

Homework and Independent Learning Policy



Formby High School
Determined To Achieve

Homework and Independent Learning Policy

Aims

The Ofsted School Inspection Handbook (August 2016) suggests that in an Outstanding school 'teachers set challenging homework, in line with the school's policy and as appropriate for the age and stage of pupils, that consolidates learning, deepens understanding and prepares pupils very well for work to come'. Quality homework is also recognised by the Education Endowment Foundation as having a positive effect on learning, particularly when children are set planned and focused activities that are linked to their learning in class.

At Formby High School we are committed to developing learners' confidence and resilience so they are able to work independently and take responsibility for their own learning. Learning that takes place outside the classroom should provide students with the opportunity to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding. It should consolidate and extend work covered in the classroom or prepare students for new experiences.

Success at GCSE and post-16 study will be influenced by the effective independent study habits students develop, particularly in relation to homework and this policy aims to use homework as a vehicle for developing students' independence from the time they arrive at Formby High School.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Outline the school's expectations of students' independent study / homework routines
- Inform teachers, students and parents of the quality and quantity of homework expected from each subject area

The policy should be viewed alongside other key Formby High School policies, including the Home School Agreement and Marking Policy.

Rationale

We are committed to developing learners' confidence so they are able to tackle challenging work and find ways to overcome difficulties independently.

Regular setting of meaningful homework enables students to:

- Develop independent work skills essential for academic success at all levels
- Be resilient when challenging work is set
- Take responsibility for identifying areas for improvement and working independently to make the necessary improvements
- Demonstrate integrity through the ownership of their work
- Increase their capacity and confidence to problem solve
- Take on responsibility for their learning and management of time
- Grow a love of learning and thirst for knowledge
- Experience success

Students will be set meaningful SMARTER homework tasks. These will include:

- Extended writing activities
- Practising and applying skills that have been developed during lessons
- Answering examination questions
- Deepening knowledge through extension / challenge work, building on understanding developed during lessons
- Learning new content in preparation for a future lesson
- Undertaking a project over an extended period of time
- Undertaking independent research

- Reinforcing, reviewing or consolidating information
- Revision for a forthcoming assessment

It may be appropriate to differentiate homework tasks to ensure a degree of challenge for all students. In addition, students may be given a choice of tasks from a 'homework menu'. Where project tasks are set for homework, students should allocate sufficient time to complete the work over several weeks.

Expectations

Students will be set purposeful homework activities by their teachers that they will record in their student planner (along with the completion deadline). Students will be expected to complete homework tasks to the best of their ability, committing adequate time, presenting work neatly and submitting it by the given deadline. Students who find a homework task difficult should seek support from their subject teacher.

We expect parents to support homework through routinely checking that homework has been completed and signing their child's Student Planner on a weekly basis. If a child is unable to meet a homework deadline and has a reasonable explanation for not being able to do so, his/her parents should write a note to the teacher in the planner and a deadline extension should be agreed.

Study Support

Early Bird Breakfast Club operates before school daily in P8 for any students who wish to access ICT resources to complete or print homework.

The School Library is available for students during break, lunchtimes and after school. Access at breaks and lunchtimes mirrors the year group assembly days. Access after school until 4.30pm is open to everyone on a first come first served basis. Sixth Form students may use the library during the school day when it not in use for other activities and lessons.

Study Plus homework club is available to students on Monday to Thursday after school in P8 until 4:30pm and provides a supervised area for students to complete homework. In addition to Study Plus, an ICT suite (P4) is made available for students to use for independent study during lunchtime.

Inadequate and Late Homework

Students who do not put meaningful effort into a piece of homework will be expected to resubmit it. If homework is not handed in, submitted late or completed to a poor standard a student will be issued with a school detention. Any reoccurrence in the same subject will result in a further detention and a letter will be sent to parents. Where there are on-going concerns about a student's attitude to homework and independent study, he/she will be referred to Study Plus (Homework Club) and the matter will be discussed with parents to identify any barriers and offer appropriate support.

The school reserves the right to impose further sanctions on students who do not adhere to the expectations set out in this policy, including Senior Leadership Team detention, Headteacher's Detention and internal exclusion, at the discretion of the Climate for Learning Leader or member of the Senior Leadership Team.

Frequency and Duration of Homework / Independent Study

The school does not publish a prescriptive timetable and teachers are expected to adhere to the arrangements described below. Students will be given reasonable deadlines by their teachers to complete homework and students should develop their organisational skills by planning the completion of their homework tasks according to the deadlines they have been given.

Years 7, 8 and 9 (Key Stage 3)

Typically, students will receive one piece of meaningful, quality homework for every six lessons for each subject. In doing so, this will ensure that homework is distributed fairly according to the amount of curriculum time devoted to each subject. **Students will be expected to spend between 45 minutes to one hour completing a piece of homework.** In addition to set homework, students may be expected to prepare and revise for examinations and other assessments.

To assist, the table below provides an indication of how frequently a student will set homework in each subject:

Subject	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9
English	Fortnightly	Fortnightly	Fortnightly
Mathematics	Fortnightly	Fortnightly	Fortnightly
Science	Fortnightly	Fortnightly	Fortnightly
History	Every three weeks	Every three weeks	Every three weeks
Geography	Every three weeks	Every three weeks	Every three weeks
Languages	Every three weeks	Every three weeks	Every three weeks
RAVE	Every six weeks	Every six weeks	Fortnightly
Computing	Every four weeks	Every four weeks	Every four weeks
Art / DT / Cook & Nut	Once per half term	Once per half term	
Drama	Once per half term	Once per half term	
Music	Once per half term	Once per half term	
Options *			Once per half term

* Art, Cooking & Nutrition, Dance, Design Technology, Drama, Music

Students will not ordinarily be set homework for Physical Education and PSHEE/Citizenship.

In addition to homework set by their subject teachers, students will be expected to work independently and in a self-directed manner on other tasks to consolidate and extend their learning.

Students should spend at least one hour each evening completing homework / independent study.

Years 10 and 11 (Key Stage 4)

Students will typically receive a piece of homework for each subject on a weekly or fortnightly basis and are expected to spend about one hour completing this work. In addition to the formal homework they receive from their subject teachers, students are encouraged to revisit work completed in class to consolidate knowledge and engage in wider reading / research. Prior to formal assessments and examinations students are expected to conduct a structured revision programme to practise the skills required for external examinations. In Year 11 twice weekly after school study support sessions are provided to those students who require additional support or who are not demonstrating the appropriate level/quality of self-directed study time at home.

Years 12 and 13 (Key Stage 5)

Sixth Form students are expected to take greater responsibility for their own learning and receive a generous allocation of non-contact time to embed and consolidate teacher-led learning. They will receive homework on a regular basis and are expected to spend adequate time completing high quality, thorough work to submit to their teachers. Where homework falls short of expectations, students may be referred to Compulsory Catch Up.

In addition to completing the formal homework they receive from their subject teachers, students are required to revisit work completed in class to consolidate knowledge and understanding, and develop skills and processes. There is an expectation that wider research and reading will support out of lesson learning. Prior to formal assessments and examinations students are expected to conduct a structured revision programme to practise the skills required for external examinations.

In order to further embed independent learning skills and habits, students are given the opportunity to complete an Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) during Year 13.

Sixth Form students can access fully resourced independent study areas (O5 and OTC) throughout the school day and until 5:00pm daily.

Marking Homework

Typically, homework will be marked by the teacher or peer/self-assessed. Teachers may provide individual written comments, verbal feedback or feedback to the whole class, and students will be expected to respond to their teacher's feedback using the purple pen during designated ROAR time (in accordance with the school's Feedback Charter).

Outstanding effort with homework will be recognised through the awarding of a merit or distinction and, on occasion, a letter or postcard to parents. In addition, a student may be asked to show a piece of homework to the Headteacher.

The quality of homework forms an essential part of a teacher's assessment of a student's progress and will inform his/her judgement on the progress the student is making towards his/her target. A student's attitude to homework/independent study and the quality of work he/she produces will be reported to parents through Screening and Progress Reports.

Monitoring Homework

Form tutors will check their tutees' planners on a fortnightly basis to ensure they are recording all homework accurately.

Subject and Curriculum Leaders should monitor the quality of homework set by subject teachers. This will also be monitored by Climate for Learning Leaders through regular planner checks and exercise book checks and the Senior Leadership Team through Learning Walks and work scrutiny.

The implementation of this policy will be monitored by the Governing Body through information they receive on a regular basis from the Headteacher.

This policy will be reviewed every three years by the Governing Body.