

HOMEWORK POLICY

We believe it is appropriate to set homework for all children who attend the school. The amount of homework set will vary according to the pupil's age and ability. Homework should be a meaningful extension of the learning experiences offered in the school. It must not become a dreary routine of time-filling drudgery.

The Purpose of Homework

Homework:

gives pupils the opportunity to develop the habit of working independently and using research skills;

allows pupils to develop pieces of work to a greater length than is possible within the time limits of lessons;

is ideal for uninterrupted revision and learning;

is useful for finishing off work begun in lessons, where appropriate.

Different Kinds of Homework

The school curriculum has changed greatly and so has the nature of homework. Whilst writing will still be an important element of homework in many subjects, as will reading, homeworks with which parents may be less familiar are those which involve finding out, observing and recording observations and solving problems. In many areas of the curriculum homework will involve practical work such as drawing, painting and making things.

Setting Homework

A homework timetable is issued for each form group in September. Teachers will set homework when it is appropriate during the lesson and pupils should note in their Student Planner the nature of the work and when it is to be handed in. It is often a good idea for pupils to be allowed time to start a piece of homework in the lesson as this gives an opportunity for questions and allows the teacher to see that the pupils really do understand what they have to do.

Handing in Homework

Sometimes pupils will be asked to complete their homework for the following day. This often happens when textbooks are taken home and are required for use the next day or when the teacher has planned a 'follow-up' lesson. Usually, however, pupils will be given a longer period in which to complete the work. This allows them some flexibility in planning when to do their homework and should ensure that large amounts of homework do not have to be done on any one night. It should also reduce any conflict between homework and other activities. Children do, however, have to learn to be responsible and not let their homework 'build up'.

How Much Homework?

For many parents this is the key question about homework but unfortunately it is difficult to give an answer which is both honest and simple. If we are to ensure that homework is both meaningful and stimulating, it is necessary for the system to be flexible. It is very easy for the school to write a homework timetable which specifies times for each subject but, in reality, it is impossible to put such a timetable into effect given the individual differences between children and the need to have effective links between homework and classwork.

It is important to remember that the **quality** of homework is more significant than the **quantity**. A flexible approach allows homework to reflect learning needs rather than artificial routines. Please contact the school if you are concerned about the amount of homework set in any subject.

Can Parents Help With Homework?

Understandably, some parents feel there is little they can do to help with homework but in fact there are many ways in which you can help your children: encouraging and supporting them; checking presentation, handwriting and spelling; testing them on learning homeworks; listening to them reading what they have written; asking them to explain what they have been studying. All these things will help your child to appreciate the importance of homework and encourage the practice of looking again at work done so that errors can be corrected and improvements made.

Student Planner

All pupils are issued with a Student Planner which they are expected to fill in carefully. The record allows pupils to keep track of the homework they have to do and helps them to organise their work. Form teachers check these diaries regularly to see whether pupils are keeping them properly and subject teachers may write in them if homework is late or unsatisfactory. It is important that parents look at Student Planner regularly and sign them. It is a way of keeping in touch with what homework the children are doing and is a way of showing an interest in their work.

Homework Problems

It is no good pretending that homework does not cause problems. Homework can cause conflict between children and their teachers and parents. This is usually the result of a reluctance on the part of some pupils to spend an appropriate amount of time on their homework. Children do need to learn how to use their time well and parents may well need to review the amount of time their children are allowed to play out or watch television if homework problems do arise.

On the other hand, homework should not be used as an excuse to deprive children of the legitimate amount of leisure they deserve after a day at school. We have experienced parents who would like the school to set large amounts of homework so that they have a reason for refusing their children permission to go out. There are many good reasons for such refusals and homework is only one of them!

Another problem is when parents become anxious that their children are getting too much or not enough homework. This problem is generally the result of individual differences between children. Some spend an insufficient amount of time on the tasks they are set, while some struggle on beyond the call of duty. It is important to strike a balance here: when work is rushed it is likely to be careless and lacking in depth but, on the other hand, hours of drudgery will not make a genius out of an average child.

One difficulty with the new types of homework mentioned is that it is not always easy for the teacher to monitor whether the work has been done satisfactorily. Reading homeworks are a good example of this problem. Learning from reading is a crucial part of homework in many subjects but, because there is no tangible end product like a piece of writing for the teacher to check, some children treat these homeworks as being of secondary importance. This sort of attitude needs to be discouraged by both teachers and parents.

If parents are worried about the amount of homework set and an inspection of the Student Planner does not reassure them, they should contact the school.

Homework: The Responsibilities

The school is responsible for setting and marking an appropriate amount of homework for your child. We should also ensure that the tasks set are meaningful, stimulating and of an appropriate level of difficulty.

Parents are responsible for providing a suitable environment for working at home and for encouraging and showing an interest in their children's work. One way of doing this is by looking at the homework diary.

Pupils are responsible for being honest with their parents about their homework and for doing their very best.