



Hexham Middle School

Homework Policy

September 2024

Next annual update: September 2025

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 that 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. For the principles underlying the homework policy, see appendix 1.

The aim of homework at Hexham Middle School is 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.
- Aid retention of newly acquired knowledge, skills and understanding.

For homework to be effective, it has to be stimulating and challenging whilst being supported through high quality teaching and learning occurring in the classroom. Types of homework can be found in appendix 2, and the purposes of homework in appendix 3.

In order to ensure consistent application of the homework policy, the Senior Leadership team, as well as Curriculum Leaders and Key Stage Leaders, will monitor pupils' planners and homework set through online platforms. Appendix 4 gives details of who is responsible for monitoring homework across the school. Appendix 5 gives details of the rewards pupils can expect for high quality homework and the sanctions pupils can expect, should homework be submitted late or be of poor quality.

Frequency

Pupils at Hexham Middle School can expect to receive at least one piece of English and maths homework weekly. As well as this, they are expected to read for 20 minutes per day and learn spellings (weekly) and times tables (as directed). Pupils in Key Stage 2 have a reading record which makes up part of their weekly planner and this should be completed and signed at least 3 times per week.

All homework will be given a set deadline which is likely to vary depending on the nature and size of the task given, as well as the amount of other homework pupils have been given that week.

Details of homework in subjects other than maths and English are given in the table on the following page.

Subject	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8
Reading	Daily reading (at least 20 minutes) Reading Plus (at least twice a week)	Daily reading (at least 20 minutes) Reading Plus (at least twice a week)	Daily reading (at least 20 minutes)	Daily reading (at least 20 minutes)
English (incl. spelling)	Weekly	Weekly	Weekly	Weekly
Maths	Weekly	Weekly	Weekly	Weekly
Science	One per half term	One per half term	Fortnightly	Fortnightly
History/Geography	One per term	One per term	One per half term	One per half term
Languages	Up to two per half term	Up to two per half term	Fortnightly	Fortnightly
Art	One project per term	One project per term	One project per term	One project per term
Technology	-	-	Series per half term	Series per half term
Music	-	-	Series per half term	Series per half term

To manage the allocation of homework, please see the below table:

Subject	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8
English	Weekly	Weekly	Weekly	Weekly
Maths	Weekly	Weekly	Weekly	Weekly
Science	Week 3 (half termly)	Week 3 (half termly)	Week 1 (fortnightly)	Week 1 (fortnightly)
History/Geography	Week 5 (History one half term then Geog)	Week 6 (History one half term then Geog)	History – week 3 Geog – week 5	History – weeks 3 Geog – weeks 5
Languages	Week 6 (half termly)	Week 5 (half termly)	Week 2 (fortnightly)	Week 2 (fortnightly)
Art	Over a month to complete	Over a month to complete	Over a month to complete	Over a month to complete
Music	-	-	Short tasks	Short tasks
Technology	-	-	Week 4 and week 6 (half termly)	Week 4 and week 6 (half termly)

Expectations of Teachers

Class teachers should issue and monitor homework undertaken by pupils whilst ensuring that clear instructions are provided. Teachers should also ensure that homework issued is recorded by all pupils in their planner and for parents on MyChildAtSchool, the online platform.

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 next steps should be set (through the use of TLF or verbal feedback) so that they can deepen their level of knowledge and understanding. Tasks may be assessed in other ways, for example through discussion, application of knowledge during in-class tasks or by self or peer marking.

Expectations of Parents/Carers

As with everything in school, homework works best when school and home cooperate effectively. Involvement of parents and carers in joint activities 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 (which could be online on Reading Plus) 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 engaging in dialogue about characters, setting, plot and author style. Prompts to support discussion on texts can be found on our school's website.

Pupils in Years 7 and 8 should build on the skills and knowledge they have acquired in the lower part of the school. Their homework will encourage greater independence, although parent/carer involvement is always appreciated. Independent reading every day will also be expected in Key Stage 3 and parents should continue to encourage this at home.

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, which can be found on the school's website.
- Providing a comfortable and distraction-free environment for homework with suitable stationery: this is vitally important in developing good working habits.
- Communicating with teaching staff if any issues arise during the year.
- Reading and signing the homework planner weekly.
- Communicating with school if pupils cannot complete homework for any reason, or if issues have arisen when completing homework of which the teacher would benefit from being informed. This can be done via a note in the pupil planner, an email to the admin mailbox, or a phone call.

Expectations of Pupils

At every stage of their education, 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, neatly, using the correct writing implement 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.
- Record all homework tasks in their planners in full detail, including hand-in dates.

Appendix 1: 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 or pre-read to prepare for 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.

Appendix 2: 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 more in-depth knowledge individually and imaginatively.

Homework should be scaffolded 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;
- Learning or practising spellings
- Learning or practising times tables
- Understanding the use of mathematics in everyday situations;
- Problem solving;
- Investigative activities;
- Designing;
- Making;
- Revision;
- Preparing for subsequent lessons.

- Accessing homework via an online portal or website for which the child will have a log-in.

Occasionally, homework may be set for completion in the child's exercise book. This will allow for continuity of classwork and for pupils to use preceding exercises as support, where needed. Parents/Carers will also be able to support pupils by using preceding work as a guide. Pupils are expected to take appropriate care to ensure exercise books are returned in a timely manner and in good condition. Failure to do so will result in a sanction according to our behaviour policy.

In addition to paper-based homework, online tasks may be set. In-school ICT facilities will be made available during homework club and at lunch times, where possible, for those pupils who do not have internet access at home.

Appendix 3: The 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 in-class learning.

Appendix 4: School Practice and Monitoring

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 education from home.
- That the development of departmental homework expectations are monitored and evaluated each year.

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.

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 Leaders 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 homework completed and follow the agreed procedures if deadlines are missed by pupils, unless a valid reason is provided by a parent/carer.

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.

Appendix 5: Rewards and Sanctions

Rewards for excellent home learning

Pupils who demonstrate high standards in the completion of homework can expect:

- P points
- Praise by subject teachers/peers.
- Comment in school planner for parental praise.
- Subject awards in the end-of-term awards assemblies.

Failure to complete homework

It is the responsibility of the pupil to ensure that homework is completed on time and to the standard expected. Parents/carers will be made aware of any failure to complete homework through MyChildAtSchool where a message will be sent to communicate that no homework has been received. 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. If still incomplete after another opportunity, the teacher will issue an S point, followed by a lunch time detention if still incomplete, where it will be completed with the support or guidance of the supervising teacher.

Failure to return an exercise book

If an exercise book has been sent home for completion of a task or for revision and does not get returned by the deadline agreed, or in an acceptable condition, the pupil will be sanctioned in accordance with the behaviour policy. This will include recording class work on paper and being expected to copy this up neatly in their exercise book in their own time.