

HOMEWORK / EXTENDED LEARNING POLICY

Rationale

The governing body recognises extended learning as a valuable part of students' educational experience. Research suggests that three of the factors that have the biggest impact on student performance for the lowest cost are:

- homework;
- students learning how to learn
- students taking control of their learning

The governing body also recognises that in an era of increasingly personalised learning, a policy needs to combine a coherent whole school framework with the flexibility to meet the individual needs of students. This will include both traditional tasks and a variety of other learning opportunities that students and families can complete. Through extended learning, it is intended that students will:

- take ownership of their own learning;
- develop the skills of independent learning, with the confidence and motivation needed to study effectively on their own;
- consolidate and reinforce skills and understanding developed at school.

Policy

1. All students are entitled to extended learning opportunities. These can be taken from the *Independent Learning Booklet* at KS3 and KS4 and also from online learning resources like GCSE Pod and Sam Learning. Students are expected to take an increasing level of responsibility for planning the completion of such work under the guidance and support of their teachers and parents.
2. Some of these opportunities will be optional, with students being given the opportunity to attend enrichment sessions out of school hours, or offered extension tasks which go beyond the basic minimum requirements of the course. The *Independent Learning Booklets* for KS3 and KS4 offer a useful resource for parents and students.
3. Some extended learning will be compulsory – it will be expected that all students complete this work and they will be rewarded and recognised for doing so.
4. The balance between these two types of extended learning may vary between subjects, and between students and groups of students within the same subject.
5. Parents and students will be informed about the work students are set on Show My Homework with the aim of maintaining their involvement in the management of students' learning.
6. Teachers should, wherever possible, provide differentiated learning opportunities which may involve an element of student choice.

7. Students' participation in, and completion of, extended learning opportunities and tasks should be monitored and acknowledged, for example through the award of appropriate effort grades and achievement points.

8. Feedback to students on the work that they have completed or the skills that they have demonstrated is part of the process and should be given in line with departmental policy.

Guidelines

1 Extended learning refers to any work or activities that students are able to access outside lesson time.

2. Extended learning should be carefully planned as part of a department's scheme of work. It is important that extended learning forms a meaningful and coherent part of the work for a particular subject and is appropriately differentiated to meet the needs of students. Models of extended learning could therefore include:

a) tasks that are specifically set for all students in the class to complete;

b) voluntary tasks or opportunities that students could take up or complete if they had a particular interest in the subject matter, or were targeting a specific grade or outcome. These may well be taken from the *Independent Learning Booklet*;

c) a menu of options from which all students have to select one or more tasks, but where the students have some discretion over which activity they do;

d) a compulsory task that covers a core theme, but that is set at different levels according to the ability of the students for whom it is set.

e) extra-curricular activities such as instrumental practice; attendance at concerts, theatre, other trips or after school clubs and workshops;

f) participation in school teams or groups;

g) rehearsal for performances that may be specifically linked to the course being studied, or more generally linked to the subject;

h) exam/book/worksheet based questions, learning, including revision for tests and exams;

i) research assignments;

j) practical exercises, such as home experiments;

k) reading a broadsheet newspaper; listening to a podcast or other broadcast; reviewing an article;

l) essay writing or other extended writing task;

m) developing software skills and programming;

n) reading ahead or consolidating past work;

o) preparation of a shared resource (including a starter/plenary) or production of a leaflet, poster etc;

p) preparing a presentation.

3. All departments should have practices in respect of the setting, managing and monitoring of extended learning that are consistent with this policy statement. *I would like to include here that all departments have a termly schedule of homework tasks that are planned?*

4. Subject leaders are responsible for establishing guidelines within their areas of responsibility.

5. Independent learning should be distinct from classwork, though it may be appropriate to establish a planned link between tasks. For example, students could be asked to use their own time to finish off the evaluation of a project started in class.
6. Longer term projects require careful planning and monitoring by the subject teacher. There should be interim deadlines for partial completion of particular sections of the work, which can be monitored so that students get appropriate feedback before the final deadline.
7. We should be encouraging the use of technology where appropriate, it is important for the subject teacher to check on the availability of ICT for each of their students, and arrangements made for them to complete work in school if it is not possible for them to carry out the work at home.

Organisation

All extended learning will be communicated with parents via the 'Show My Homework' website and students will record it in planners.

- 1 Extended learning opportunities will be provided for all students, who will be encouraged to establish good working habits from the time they enter the school.
- 2 The nature, type and length of tasks set will vary according to the age and abilities of the student and according to the subject.
- 3 Teachers should always allow a reasonable amount of time for compulsory tasks to be completed. Students may have extra-curricular commitments on certain nights and teachers should, therefore, avoid requiring tasks to be completed the following day.
4. Students will be given advice and guidance about time management, study skills and dealing with stress through the tutorial and personal wellbeing programmes, as well as through subject lessons.
5. The amount of homework will vary as students pass through the school. The amount of time spent will vary between individual students depending on the course choices selected.
6. As a general guide, the amount of independent study is likely to increase: as the student passes through the school from year 7 up to year 11 and:
 - if a student is aiming for higher grades at KS4;
 - if a student selects courses which involve a greater degree of project work.
7. Subject teachers should ensure that they set work according to departmental guidelines. Tasks should be explained to students in the lesson and will then be logged on the SMHW website and written in planners. If an assignment is to be completed over a long period, interim deadlines should also be recorded.
8. Teachers may also wish to use e-mail distribution lists to remind students about when homework has been set, and to give reminders about deadline dates.
9. Parents will be encouraged to check the website regularly and to discuss tasks with their children and to help them plan its completion on time. This is especially important with extended tasks that may run over a series of weeks. Parents should also use the *Independent Study Booklets* to further develop learning with their children, if they wish.
- 10 Wherever possible, parents will be encouraged to provide a suitable place, away from distractions, for their children to complete independent study. Where this is not possible, parents

should encourage their children to attend homework clubs or use other provision made by the school.

11 The Library is available for the completion of quiet work at lunchtime and after school.

Implementation

1 Subject teachers will monitor the extended learning completed by the students in their teaching groups.

2. Subject leaders are responsible for the nature and quality of extended learning tasks and opportunities set by their department. The SMHW system does provide a number of tools which allow the quantity of work set to be monitored very easily. These tools may be a very useful part of the monitoring procedure, it is no part of this policy to have any kind of crude 'league tables' in which the quantity of tasks set is seen as an end in itself. Quality of provision and the positive impact on learning and student motivation are the key factors that will constitute success criteria.

3 Students are responsible for checking that they know what work has been set, through a suitable combination of looking on the website, checking e-mails and looking at their own notes in their planners

4 Students also need to take responsibility for making sure that work is completed on time. If there are problems about meeting a deadline, students should discuss this with subject teachers. Where there are concerns about the overall amount or nature of work being set this could be discussed with subject teachers, form tutors or parents as appropriate.

5. Parents are responsible for checking the SMHW website and/or student planners and helping to ensure that work is completed by students. Concerns about homework would normally be raised with subject teachers in the first instance.

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Review