by no means all, homework tasks.

We ask parents for support in this, and in monitoring the time students spend on their homework. They should be encouraged to write the time spent on their homework at the end of the task in order to give immediate feedback to the teacher who has set the work.