



Ysgol
Bryn Elian
High School

HOMEWORK POLICY

October 2019



INTRODUCTION

This policy draws on the existing good practice of many Departments and attempts not only to provide guidelines and state policy on homework issues, but also is intended to be used as a series of guidelines for Departments to apply to their own approach to the setting and marking of homework.

Homework is quite simply defined as any work or activities which pupils are asked to do outside lesson time.

Homework has to be taken seriously and given the priority it deserves. It is imperative, therefore, that it is an integral part of a department's schemes of work and plans for learning rather than a mere appendage. It is essential that homework is regarded as a key part of teaching and learning, and is relevant and appropriate to the learning goals for a pupil, a class and a year group.

Teachers' attitudes to the setting and marking of homework tasks frequently affect pupils' attitudes towards completing them. Therefore, if pupils are to feel positive about homework, teachers not only have to be positive about its validity but also need to be diligent about setting and assessing it. It is important to ensure that homework assignments are appropriate to the work in hand, are collected in on time and some suitable feedback provided for each child.

Evidence from recent research suggests that secondary school age pupils WILL achieve better grades at GCSE if they have a habit of regular homework that reinforces the classwork. ('Influences on students' GCSE Attainment and Progress at age 16' 2014. P. Sammons et al University of Oxford).

Homework makes the greatest contribution to learning when:

- There are clear and high expectations of pupils in completing the homework.
- There is a regular timetable of homework that is carefully followed so that everyone – teachers, pupils and parents know what to expect each week.
- Pupils and parents are very clear about what to expect.
- Homework assignments are carefully planned as part of schemes of work.
- There is a consistent attitude across departments and subjects in setting, assessing and managing homework.

WHY SET HOMEWORK?

One of the obvious values of homework is that it can improve students' attitudes towards school and their academic performance. From the perspective of developing the independent learner, homework improves students' independence and responsibility. Regular setting and assessing of homework further serves to illustrate our professionalism to parents and pupils alike.

For Secondary school pupils, homework has been established as having significant impact on achievement. Indeed compared to other instructional techniques and considering the minimal costs



involved in implementation, homework can yield a considerable increase in academic performance [Cooper, H. 1992]. This is reinforced by further controlled action research by Cooper, Robinson and Patell in 2006:

“With only rare exceptions, the relationship between the amount of homework students do and their achievement outcomes was found to be positive and statistically significant. Therefore, we think it would not be imprudent, based on the evidence in hand, to conclude that doing homework causes improved academic achievement. “

Homework can and does make an important contribution to pupils’ progress at school. John Hattie has written that homework plays a vital role in raising standards of achievement by pupils at all stages of secondary schooling, when used properly to extend, reinforce and review learning. Set for its own sake alone, it is worse than useless.

The setting of homework that is both appropriate to the subject and correctly administered is, therefore, a valuable component of the learning process. Pupils, who set a high priority on homework, tend to achieve higher academic results and furthermore, they frequently develop learning skills and self-discipline that will stand them in good stead in the world of work beyond school. Regular homework that is both appropriate to the subject and correctly carried out is a valid component of the learning process for pupils who are working at all levels. Recent research also suggests that lower-ability pupils are the most likely to benefit from regular homework that is easy to access, enjoyable and habitual. (Pam Sammons et al).

The purposes and benefits of setting homework include:

- Encouraging pupils to develop the skills, confidence and motivation needed to study effectively on their own.
- Consolidating and reinforcing skills and understanding developed at school.
- Extending school learning, for example through additional reading.
- Encouraging independent learning.
- Practising skills by doing and rehearsing them further.
- Encouraging self-discipline and pupil motivation.
- Sustaining the involvement of parents and carers in the management of pupils’ learning and keeping them informed about the work pupils are doing.
- Developing and using problem solving skills.
- Enhancing the retention of information received throughout the school day.
- Checking of each individual pupil’s learning.



MANAGING HOMEWORK

Work carried out in the international field suggests that countries in which the pupils average the most home study [8-9 hours weekly] also average the highest test scores [Chen & Stevenson, 1989, Walberg, 1991].

The quantity of homework set should increase as the pupils move up through the school, and should also reflect the curriculum. The school expects teachers to work to the published timetables for each year group, which are prepared each September by the Learning Manager, and are consulted on with staff before being published to parents and pupils. It is important that we all follow and adhere to the timetable in order that the pupils do not have too much homework on some nights and too little on others. This system has positive advantages for teachers too in that the marking of homework should be easier to plan for.

It is appropriate for a project work or an extended activity to span two or more homeworks, as is frequently done at present within the Maths and Science departments, for example. Where lengthy projects for homework are set over a period of time, then short-term deadlines can be set for completing various phases of the work, in order to monitor progress. These could be marked in progress depending upon the nature of the task and the final marking should be thorough enough to reflect the time and energies of pupil input.

Sanctions for non-completion

Sanctions for not completing homework or failing to complete it to a satisfactory standard should be that the pupil completes the homework to a satisfactory standard and that s/he serves a department detention as a consequence. A department's policy of homework should make the sanctions clear and manageable for staff.

Teachers should never use homework as a punishment! This immediately conveys that it is an unpleasant and unnecessary use of time. Teachers should record the homework set in their planners.

When work is set, teachers must evaluate it for ease of access for all pupils. Appropriate time and support mechanisms such as work sheets, resource texts, guidelines for data collection, detailed teacher input during lesson time and so forth, should be given for homework especially where research is involved.

Homework is set by teachers using the Show My Homework software. Pupils can therefore access the homework via an electronic device eg phone, tablet, laptop, etc.

Departments need to constantly evaluate the purposes and desired outcomes of homework set in order that good quality tasks are set. It is not **generally** appropriate for the pupils to finish off class work for homework, since this disadvantages the weak pupils in that they may be overburdened and will have no teacher support to complete work and also places too light a demand on the most able. Sometimes, when time has been lost in a lesson due to an unforeseen circumstance, then completion of class work can be an effective way of ensuring the next lesson begins well- with appropriate support



being given to the less confident pupil, who might feel that completion is difficult without the teacher's aid. Bringing in equipment, items for lessons, or display materials are NOT legitimate homework tasks- these are aspects of a pupil's organisation that we would expect.

Useful tasks for homework could include:

- Planning
- Memorising
- Investigations
- Research
- Reading
- Drawing
- Interviews
- Work on literacy targets and tasks
- Designing
- Drafting
- Revision
- Essay planning/writing
- Note taking
- Finding a number of facts
- Report writing
- Project work
- Comprehension
- Cloze tasks
- Preparing for talks/presentations
- Data collection
- Problem solving
- Coursework
- Learning spellings
- Vocabulary work
- Re-ordering information
- Summarising
- Responding to teacher feedback/marking dialogue

What the teacher does with the homework when it is completed can also vary and will affect the homework's usefulness as an activity. It is a requirement of the school that **all** homework is assessed and that feedback on its quality is provided for the pupils. If the teacher makes the homework part of the pupils' work as opposed to a latch-on, it will be valued and useful.

Monitoring homework

The quality and quantity of homework tasks set must be regularly monitored and evaluated by the head of department who should assess the contribution of the homework set by department members to the pupils' learning. This monitoring should take place through regular sampling of the **Show My Homework software, the books/folders checks**, and the conclusions discussed with subject teachers.



SLT will also monitor planners and homework as part of the 'Book Checks' that are calendared.

Proposed Timetable of Homework:

KS3:

1 lesson weekly -	one homework set every fortnight
2 lessons weekly -	one homework set per week
3 lessons weekly -	one homework set per week
4/5 lessons weekly -	two lessons set per week

KS4:

English -	two homeworks a week
Maths -	two homeworks a week
Science -	two homeworks a week
Options -	one homework a week
Welsh -	one homework a week
RS -	one homework a fortnight
PE -	one homework every other week
WBQ -	one homework every other week

KS5:

All subjects:

- Homeworks are best calculated in hours at this level
- Homework includes planning, timed essays, making notes, preparing presentations, research etc
- 3-4 hours per subject would be a conservative estimation?