

HOMEWORK POLICY

Aim

The purpose of homework is to enhance pupil learning and therefore promote academic achievement.

In particular homework will:

- provide more time for study, allowing pupils to make more rapid academic progress;
- encourage pupils to study on their own and so develop as independent learners;
- allow parents to become involved in the education of their children.

Purpose

The reason a teacher will set a particular homework will vary but will include:

- consolidating and reinforcing skills and understanding, developed at school;
- practice – learning by doing;
- learning and memorising factual knowledge;
- extending school learning, for example through additional reading;
- managing particular demands, such as coursework assignments;
- encouraging pupils to develop the skills and motivation needed to study on their own as independent learners;
- developing research and practical skills;
- providing opportunities for private reading, study or research;
- doing work not suited to a classroom situation;
- developing self discipline.

Forms

Homework will be set by the subject teacher. To achieve the purpose outlined above it will take a wide variety of forms

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| • written exercises/worksheets | • drawing from observation or imagination | • reports |
| • investigations | • essays | • drafting |
| • simple practical work | • reading | • research |
| • designing | • interviews | • projects |
| • coursework assignments | • model making | • practice |
| • extended projects | • using IT | • revision tasks |
| | | • review |

- Note 1) As pupils progress through the school there will be a tendency to set more homeworks of the extended type, moving more towards the forms at the end of the list above.
- 2) **Parents should be aware that homework will NOT always be a written piece of work**, but may include reading research or a simple practical task.

Timing

The amount of homework set will depend on the age of the pupil. In general the time spent on homework should increase as pupils progress through the school. **The intrinsic value of homework activities is far more important than the precise amount of time devoted to them and tasks will be set of variable lengths.** However, broad expectations are included here as to how much time is reasonable to expect of pupils of different ages.

At Key Stage 3 (years 7 to 9) pupils are expected to spend between one and 2 hours a day on homework. Pupils in year 7 would probably spend about an hour a day or more, increasing to 1½ to 2 hours in year 9. Homeworks may not necessarily be set prior to a holiday.

At Key Stage 4 (years 10 to 11) pupils would be expected to spend about 2 hours per day on homework. This may increase to 2½ hours in year 11 when pupils often have to undertake more extended tasks in including GCSE coursework. Homework at Key Stage 4 is often less prescriptive; pupils are expected to plan their own study, with guidance, and complete longer pieces of work over a period of time. However, there is always plenty of work to do for GCSE, including ongoing revision, learning vocabulary, practice exercises and background reading. No GCSE pupil can ever say that “there is nothing to do”.

Note: If GCSE coursework is set for homework, parents should be aware that there are certain external regulations, specified by the examinations boards, and failure to meet these requirements may affect a final grade in a particular subject; these may include deadlines for the final submission of work.

In the Sixth Form students have independent study time in school as well as the time they should spend at home. Students should be taking responsibility for their own learning, under the guidance of their tutors, in preparation for Higher Education. Sixth form students are encouraged to work on their own and develop as independent learners. There is both supervised and unsupervised study areas within the Sixth Form Centre. Students may choose to organise their own study, unless they receive unsatisfactory grades in the half-termly monitoring, when they will be required to attend the supervised study sessions in their non-contact periods. Students will be given termly action plans.

Sixth Form Personal Development

Where students complete all their work, and have further time available, staff are expected to set general reading.

The study time will depend on the course followed. However there is an expectation that:

- a) **A-level students** will spend an additional 5 hours per week per AS-level, 6 hours per week per A2 equivalent over and above class contact time.
- b) **Vocational** students will spend an additional 12 to 15 hours over and above class contact time, in addition to time for A-levels specified above. Vocational course are based on assignments which will be worked on both within and outside specified lesson times.
- c) **Additional/resit** GCSEs should take 2-4 hours in addition to above.

Note: Parents should note that these timings are for guidance only. While every effort will be made to set differentiated work to take the recommended time, inevitably some pupils

will work more quickly than others. Parents should not be overly concerned at some variations from the stated guidelines. If parents have particular concerns that their child is doing too much or too little homework across the board, they should contact the form tutor.

Pupils with Special Educational Needs

Teachers will always try to match the homework to meet the learning needs of the pupils. Extension work can be set for the more able. Reinforcement work can be set for pupils experiencing difficulties. If a pupil is on the SEN Register, then they may have an Individual Education Plan which may refer specifically to homework. Parents should ensure that these pupils do an appropriate amount of homework and contact the School's Special Need's Coordinator if they have any concerns.

Gifted and Talented Pupils

Teachers will set more challenging homework in order to stretch pupils and help them fulfil their full potential. The focus will be on quality rather than quantity.

The extension homework provided could be:

- an extension of the core homework set to the class, with an open-ended outcome
- more challenging tasks on the same topic at graded levels
- a project type homework on the topic studied
- a project type homework on a topic chosen by pupil
- research of information on a topic from a variety of resources
- presentation made to the class
- creative writing (poetry "playlet")
- independent reading
- working with an older pupil.

When a pupil completes homework set very quickly, he/she should tackle homework at a more appropriate level. We invite parents to contact the subject teacher or the gifted and talented coordinator if they have any concerns.

The School will

- set homework of an appropriate type according to a set timetable which is published to staff, pupils and parents every September;
- ensure the work is marked in an appropriate manner;
- provide feedback to pupils on how they are doing
- ensure homework is complete, imposing sanctions to pupils who fail to comply.

Parents

St Mary's believes that education is a partnership between home and school, and that parents have their own responsibilities. Parents are encouraged to support pupils with their homework. Such interest and support will always enhance the child's learning. Parents are requested to:

- provide a quiet, suitable place where pupils can do their homework;
 - make it clear to pupils that they value homework and support the school policy;
 - take an interest in the homework, encourage pupils and praise them when work is completed;
 - expect deadlines to be met and check that they are,
 - monitor progress by checking exercise books and student planners, and praising good work;
 - check student planners at least once per week;
 - contact the school via the student planner if there are particular difficulties;
 - support the school in the imposition of appropriate sanctions.
- }See section
}on Student
Planner

Sanctions

The sanctions for no homework or incomplete homework will be made known to the pupils. Part of the discipline of homework is to hand in the work on time, so failure to produce the work will be treated as if the work was not done. The sanctions will be imposed by the subject teacher in the first instance and will include a verbal reprimand or additional work. If problems persist, parents will be informed via the student planner. If this fails to resolve the problem, the Subject Leader will impose sanctions such as detentions, informing parents through the student planner. If a pupil is experiencing problems in many subject areas the form tutor or Learning Coordinator will become involved. They will work with parents and the Learning Support Department to develop strategies to support the student and resolve the problem. If parents have any concerns they should take up the matter with the subject teacher through the student planner in the first instance. The form tutor should be contacted if problems persist.

Conclusion

This policy has been developed to provide clear guidelines to pupils, parents and teachers regarding homework. It should ensure that all involved in the educational process at St Mary's have the same high standards of expectation. This will create an atmosphere in which pupils can develop as independent learners to raise their standards of achievement.

Reviewed: January 2009

Next Review Date: July 2012

Responsible Governor Committee: Curriculum