

HOMEWORK, MARKING AND ASSESSMENT POLICY

Last reviewed:	January 2020
Next review due:	January 2021
Reviewed by:	Head of Years 7-11 Sixth Form Academic Co-ordinator International School Academic Co-ordinator

I. KEY STAGES 3 AND 4 (Years 7-11, and International School 9i, 10i & 11i)

Purpose of homework

Homework should be set as an aid to the learning process. It should serve one or more of the following functions and not be set for its own sake.

- to develop habits of personal organisation, independent learning, resilience and resourcefulness;
- to consolidate and build on classwork by means of extension exercises, practice tasks or revision;
- to prepare for lessons (so-called 'flip learning') through research, note-taking or guided learning from books and other appropriate sources;
- to develop skills, both those of general academic benefit and specific to examination demands;
- to extend the range of available resources e.g. using books and information at home and in libraries, and asking other people;
- to provide parents with an insight into their child's learning, reaffirming their role as partners and strengthening home-school links.

Nature of tasks

A wide range of tasks may be given depending on the subject being studied, but all homework, with the exception of art, should have some visible, tangible outcome so that formative feedback may be given.

Tasks set may include:

- Collection and presentation of information
- Guided learning and active revising
- Extension of classwork activities
- Problem solving
- Reading set texts
- Research tasks

Frequency and Amount

- Homework MUST be set in accordance with the published homework timetable. Year 7 and 8 students will normally have two subjects per night, with 2/3 subjects as the norm for those in Year 9 and following GCSE courses.
- However, homework must also stem naturally from the topic under discussion. There is no point setting homework just for the sake of it, so staff should feel empowered, on rare occasions, not to set specific homework if they feel it does not hold particular value.
- In Years 7-9, homework should be set for submission at the next appropriate lesson. Extended homeworks may be set for occasional projects and more frequently in subjects such as art but for the majority of subjects this should be the exception as younger students find this kind of work more difficult to manage.
- To provide some flexibility in the homework programme, for instance when the school production is underway, each term in Years 7-11 will feature a 'reading week' in which students are given reading tasks to do in place of formal written homework. This is not a 'no homework' week, but an opportunity to undertake wider reading and provide a breathing space in a busy school life. Homework Club is suspended for the duration of these reading weeks.
- It is impossible to specify precisely how long students should spend on their homework but excessive homework is usually counter-productive. Each homework subject is expected to take students approximately 30 minutes to complete in Years 7 and 8, 40 minutes in Year 9 and 45 minutes in Years 10 and 11. However, please note that in the first term of Year 7 homework should consist of shorter tasks designed to acclimatise students to the homework regimen of a senior school
- It is the parents' prerogative to decide when their child has done sufficient work for one evening and parental messages to that effect should be accepted but the Head should be informed if this becomes a regular occurrence.
- Be aware of family or other circumstances which may require a degree of flexibility in submission.
- International School: In the case of students in Years 9i, 10i and 11i who are boarders, teachers need to be alert to feedback from a Head of House or host family which may suggest that a student is having to work late into the evening to complete set homework.

Administration and monitoring of homework

- In Years 7-11 students will record all homework set in homework diaries.
- All staff should ensure that all homework is also available through Firefly, our VLE.
- Where homework has not reached the required standard, students should be asked to re-present it. Non-production of homework will be reported by subject teachers to form tutors (via brown slips in Years 7-11 and via the homework diary in the International School) and will be subject to the follow-up procedures contained in the Behaviour, Rules, Rewards, and Sanctions policy.
- Genuine difficulties will be addressed initially by subject teachers but this may be supplemented by attendances at after school homework club. This is not a punishment but is

designed to provide a workmanlike environment in which students can complete homework and seek the supervisor's advice as appropriate.

- All communications received from parents regarding homework should be passed to the relevant teacher(s) and Head of Department. The same should apply to feedback from Heads of House and host families regarding boarders in the International School.
- If a student planner is lost, defaced or damaged, the student/parent is expected to pay for a new one.

Submission

Completed homework must be submitted on time unless there are extenuating circumstances which need to be conveyed to the relevant teacher at the earliest opportunity.

Marking, assessment and grading

- Staff should think of marking as a dialogue between teacher and the student with the aim of improving the student's work. Comments should be legible and easily understood.

While the purpose of marking varies according to the nature of work set, it may serve one or more of the following functions:

- to ensure that work has been completed according to instructions;
 - to ensure the student has understood the work and to correct errors and misunderstandings;
 - to enable student progress through good quality formative feedback;
 - to assess the student's level of achievement;
 - to encourage and reinforce effective effort, progress and attainment.
- Marking should be formative and comment-based. Comments should specify what is good about a piece of work and make suggestions about how the student can make progress. There is no requirement to include a grade for effort or attainment. Grades or marks may be given at the discretion of the teacher where this is appropriate (in a test, for example) or where this is likely to enhance student learning and progress (when students at GCSE tackle exam-style questions, for example).
 - Staff should mark work regularly with the following best practice in mind:
 - Effective formative comments are specific about what is good about the work and make specific suggestions for improvements.
 - It is essential to give students time at the beginning of a lesson to read and absorb their comments.
 - Students are more likely to take notice of comments if they are asked to respond or take action in some way. For example, they may transfer advice to a target sheet in their book or answer a question or simply write back to the teacher.
 - Students are more likely to read and act on comments if they are not accompanied by a grade.
 - Teachers should record the level/grade of the work in their markbooks.

- The information gained from marking/assessment should be used together with other information to adjust future teaching plans.
- Peer marking can, from time to time, be an effective learning tool, but should never form more than a very small proportion of child's assessed work.

Frequency and speed of return of marking

Marking should be returned as quickly as possible and sufficiently swiftly to enable students to apply any necessary correction to subsequent tasks. In most cases it will need to be marked ready for handing back in the next appropriate lesson with appropriate individual feedback. Books should be marked on a regular basis, preferably weekly.

Work Scrutiny

In order to maintain standards, a selection of student books should be scrutinised by Heads of Department on a regular, though not necessarily frequent, basis to evaluate the quality of marking and feedback. Advice should then be given to staff as appropriate. In addition, and at least once a year, the Academic Deputy will organise work scrutiny on a school-wide basis to provide a broader understanding of standards of student work and staff assessment, with findings being fed back to HoDs as necessary.

Parental involvement

We welcome the support parents can give in encouraging and enhancing their child's learning and recognise that it is important to have a balance in life and that time spent visiting places of interest, taking part in sport, talking, exploring ideas and having fun together all enhance learning.

Presentation of work

- It is important that all students take a pride in their work and present it accordingly. Scrappy presentation is often an indication of lack of care and poor content.
- All written work is to be done in blue or black ink or biro. Students are not to use red ink or pencil in written work. Mistakes are to be neatly crossed through and re-written or removed with an ink eraser. Tippex must not be used.
- All exercise books must be clearly marked with name, form and subject on the front and must have no other decoration applied except that approved by the relevant teacher.
- All pieces of work undertaken must:
 - have a title, underlined with a ruler, at the top of the page
 - have a date underlined
 - have a left-hand margin for question numbers only
 - have any errors crossed out with single horizontal line
 - be neat, tidy and thorough
 - have no rough work or graffiti on front and back inside covers of exercise books, as these are used for target setting

Homework Club

Years 7-11 offers a supervised student Homework Club which runs from Monday-Thursday from 4.00-5.00pm for those students who may find working at home more difficult. Limited places are available.

*

II. THE SIXTH FORM

Principles

Assessment is a central aspect of students' learning and development. Assessment tasks will always be created with a specific learning goal (or goals) in mind. Whilst summative assessment will be used, particular emphasis is placed on the use of formative assessment. Feedback should be designed to maximise future learning, enabling students to see how further progress can be made. Students will be set frequent, regular homework in order to achieve these learning goals and to promote continuous progress.

Purpose of homework

All homework should be set with a meaningful learning goal (or goals) in mind. It should serve one or more of the following functions:

- to consolidate and build on classwork by means of extension exercises, practice tasks or revision;
- to cover new material through research, note-taking or guided learning from books and other appropriate sources;
- to develop skills, both of general academic benefit and specific to examination demands;
- to encourage independent learning;
- to facilitate differentiation, including extension tasks for the more able;
- to test attainment levels of students.

Frequency, amount and type of homework

Homework must be set at least once a week in each subject. It should amount to approximately 4 hours 30 minutes per subject per week in Year 12 and 6 hours per subject per week in Year 13.

Teachers will set a rich variety of homework tasks which reflect the nature of the subject and the types of assessment used in the A level examination. Particular emphasis must be placed upon the regular use of examination-based questions for students to work on.

Administration and monitoring of homework

In the Sixth Form, students will be required to take more personal responsibility for the recording and organisation of their homework. Students are given a homework planner which is used to reinforce good study habits. It is expected, however, that Directors of Studies will assist students in organising their weekly private study programmes and will monitor them regularly.

Teachers will take responsibility for the setting, marking, recording and reporting of homework. They will address any concerns about production of work directly with the student and take appropriate action to ensure that work is completed to the best of the student's ability. Directors of Studies regularly receive updates on homework progress for their students, including any concerns about non-completion, lateness or inadequate quality.

Should issues such as the late or non-production of homework or sub-standard work persist, teachers and the relevant Directors of Studies will work together to agree on a plan of action which the Directors of Studies will address with the student and, where necessary, the parents – and keep the subject teacher and head of department informed.

A variety of measures and sanctions will be used as appropriate. These may include compulsory attendance at scheduled private study sessions in the library, compulsory attendance at the end-of-the-day Friday work club with the Head of Sixth Form and periodic review meetings with parents and the Head of Lower Sixth or Head of Sixth Form.

Marking

Marking is always an opportunity to help students to improve. Feedback should be aimed at promoting student development, providing appropriate comments which allow a student to clearly understand how to reach higher standards. This feedback will encourage a dialogue between teacher and student which allows the student to take control of future learning. Students will typically receive written and oral feedback on work set.

Marking will detail what is positive in a student's work as well as giving specific comments on aspects which can be improved. Feedback will not only show which aspects of work can be improved but will give students specific guidance on the steps which can be taken to make those improvements.

Staff should mark work regularly with the following best practice in mind:

- Effective, formative comments are specific about what is positive about the work and will make specific suggestions for improvements.
- It is useful to give students time during a lesson to consider feedback and/or have the opportunity to discuss this directly with the teacher.
- Where appropriate, there should be specific action points for a student to address as well as targets for future learning. There is an expectation that students should respond to action points and correct mistakes where indicated. There should be explicit evidence of engagement with developing the quality of their work: for example, students could be asked to write their action points and/or targets at the top of subsequent work before it is written.
- Teachers should record the level / grade of the work in their markbook. The information gained from marking/assessment should be used alongside other information to adjust future teaching plans.

Grading

Teachers may adopt a non-grading policy for some work, based on evidence that students are more likely to pay attention to feedback and apply suggestions for progress if a specific mark or grade is not given. In such cases teachers should keep a record of any grade they have privately ascribed to that work.

That said, it is important that students are made aware of their progress relative to public examination board standards on a regular basis. Such awareness can be gained through mock examination grading. As a whole course or topic progresses, students will be given grades for homework. Where examination type questions are used, grading will be based on examination board standards.

It is essential that students have a clear sense of how they are being assessed and have an understanding of how a grade has been determined. Detailed reference to examination board standards should be provided to students, allowing students to appreciate fully the assessment criteria used by the relevant examining body. Students must have a clear sense of what success looks like in order to make effective progress. Exemplar material and model responses can be useful in showing students what is required for a particular grade.

Teachers within a department must adopt consistent policies and practices and ensure that students understand the basis upon which marks and grades are awarded in their subject.

Teachers are expected to keep a record of marking and assessment for all students. Information about student progress and assessments should be shared with the head of department and among members of the department.

The record of marking and assessment must be designed to maximise the ability of teachers and heads of department to assess and respond to the needs of the individual and the group. It should also provide an objective and easily accessible record of students' progress which is available to senior staff and parents as and when necessary.

Frequency and speed of return of marking

Students should have their work marked by teachers at least once a week in every subject. This may be supplemented by oral feedback from teachers or by peer assessment. Marking will be returned as quickly as possible. This maximises both the learning impact of the task as well as student motivation. We aim in all cases to return marked work within five working days of submission.

Other forms of assessment

- **Mock examinations**

Mock examinations are used regularly on specified dates for all subjects/students. They take place in October, February and May for each year group, although departments may schedule additional mock examinations at other times.

Mocks are an important aspect of student development and will have a formative element, as well as being used to assess progress to date, at key points in the year. Mocks will be marked and graded according to public examination criteria, allowing students to have a clear understanding of their progress relative to examination requirements.

- **ALIS**

We make use of ALIS data generated by Durham University's Centre for Evaluation and Monitoring (CEM). Using GCSE grades and an online test, ALIS data provides us with a way of monitoring student progress relative to a baseline starting point. It also allows us to measure the value added by comparing this baseline with actual A level results in each subject, helping to inform future teaching and learning approaches.

The ALIS grades give an indication of how a student *might* perform at A level in each of their subjects, based on their GCSE score and/or the online test. It compares recent A level results with specific GCSE scores, using national UK data to assess performance.

We have chosen to use ALIS grades which would place a student in the top 25% of A level grades for all of those students with the same GCSE or test score. It is made clear to students and parents that this grade is **not** a target. Wherever possible, we want every student to aim to reach a higher grade than the one shown by the ALIS grade assessment. One way we will judge our success is by the extent to which students meet, and indeed exceed, these ALIS grades.

- **Progress tracking information**

A sixth form wide Progress Tracking document covers a variety of indicators of attainment and progress for each student in each subject. It is used by Heads of Department, Director of Studies and the Senior Management Team to track student progress and inform future policy on teaching and learning. This includes information such as GCSE scores, notification of SEND, ALIS data, regular effort and attainment grades by subject, mock grades and public examination results.

Departmental policies and the responsibilities of heads of department

Each department has its own homework, marking and assessment policies which give details of the specific needs of that subject and the approaches adopted by the department. Heads of department are responsible for the development, review and consistent implementation of the policy in their department.

All departmental policies must be consistent with this overarching policy. They should include specific reference to the types of assessment used and the purpose of that assessment, alongside the main strategies and approaches used in the department.

Work scrutiny

Heads of department are responsible for monitoring assessment within their department and for ensuring that the agreed policies and practices are being carried out by all colleagues in the department. This includes heads of department conducting regular work scrutiny to check that students are making appropriate progress and that consistency of practice, with regard to the nature and amount of homework set and the quality and effectiveness of the marking, is being maintained by all colleagues in the department.

Linked policies

- Curriculum Policy
- SEND policy
- Disability Inclusion Policy