

HEXHAM MIDDLE SCHOOL

HOMEWORK POLICY

Rationale

This policy statement has been produced to provide a framework for homework from which teachers in all subject areas can develop a consistent and effective approach for pupils. It will also serve to inform parents of the nature of homework their children may be set throughout the school year.

Homework is seen as one of the principal ways in which pupil achievement can be raised. The benefits of doing homework must be instilled at an early age in all pupils, so that independent study becomes routine. We also believe that children should have the opportunity to enjoy activities and family life outside of school. Therefore, homework should not be over burdensome.

The aim of homework at Hexham Middle School is therefore to:

- Enable pupils to understand that independent learning is vital to achieving success.
- Provide another opportunity for pupils to fulfil their potential.
- Instil in all pupils the importance of life-long learning.
- Provide training for pupils in planning and organising time.
- Promote a responsibility for learning within each pupil.

For homework to be effective it has to be stimulating and challenging whilst being supported through the quality of the teaching and learning occurring in a classroom.

Purpose of Homework

There are various reasons for setting homework, examples of which are:

- To encourage and develop self-discipline, study habits and a range of skills in planning and organising time.
- To allow reinforcing, extending and consolidating of work done in class.
- To give pupils experience of working on their own, and to develop in pupils a sense of responsibility and commitment to their own learning.
- To involve parents/carers as partners in education.
- To prepare for tests/examinations.
- To further challenge and extend.
- To provide focused and sustained support.

Principles Underlying the Homework Policy

Pupils must take full responsibility for their homework and should be supported by their parents/carers. Homework should be issued in appropriate quantities, and completion dates should be both clear and reasonable. Expectations for homework quantity will develop as pupils move through the school.

- Homework should be a carefully planned and an integral part of work in lessons.
- It should not be seen as an “add-on” or a dispensable extra.
- Homework should match the needs and abilities of pupils.
- Homework should promote opportunities for consolidation and extension.
- Homework is usually related to current work though may be used to research an upcoming topic.
- Where possible, homework should be stimulating and challenging.
- Pupils should be adequately prepared for the completion of tasks set.
- Homework should be inclusive.
- Homework should not be restricted to certain subject areas. It should reflect the breadth and balance of the curriculum.
- As pupils get older they should have increasing opportunity to choose how to tackle homework.
- While we encourage its use, pupils who do not have access to technology at home should not be disadvantaged.

Types of Homework

Practice exercises – providing pupils with the opportunities to apply new knowledge, or review, revise and reinforce newly acquired skills.

Preparatory homework – providing opportunities for pupils to gain background information on a unit of study so that they are better prepared for future lessons.

Extension assignments – encouraging pupils to pursue knowledge individually and imaginatively.

Homework does not just mean formal exercises carried out by pupils without help from adults. Involvement of parents and carers in joint activities, which can be very brief, is most valuable in promoting children’s learning. The main focus of homework for pupils in Years 5 and 6 should be on literacy and numeracy. Regular reading practice and listening to others read is essential and where possible parents/carers should allow their child to read to them. This should take between 10 and 20 minutes each day and involve asking questions about the plot, why the child thinks a particular action happened, what could happen next etc. Other literacy related homework might include learning spellings and practising correct punctuation. Pupils in Years 7 and 8 should build on the skills and knowledge they have acquired in the lower part of the school.

All homework should have a clear focus and a time guideline. It will give plenty of opportunities for pupils to succeed and, at times, will help develop social as well as academic skills.

Homework should be differentiated where appropriate to take account of individual pupils' needs and might include:

- Independent/guided research;
- Reading in preparation for lessons;
- Preparing oral presentations;
- More traditional written assignments;
- Find out the use of mathematics in everyday situations;
- Problem solving;
- Investigative activities;
- More traditional mathematical tasks;
- Designing;
- Making;
- Revision;
- Preparing for subsequent lessons.

School Practice

The Senior Leadership Team must ensure:

- That parents/carers and pupils understand the use of the planner and what homework to expect.
- That parents/carers and pupils have access to the Hexham Middle School Homework Policy.
- That parents/carers understand how best they can support their child's study.
- That the development of departmental homework programmes is monitored and evaluated each year.

Curriculum Leaders

Departments must plan, prepare and implement realistic and manageable programmes of homework and maintain accurate records of completion and non-completion of homework.

The Curriculum Leader must ensure that:

- The whole school policy is embedded firmly in departmental provision.
- Regular monitoring and review of departmental provision takes place.
- Teachers keep up to date records of assessment and homework completed.

Teachers

Class Teachers should issue and monitor regularly homework undertaken by pupils whilst ensuring that instructions are stated clearly. Teachers should also ensure that homework issued is recorded by all pupils in the pupils' planner.

Marking and Feedback

Where appropriate, homework should be marked as quickly as possible and the pupils given appropriate feedback. Comments should identify ways individual pupils can improve and appropriate targets should be set so that they can deepen their level of knowledge and understanding. Key homework tasks will be marked in accordance with the school AIMSS policy. Other tasks may be assessed in other ways, for example through discussion, application of knowledge during in-class tasks or by self or peer marking.

Parents/Carers

As with everything in school, homework works best when school and home cooperate effectively. Parents/carers should support the school in:

- Being aware of homework expectations.
- Showing that they value the process.
- Making the completion of homework as positive an experience as possible
- Accepting that there may be differences in methods used by the school, e.g. calculations for mathematical problems. There is guidance available for parents on the methods used by school.
- Providing a comfortable and distraction free environment for homework with suitable stationery: this is vitally important in developing good working habits.
- Talking to teaching staff if any issues arise during the year.
- Reading and signing the homework diary.
- Writing in the planner if pupils cannot complete homework for any reason, or have found homework too easy/hard, write a comment in the homework diary, or contact school.

At every stage, pupils should be encouraged to recognise the value of homework, and made fully aware of its capacity to improve learning.

Pupils should:

- Be responsible for completion of homework to the best of their ability and on time.
- Avoid overloading themselves by planning when they will complete their homework during the week.
- Seek appropriate support to ensure that they are able to complete tasks set for homework. There is support available in school from teachers during breaks and

lunches. We aim for our pupils to become increasingly independent and to take responsibility for their own learning.

- Record all homework tasks in their planners in full detail including hand-in dates.

Time allocation per subject:

- Year 5: up to 25 minutes
- Year 6: up to 30 minutes
- Year 7: up to 40 minutes
- Year 8: up to 45 minutes

Time will vary for extended writing tasks or investigations.

Rewards for excellent home learning

Pupils who demonstrate high standards in the completion of homework:

- Praise by subject teachers/peers.
- Comment in school planner for parental praise.
- House Plus points.
- Subject awards.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) will monitor the effectiveness of the homework policy across the school. SLT and Pastoral Leaders will regularly check the use of pupil planners. Where good practice is identified, this will be shared across the school.

A whole school evaluation of the effectiveness of the policy will be carried out at regular points. This process will involve consultation with staff and pupils and will take into account the views of parents.

Failure to Complete Homework

It is the responsibility of the pupil to ensure that homework is completed. Parents/carers will be made aware of the failure to complete homework through the pupil planner. Pupils will be expected to complete the homework and the teacher may offer an opportunity for that to happen at break time, lunch time or at home the following evening.