

Homework Policy

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The importance of homework to support learning

Introduction

Research has shown that the setting of homework for Secondary School students is a benefit to their learning¹. However, there is a wide variation in potential impact, suggesting that how homework is set is likely to be very important. There is some evidence that homework is most effective when used as a short and focused intervention (e.g., in the form of a project or specific target connected with a particular element of learning) with some studies showing very strong positive impact on attainment. Benefits are likely to be more modest, if homework is more routinely set (e.g., learning vocabulary or completing problem sheets every day).

Evidence also suggests that relating homework to learning in normal school time is important. In the most effective examples homework was an integral part of learning, rather than an add-on. To maximise impact, it is also important that students are provided with high quality feedback on their work.

Studies imply that there is an optimum amount of homework of between 1 and 2 hours per school day (slightly longer for older pupils), with effects diminishing as the time that students spend on homework increases.

Why should students receive homework?

- Research evidence shows that students make better progress by completing homework
- Students develop the correct habits for study, including the Learner Profile characteristics
- Teachers can set a wider range of tasks through setting homework and, therefore, have a greater range of evidence of the students' progress and achievement
- Teachers can devote more lesson time to collaborative study, practical work and discussion, if independent work can be completed outside the classroom
- Students can prepare for future learning in the classroom
- Students can be encouraged to enrich their classroom learning
- Students and parents can share the learning experience in greater partnership

Types of homework tasks

The list below is not an exhaustive list of tasks that could be set for homework, but rather an indication of the type of tasks that are appropriate. There is an expectation that students would receive a variety of tasks over time.

- Preparation for future learning (such as reading ahead and summarising or planning tasks for future tasks)
- Wider reading tasks for enrichment or consolidation
- Structured short-answer questions to consolidate learning in lessons

- Choice of tasks with varying levels of challenge
- Vocabulary or key-facts learning
- Extended project work – either completed as individuals or collaboratively
- Guided research with appropriate support at the start of the work, such as key websites or printed references
- Timed essays or extended pieces of writing
- Creative responses to the learning – such as pamphlets
- Online homework tasks
- Revision
- Write-up of experiments or practical work
- Rehearsal

Current research suggests that the most effective homework tends to be preparation for future learning and completion of specific tasks with clear criteria for success. Research also suggests that it is effective to give students some autonomy with the task, such as giving them choices or license to be creative. Project work tends to be least effective.

Under normal circumstances, it is not appropriate to set homework overnight. There are occasions when lessons are on consecutive days and, therefore, the teacher may feel that they must set homework overnight. In these circumstances, the teacher must make it clear that if a student cannot find the time to complete the work overnight, then their parent can write a note in their logbook and an extension will be agreed. In any case, it should be noted that completing work overnight, such as learning vocabulary does not encourage good learning habits or support students' long-term knowledge acquisition.

Many students at our school are involved in many extra-curricular activities and indeed this is encouraged. This means that students can struggle to find time to do both their activities and spend sufficient time on their homework which leads to extra stress, especially on the highly committed students. It is important that both parents and teachers encourage the students to seek support if they are finding it difficult to balance everything.

It is important to note that there is no expectation that homework will be set every lesson; if there is nothing appropriate to set at that time, then the teacher is not required to set work. However, a creative teacher should be using the full range of homework tasks and, therefore, it would be rare for them to not set homework for several lessons.

Homework setting practice regularity

The tables below set out a guide for the homework time per fortnight in each year group. This is a guide for subject staff, although it is clearly difficult to judge how long it will take every member of the class to complete the work; teachers should inform their students how long they believe the task should take and encourage their students to give feedback to them at the end of the task. This is also a guide to students and parents; if the task is taking significantly longer than the allotted time then they should give feedback to the teacher. Parents

should write a note in the student's logbook if they have decided that the task is taking too long and cannot be completed by the deadline.

If the teacher knows that a task will take longer than their allocated time, then they should make this clear to the students and inform them that the homework will count for the appropriate number of weeks. The students should write this in the appropriate dates in their logbook as evidence and as a reminder.

Key stage 3

Subjects	Homework time per fortnight (minutes)
Core	120
Non-core	60

Key stage 4

Week A

Maths 30 mins	Science 30 mins	Option A 30 mins	Option D 30 mins	English 30 mins
English 30 mins	Option B 30 mins	Option C 30 mins	Maths 30 mins	Science 30 mins

Week B

Option A 30 mins	Option C 30 mins	Science 30 mins	English 30 mins	Maths 30 mins
Option B 30 mins	Option D 30 mins	Maths 30 mins	Science 30 mins	English 30 mins