

Woodchurch High School

A Church of England Academy



HOMEWORK POLICY DOCUMENT

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Background

Homework can make an important contribution to pupils' progress and many parents also see work done at home as a valuable and essential part of school work. However, tasks set for homework that are poorly planned and take little account of learners' strengths, interests or home circumstances can have a negative impact both on attainment and motivation.

Homework, when planned and used properly, extends the challenge open to the pupil, and ensures that teaching time can be used to maximum effect. There is evidence that pupils in the highest achieving schools spend more time on learning activities at home than pupils in other schools.

Homework makes the greatest contribution to learning when:

- tasks are carefully planned and structured to support progression in learning, as part of the school's schemes of work;
- there is consistent practice across the school in setting, managing and marking homework (as appropriate);
- there is a regular programme so that everyone teachers, pupils and parents or carers knows what to expect each week;
- pupils and parents or carers are very clear about what they need to do;
- parents and carers are treated as partners in their child's learning;
- there are high expectations of pupils in completing homework and consistent curriculum area procedures in place when pupils fall short of expectations with regard to meeting deadlines and agreed success criteria;
- pupils receive prompt, clear feedback on their work;
- the homework policy is regularly monitored and evaluated to check that it supports pupils learning in the best possible way.

Purposes of Homework

The purposes of homework include:

- To encourage 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 enable pupils to understand that independent learning is vital to achieve success;
- To provide training for pupils in planning and organising time;
- To promote a responsibility for learning within each pupil;
- To consolidate and reinforce skills and understanding developed at school;
- To extend school learning, for example through additional reading;
- To sustain the involvement of parents and carers in the management of pupils learning and keeping them informed about the work pupils are doing;

- To manage particular demands, such as preparation for GCSE controlled assessments.

The intrinsic value of homework activities is far more important than the precise amount of time devoted to them. However, broad expectations about how much time it is reasonable for pupils to spend are useful, both as a framework for teachers and as a guide for parents and pupils.

Homework Timetables

Good practice suggests that the amount of time which should be spent by pupils at secondary schools, on average, on homework, should fall within the following ranges:

Years 7/ 8	45-90 minutes per day
Year 9	1-2 hours a day
Years 10/11	1.5 -2.5 hours a day

All pupils will be issued with a homework timetable at the start of the academic year. Homework will be set by all teachers, in all subject areas, in accordance with the published timetable and will be compulsory for all pupils. Careful thought will be needed when planning tasks for pupils in lower sets / AEN groups in order to achieve the right balance between time requirement, rigour and benefit. It is essential for Curriculum Areas to plan homework tasks collectively to encourage consistency of good practice.

Staff must then ensure that homework is recorded by all pupils in their planners. This should take place in the first part of the lesson and could be revisited or fully explained at an appropriate time later on in the lesson if required. Setting homework at the end of the lesson discriminates against pupils with learning difficulties.

Pupils must be given clear written instructions of the homework task, deadline and, if necessary, how to complete the work set. Consideration should be given to how homework is recorded for pupils with additional needs. Pupils must be clear about the purpose of the homework, the success criteria and how it will be assessed.

Form tutors should ensure that pupils note down each day in their planners only the subjects which should be setting homework on that particular day and not all the lessons that they have on that day. If no homework is set due to staff absence then this should be recorded in the planner as 'Teacher absent'. 'None set' should be challenged if seen in planners and Form tutors should regularly monitor and compare planners to ensure that pupils are keeping them up to date appropriately.

Staff should be careful to ensure that homework time is not regularly used simply for finishing off work carried out in class. This can often place too heavy a burden on some children and too light a demand on others.

Homework Formats

In years 7 and 8 pupils should be encouraged to articulate their learning so homework could involve the preparation of presentations, posters, leaflets or recordings.

Project work over a period of time is also appropriate provided that there are regular progress checks and that weekly tasks are recorded in planners.

If revision or 'learning' are to be set as homework it is essential that guidance is given and recorded in planners concerning the content to be revised / learnt and possible strategies to use.

Attendance at after school sessions may count as homework for any year group.

Assessment of Homework

If homework is to benefit pupils learning they must be given prompt and appropriate feedback on what they have done. Parents/carers have a role in encouraging and praising children for the effort which they have devoted to homework but pupils look mainly to teachers for a response on the quality of their work. All homework must, therefore, be assessed. This can be done in a variety of ways:

- Marked by the teacher
- Peer/self-assessment
- Orally
- By testing

It is school policy that we endeavour to mark and return work and homework within two weeks.

It is essential that staff record grade/marks for all formally assessed work as this will allow individual progress to be monitored and, where necessary, appropriate interventions planned and implemented.

Curriculum leaders should monitor homework set to ensure variety, differentiation and the consistency of good practice. Key, cross cohort homework tasks should be included in all schemes of work and included in curricular information communicated to parents. Regular use should be made of the VLE by all teaching staff to both record homework set and to support individual tasks. This will help enlist the support of parents in monitoring and supporting the work of their child and also counter some of the excuses sometimes offered for failing to complete tasks set such as not knowing what had to be done or losing worksheets.

When setting homework, teachers will take account of the range of access that pupils have to computer equipment, software and printing facilities outside school. For example, some pupils may not have access to a computer at home or the number of people in the home trying to use a single computer restricts access.

While it may be acceptable for pupils to use the internet to find information which helps them with their homework, teachers will be sensitive to the different access that pupils may have to the internet and avoid disadvantage for those pupils who do not have access to the internet outside the school.

Homework Deadlines

Pupils must be trained to adhere to deadlines. It is essential therefore that staff are consistent with regard to sanctions. Failure to do homework or the submission of unsatisfactory work should initially be acted upon by the member of staff who set the work. Deadlines should only be extended for pupils who supply a letter from parents/carers or who have a note from the relevant PPL. Repeat offenders should be referred to curriculum leaders and a letter should be sent home.

Curriculum leaders should ensure that there is provision made on a weekly basis for any pupils who wish to do homework within the relevant curriculum area in school after 3.15.

Variety of Homework

Where possible, pupils should be provided with an element of choice, particularly with regard to format. They will, however, need to be reminded that substance should not be sacrificed to style.

A variety of tasks could be set, such as:

- questions;
- research;
- thinking;
- reading;
- extended writing;
- past papers;
- notes ;
- learning/revision (but clear guidelines should be given on how to do this)
- listening tasks (e.g. on VLE)
- watch film/TV clips (e.g. on VLE or websites such as BBC)
- group work;
- presentations and speaking/oral tasks. Presentations could be recorded via VLE or Audacity or could be PowerPoints / photostories
- Animations
- Planning and recording a podcast /vodcast/rap
- On-going project
- Mind maps
- Pupil voice (on line)
- Contributing to a wiki/blog/survey/forum on the VLE
- Attendance at an after-school / dinner-time club/session
- Projects
- Learning logs

- Pre-learning keywords for the next lesson (by research on the Internet or by reading in context)
- 'Flipped learning' – previewing learning planned for subsequent lessons

Evaluation

A whole school evaluation of the effectiveness of the policy will be carried out regularly. This will involve consultation with staff and a sample of parents and pupils. Where further good practice is identified, this will be shared across the school.

Appendix A - Helping your Child with Homework

Show you think Education and Homework are important:

- set a regular time every day for homework
- ensure your child has paper, books, pencils and other things needed to do assignments and, where possible, has a quiet place to work free from distractions.

Monitor assignments:

- Do you know what your child's homework assignments are? How long should they take?
- Do you see that assignments are started and completed to the best of your child's ability?
- Do you read the teacher's comments on assignments that are returned?
- Is TV viewing / playing on games consoles / social networking cutting into your child's homework time?
- Do you check your child's homework diary on a regular basis?

Provide guidance:

- help your child to get organised. Does your child need a calendar or assignment book or a bag for books and a folder for papers?
- encourage your child to develop good study habits (e.g. scheduling enough time for big assignments; making up practice tests). It is important that homework tasks are at least looked at, if not tackled as soon as possible after the lesson when they have been set as this allows time for further instructions or support from the subject teacher before the deadline for completion.
- do you talk with your child about homework assignments? Does s/he understand them? If not, encourage him / her to talk to the subject teacher as soon as possible and not struggle with a specific task for an extended period of time.
- do you and your child talk about plagiarism and its consequences

Talk with someone at school when problems come up:

- if a problem comes up, do you contact the teacher?

Appendix B – Letter Home

Dear

I am writing to inform you that _____ has recently failed to complete and return homework for _____ on a number of occasions.

At Woodchurch High school we greatly value of homework as it allows pupils to further develop their understanding of subjects at home and develop the habits of study that are essential to becoming an independent learner. This will ultimately lead to greater success in all areas of the curriculum.

I am sure that we can rely on your help in ensuring that _____ attempts and returns all future homework tasks according to deadlines set.

Please sign the tear-off slip below to acknowledge receipt of this letter.
Yours sincerely

Class Teacher

Tear here and return

Parent/carer's receipt:

I have received your note about the failure to complete homework and will ensure that, in future, it is completed and returned to the subject teacher on time.

Parent/carer's signature _____ Date _____

Pupils name _____ Form _____