



This Policy establishes the School's expectations of pupils, parents and staff in relation to homework.

In the context of A Curriculum for Excellence and good practice, the purpose of homework is to help pupils:

- to develop the skills, confidence and motivation needed to study effectively on their own. This is vital given the importance for pupils in the future of life-long learning and adaptability
- to consolidate and reinforce skills and understanding developed at School
- to extend School-based learning, for example, through additional reading
- to prepare for work to be undertaken
- to take more responsibility for their own learning
- to maintain the involvement of parents in the management of pupils learning, and to keep them informed about work being carried out in school
- to extend the time available for study
- to allow work to be carried out which may not be suitable to a classroom situation
- to become independent learners.

Expectations of pupils

The School expects pupils in the Senior School to record their homework in their Student Planner as soon as it is given to them. Homework would normally be done on the evening of the day in which it is given whenever possible and pupils are expected to meet homework deadlines. If pupils do not receive homework, or complete it quickly, they are expected to revise and/or look over the work covered that day in their subjects.

In the Junior School, pupils are issued with a Homework Sheet at the beginning of each week detailing the work to be done at home each day.

Pupils preparing for SQA Examinations [currently all pupils in Senior 2 and above] would be expected to have a programme of personal revision which they are following. If any pupil is experiencing difficulty in completing homework, they are expected to seek help from staff.

Expectations of parents

Parents are expected to support their children in meeting the school's expectations with regard to homework. Parents can provide this support by encouraging their children:

- to tackle their homework at a regular time of the day in a suitable location free from distractions e.g. mobile phones, televisions, access to computers unless required for homework – Bebo, MSN etc are often major distractions
- by checking the homework against the entries in the pupil's Student Planner and, if requested, by signing both Student Planner and homework
- by writing comments in the parents' boxes on the Homework Sheet (Junior School)
- by providing help if required. However, it is unhelpful if parents actually do the homework for their children as this does not aid the learning process.

Expectations of teachers



The School requires that subject/class teachers set homework. In the Junior School, pupils are provided with a weekly planner detailing the homework set for that week [Monday-Thursday inclusive] and parents

are encouraged to engage and support their children closely. In Transitus-Senior 1 [Senior 2 from August 2009] homework should be set every time a particular subject appears on the homework timetable and in Senior 2-6 it would be expected that pupils have homework from every class on virtually every occasion the class meets. The format of homework set will vary but teachers are expected to mark or check that homework has been done by following it up in an appropriate way in class through discussion, presentations, tests, checking jotters etc.

It is the responsibility of class/subject teachers to check that pupils are recording set homework in their Student Planners and to check that it has been done to their satisfaction.

It is the responsibility of the Tutor to check that pupils are using their Student Planners effectively.

It is the responsibility of Principal Teachers/SMT to check the work of class/subject teachers/departments in administering the School's Homework Policy.

Regular Homework Surveys are carried out.

Appropriate Homework Tasks

Homework tasks should have a clear objective, linked to study programmes. They should be planned as carefully as any other part of the learning and teaching process. Homework time should not be used solely for finishing off work carried out in class, as this often encourages pupils to work as rapidly as possible with little care for their work, whilst penalizing the conscientious pupil. Where homework is a planned progression from the lesson, the time and date should be noted in the margin at the end of classwork, so that the homework carried out can be clearly identified

Suitable homework tasks might include:

- written work
- short answer and extended answer questions
- investigations
- interviews
- simple experiments
- essay writing/drafting
- learning vocabulary
- reading
- personal research
- revision
- report writing
- preparation for practical work /simple "everyday" experiments
- preparing presentations.

It is expected that homework tasks are differentiated appropriately and it is necessary to ensure that all pupils understand what they have to do, and that the instruction noted will allow parents to provide support. Often the end of the lesson is not the best time to set homework, but whatever time is chosen, it must be sufficient to allow all of the class to record the task accurately.

Time allocation:



Whilst the intrinsic value of homework activities are far more important than the precise amount of time devoted to them, it is vital for there to be a regular programme so that everyone (teachers, pupils and parents) know what to expect.

In general pupils will receive homework each evening, although it is not normal for Junior School pupils to receive homework over a week-end.

The following guidelines should be used in relation to expected time per evening:

- **J1 & J2: 25 minutes**
- **J3 & J4: 35 minutes**
- **J5 & J6: 45 minutes**
- **Transitus: 1 hour**
- **Senior 1 & 2: 1 hour 30 minutes**
- **Senior 3 & 4: 2 hours**
- **Senior 5 & 6: at least 2 hours 30 minutes**
-

These times are notional as all pupils work at differing rates. Parents with concerns in relation to the amount of homework their child has, or the length of time taken to complete it, should contact their child's class teacher (Junior School) or Tutor (Senior School) in the first instance.

It is the responsibility of the Vice-Principal [Head of Junior School] (J1 - J6) and the Senior Vice-Principal (Transitus & S1) to draw up homework timetables and to communicate these to parents as early as possible in the Autumn Term. This communication will also advise parents how they can best support their child with homework. The points covered will include those below:

- check that homework details are filled in clearly and regularly in the Student Planner. There is space there for parents to sign
- help your child organise his or her time to best advantage so that things are not all left to the last minute or even forgotten
- try to make sure that there are suitable working conditions at home
- take a positive and active interest in your child's work at home rather than just insisting that it is done
- let us know if there are problems with homework that you cannot resolve. Perhaps your child seems to be doing too much, or not enough, or is finding it too easy or too difficult. Contact your child's Tutor in the first instance who will be glad to help.

Types of Homework Assessment

- **Formative Assessment**

Formative Assessment involves staff in:

- sharing learning intentions/outcomes with their pupils to help them appreciate what they are expected to achieve
- providing their pupils with regular feedback in class on their strengths and how to improve
- using open-ended questions to develop and improve understanding



- using marking and feedback strategies that help their pupils to improve

Formative assessment makes use of peer- and self-assessment, helping pupils learn to make their own improvements and increasingly become independent learners. In this context, teachers may set homework and pupils are then asked, in class, to assess each other's work. The teacher directs discussion using effective questioning and establishes/sets the criteria for assessment. By being actively engaged in the assessment process, each pupil will identify their strengths, clarify their understanding, and recognise their weaknesses and the steps necessary to affect improvement.

Homework set in this context may not be "marked" in terms of having a numerical score or grade but teachers will provide feedback to pupils and maintain a record of pupils' progress and next steps.

- **Summative Assessment**

Summative assessment involves teachers marking homework in the "traditional" way, with a numerical score or grade awarded to specify attainment against relevant grade-related criteria or learning outcomes. Staff would still be expected to give constructive written or verbal feedback in addition to marks/grades in order to highlight strengths and/or areas for improvement.

Feedback for Pupils

If homework is to be of the greatest benefit, pupils must be given prompt feedback from teachers. Work should be marked as swiftly as possible, as a general guideline within a maximum of ONE week. Only in exceptional circumstances should it take longer.

Praise and High Expectations

As with all aspects of teaching, it is important for teachers to have high expectations of their pupils' completing homework, and to use praise extensively for work well done. Whole classes should not be subject to criticism, or have teaching time wasted whilst the teacher is criticising those who have not completed homework. Rather, homework issues should be handled individually, and often this is best done by going around the class whilst the pupils are working individually.

Where there are real personal / home problems, the Principal Teacher in collaboration with the Tutor should seek to assist the pupil and to advise subject staff. In the Junior School, parents should contact the class teacher or Vice-Principal [Head of Junior School] who can tailor homework to suit the individual circumstances.

Where a child has identified barriers to their learning, it is vital to deal with the individual and not set homework according to the minimum that can be accomplished by the weakest child in any class. Support for Learning will advise in cases of particular concern where an individual pupil may be struggling with the quantity of homework being set for them.