



Brentwood School

SENIOR SCHOOL HOMEWORK AND MARKING POLICY

Introduction

Homework constitutes an integral aspect of a pupil's education. Ultimately, its success is dependent upon staff adhering strictly to homework timetables and providing pupils with worthwhile tasks which meet specific departmental guidelines. Equally, parents have an important role to play in terms of monitoring homework and providing an environment within which homework may routinely be accomplished successfully.

Purpose of Homework

The following purposes are articulated in order to provide guidance to departments and though these clearly stated objectives will be met by the curriculum as a whole, each and every one is not necessarily delivered within each discrete subject area:

- to develop students' self-discipline and the ability to work independently (eg general development of study skills)
- to extend effective learning time (eg for the completion of coursework)
- to provide feedback to the student and teacher of the student's knowledge, skills and understanding of classwork (eg exercises which test a student's knowledge)
- to consolidate knowledge, skills or understanding of work (eg revision for tests or assessments).
- to prepare for future work (eg preliminary reading about a new topic)
- to encourage research and extension work including the use of resources available outside the school (eg carrying out questionnaires, surveys, background reading)
- to allow teachers to concentrate in lessons on using school-based resources (eg laboratory equipment)
- to enable differentiated tasks to be set which match the abilities of students (eg open-ended investigations)
- to encourage closer liaison and co-operation between home and school (e.g. by involving parents in the monitoring of homework and facilitating communication with the school)

Organisation

In the First to Fifth Forms homework is set according to a timetable published by the Director of Studies. The number of homeworks for each subject is discussed with the Curriculum Development Committee and confirmed by the Deputy Head (Academic) in advance of the forthcoming academic year. In the First to Third Forms each homework is estimated to last thirty minutes whilst in the Fourth and Fifth Forms this increases to 35-45 minutes per subject. In addition to this, coursework and project work may be set over an extended period of time, including holiday time. In the Sixth Form, students are expected to undertake at least twenty hours of homework each week allocated according to the demands of each subject.

Pupils are expected to use their form journals to note down their homework and to indicate any deadlines. The form journal includes the following advice "If ever there is a

problem with your homework your parents should write a note explaining this in the comments section of your journal. This could relate to the following problems:-

- Homework which greatly exceeds the recommended time allocation.
- Any reason why homework has not been completed with an indication of when it will be completed.

When classwork or homework has been missed pupils are expected to make up the work and to seek advice from the relevant subject teacher if they have any problems with comprehension.

Departmental Responsibility

Homework tasks should reflect the aims set out in the Policy Statement. The effectiveness of homework depends essentially on quality. High quality homework:

- is closely linked with classwork
- has clear curricular objectives
- encourages independent learning, research, creativity and initiative
- demands high standards of accuracy and presentation
- exploits resources available outside the school
- promotes the involvement of parents and other adults outside school.

Homework Activities may include:

Drafting, writing, reading, evaluating, learning, revising, researching secondary sources, investigations, recording practical classwork, fieldwork, problem-solving exercises, collecting data, drawing, modelling, collecting materials, making artefacts, practising, composing, preparing a talk, coursework etc.

Evidently, to some extent, the time required for a specific homework will depend upon the nature of the task concerned. Extended tasks may need a number of homework sessions over several weeks. Deadlines should be made clear and progress should be monitored throughout the period.

Marking

At Key Stages 4 and 5, each subject utilises marking templates. This provides consistency across teaching groups and clarity in terms of the communication of marking for each subject to pupils and parents. The main aims of marking are to motivate pupils, monitor their progress and to assist in diagnosing any problems. In addition to this marking should help a teacher to measure the effectiveness of his/her teaching. The tasks set should test understanding, knowledge and skills. It is important that teachers in departments are consistent in their approach to marking.

- Teachers should collect in and mark pupils' work on a regular basis (At least once a fortnight). This should be returned within a reasonable time to enable pupils to receive maximum benefit from the marking
- A mark/grade should be given in line with departmental criteria
- Diagnostic and remedial comments should also be made, where appropriate, and whenever possible. Comments need to be constructive, encouraging, and couched in positive language. Most importantly, comments should clearly indicate how improvements may be made
- In addition to ensuring consistency in marking, factual content, skills and understanding, consideration should be given to presentation, spelling and punctuation
- Pupils should be encouraged to evaluate their work and to set appropriate targets for improvement on a regular basis
- Heads of Department are responsible for monitoring the implementation of the School's marking policy and for developing departmental criteria and guidance in liaison with related subject areas

Monitoring

Tutors are responsible for monitoring homework through their liaison with pupils, parents and staff and are expected to raise any issues with their Head of Year as these arise. The Head of Department is responsible for regularly monitoring the homework set by staff and completed by pupils across the whole age range in their subject area. This includes the quality of the marking as set out in the whole school and departmental marking policies. Heads of Year review the use of the form journal and homework set for pupils in their year group. The Headmaster, the Second Master, the Deputy Head (Academic) and other senior staff monitor homework as part of the procedure for year group monitoring.