

Tanfield School

Specialist College of Science & Engineering



HOMework POLICY

“When evaluating the quality of teaching in the school, inspectors will consider the extent to which teaching strategies, including setting appropriate homework, together with support and intervention, match individual needs.” Ofsted, 2012

Students who regularly study at home are more successful in tests and exams. Homework enhances pupil learning, improves achievement and develops students' study skills and as such is an integral part of the curriculum.

However, not all homework is done at home; in fact, for some pupils who find it hard to work at home, or for some tasks which may require resources (books, software, equipment) more readily available at school, it may be necessary to carry out the task at school.

Homework Policy Summary

At Tanfield School we will:

- Set homework on a regular basis
- Record the setting of homework
- Set tasks which are differentiated so that they are suitable and achievable
- Embed homework into schemes of work
- Relate homework to work done in class
- Assess homework and give feedback
- Provide support for students e.g. TASC, library facilities, Moodle, etc.

Requirements on Departments

Aims

Homework enables pupils to:

- Consolidate and extend work covered in class or prepare for new learning activities
- Access resources not available in the classroom
- Develop research skills
- Have an opportunity for independent work
- Show progress and understanding
- Provide feedback in the evaluation of teaching
- To enhance their study skills e.g. planning, time management and self-discipline
- To take ownership and responsibility for learning
- Engage parental co-operation and support
- Create channels for home-school dialogue

To make sure that homework is appropriate, teachers should follow these guidelines:

- Assign purposeful homework. Legitimate purposes for homework include introducing new content, practicing a skill or process that students can do independently but not fluently, elaborating on information that has been addressed in class to deepen students' knowledge, and providing opportunities for students to explore topics of their own interest.
- Design homework to maximize the chances that students will complete it. For example, ensure that homework is at the appropriate level of difficulty. Students should be able to complete homework assignments independently with relatively high success rates, but they should still find the assignments challenging enough to be interesting.
- Involve parents in appropriate ways (for example, as a sounding board to help students summarize what they learned from the homework) without requiring parents to act as teachers or to police students' homework completion.
- Carefully monitor the amount of homework assigned so that it is appropriate to students' age levels and does not take too much time away from other home activities.

Department Homework Policy

All departments will have a homework policy, detailing:

- Types of homework used
- Place of homework in the scheme of work
- Department incentives
- Sanctions for unsatisfactory work
- How and by whom homework will be monitored within the department
- Homework action plan following most recent detailed monitoring of homework

Department Development Plans may include homework as an area for action. It is good practice to have homework as a regular item at department meetings. Departments may choose to develop or buy in resources such as booklets specifically for homework.

Homework tasks

Homework can be:

- Independent learning
- Consolidation of work in class
- Practice - learning by doing
- Completion of course work assignments
- Reading and responding
- Interviews
- Drawing
- Using ICT
- Recording audio responses

- Guided revision
- Preparing a presentation
- Discussing with family/friends
- Learning vocabulary or spelling
- Using a library/online information
- Essay writing
- Trying out a safe experiment
- Watching a programme on television and recording a response
- Collecting data/information or materials to bring to lesson

Sanctions

When homework is not completed, teachers should initially support the pupil and ensure the tasks set meet the pupil's needs. If this is so, then sanctions should be used. Teachers receive support from their Head of Department and Senior Staff. The sanctions are as follows:

1. Class teacher – discussion with pupil, in-school detention (break or lunchtime), and informing parents via student planner, letter or Schoolcomms
2. Head of Department – as class teacher. Refer to CoL for students persistently failing to complete homework
3. Form Tutors - through weekly monitoring of planners, identifying pupils with homework problems across several curriculum areas and refers to Coordinator of Learning
4. Coordinator of Learning – parental contact including meetings, refer to Behaviour Support staff or Assistant Head (as appropriate) in the case of students persistently failing to complete homework

There must be a clear understanding that Homework sanctions DO NOT lead to Inclusion Room, however the Behaviour Support staff may be involved in support of the CoL. If a student fails to attend a break or lunch detention, staff will record this as a Homework incident and not a failure to attend detention.

In cases where personal circumstances that prevent students from completing homework, the CoL must inform the HoD and class teacher so they can provide support. This may involve differentiated work, opportunities to complete the work in school, or in a different format. The expectation of students completing homework remains.

Incentives

High quality homework and a good work ethos should be praised in class.

Where appropriate, homework should be included in display work. Credits on Vivo miles and rewards for achievement and sustained effort will be awarded for good homework. For exceptional pieces of homework, a department letter or postcard may be sent home.

NB: Sanctions and Incentives may change following the current review of Whole School Rewards

Responsibilities

The role of the pupil

1. To listen to homework instructions in class
2. To copy down instructions for the task and deadline date into the student planner
3. To ensure that homework is completed and handed in to meet the deadline
4. To attempt all work and give their best
5. To inform the class teacher of any difficulties

The role of the Form Tutor

1. To include homework in pupil mentoring where appropriate
2. To see that homework is being set and recorded
3. To check that the planner is being signed by the parent/guardian
4. To note and respond to any comments written in planners by parents

The role of the Class Teacher

The class teacher controls the direction of homework and the nature of tasks undertaken, and will:

1. Set homework according to the timetable
2. Record the setting of homework using the online tools provided
3. Provide the stimulus
4. Give full and comprehensive instructions
5. Set deadlines for completed work and ensure that they are met
6. Mark and return all homework promptly
7. Provide help and support
8. Inform the Head of Department, Tutor and Coordinator of Learning, as appropriate, when problems arise

The role of the Head of Department & Subject Leader

1. To seek to enhance the quality of homework set, in line with Schemes of Work
2. To monitor and evaluate homework policy within their curriculum area

The role of the Senior Leaders

1. To provide staff, pupils and parents with the necessary homework documentation
2. To develop classroom practice to enhance homework across the school
3. To review annually the school homework policy
4. To monitor and evaluate the school homework policy

The role of the Parents

The role of the parent is crucial if a child is to gain success from homework. They should reinforce its value through positive feedback and give students the confidence to persevere, work hard and reach high standards of achievement. Parents can assist by:

- Providing a table, chair and a quiet place to work
- Setting time with the student when homework is to be done as free play is important too
- Checking the time spent on individual tasks
- Ensuring that outside clubs do not hamper a child's quality of work and put a child under undue pressure
- Checking presentation and content of all homework being returned to school
- Signing the student planner each week
- Providing the school with information about any problems through the student planner or by contacting the school directly. Students will be given tasks appropriate to their needs and that are achievable within the set time.

Monitoring

Pupils

Homework diaries will be checked by:

1. The form tutor (weekly)
2. The Coordinator of Learning (sampled every few weeks)
3. Member of the Leadership Team (sampled termly, though initially more frequently)

Subject Staff

1. Will keep a record of homework tasks as part of lesson plans and schemes of work
2. This record will include the online SIMS 'flag' that is recorded on the day the homework is set
3. Make the record available to the Head of Department and Subject Leader

Head of Department and Subject Leader

1. Will sample homework records
2. Will look at examples of homework and talk to pupils and staff
3. Will evaluate and update action plan

Leadership Team

1. Will sample homework records through department review
2. Will sample examples of work and talk to pupils
3. Will review school policy annually

Evaluation

- By Leadership Team
- Whose needs are met?
- Whose needs are not being met and why?
- What are the problems that require short and long term solutions?
- What is the relationship of homework to the curriculum?
- How can policy and planning be more effective?
- Does the evidence in student planners and exercise books or coursework folders match with the homework being set by the members of staff?