

Homework: A guide for parents.

Over the course of the last twelve months, the school has carried out a full review of how we use homework. A new policy has been devised and agreed, and what follows is a summary to enable you to take a full and active role in your child's progress.

The basic principles:

The five general principles that support the use of homework within the curriculum link to the notion that homework helps develop pupils as independent learners. As a result, homework should always be:

- **Timely** – the right amount on the right day
- **Regular** – to support a routine that encourages time management and self-responsibility
- **Motivating** – we want pupils to want to learn so that they improve over time
- **Purposeful** – there must be a clear outcome from the work that supports learning
- **Differentiated** – where possible

Homework types:

In general, a homework assignment can serve one or more of the following purposes:

- **Preparation** so that the next lesson can take a more interactive form. This might take the form of reading or research.
- **Practice** in various skills – for example mathematical, language, note-making or essay writing.
- **Learning** a stated section of work for a test.
- **Developing study skills** - especially revision. Good homework may also develop self-confidence, self-discipline and a motivation to succeed.
- Saving time in class, e.g. performing tasks that do not require teacher supervision/guidance/input

The specific activities that a pupil may be asked to do are:

1. Practice activities a. Repeat skills/knowledge until secure b. Analyse, evaluate and reflect c. Exam preparation	2. Learning activities a. Factual recall b. New terminology c. Memorising through revision
3. Research activities a. Gathering information b. Organisation of information c. Steps in a larger project	4. Creative activities a. Quizzes on a topic to test each other b. Extended projects c. Revision toolkits
5. Extended outcome activities a. Written work developing knowledge, understanding and skills gained in lessons b. Develop wider awareness	6. On-line activities a. Moodle b. Kerboodle c. Bitesize
7. Literacy practice a. Spelling, punctuation and grammar b. Reading for next lesson	8. Preparation activities a. Organising ingredients b. Planning
9. Teacher set, or student choice activities a. Homework challenges	

Occasionally, homework that consists of finishing a piece of classwork may be set, but this should not be the norm.

Normal pattern:

The volume of homework each pupil receives is determined by the homework timetable. The majority of pupils will receive homework as follows:

Key Stage 3:

On average, each pupil will receive one or two homeworks per night per week. Subjects with more than one lesson per week may set two homeworks per week. Subjects with one lesson per week, eg. RE, may set homework once per fortnight. Practical subjects, eg. Art and Technology may set homework in the form of projects that will run over each curriculum module.

The notional time that students are expected to spend on each homework task is as follows:

- Year 7: 20 minutes
- Year 8: 25 minutes
- Year 9: 30 minutes

Key Stage 4:

Most subjects have two homework sessions per week, with each piece being 30 to 40 minutes **on average**. Practical subjects, e.g. Art and Technology usually set homework assignments once per week, with the duration being extended accordingly. Exceptions are PSHRE/PSHEC and Games, where none is set.

Sixth Form:

In the Lower Sixth, GCE students are expected to complete at least 2 hours homework per week per subject. In the Upper Sixth, where students generally take fewer subjects, this can be expected to rise to between 4 and 5 hours per subject per week. This is because most subjects have two teachers, and each one will set homework.

Student planners:

All students are issued with a planner in which the homework set is recorded day by day. Subject teachers should be confident when setting homework that the pupil has recorded:

- The task/assignment – accurately transcribed from your instructions
- The length of time you expect the homework to take
- The deadline for submission

The planner has three main uses:

- It serves as an aide-memoire to the pupil, helping with the organisation of books etc.
- It serves as a record for the pupil (and the form tutor) of the work set
- It should help parents to become involved with their children's learning by enabling them to review the homework that has been set

Parents are requested to sign the planner each week. Form tutors should check this weekly. It can also be used by tutors as a way of monitoring pupil progress, and pupils can be asked to produce the planner at registration each morning, correctly completed, together with the homework that has been done the night before.

And finally:

The successful and impactful use of homework can only be achieved if the partnership between pupils, teachers and parents is strong. Therefore, please do not hesitate to contact the school if you have any concerns or queries about homework and its' place in the NTS curriculum.

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