



Mintlaw Academy

# **Homework Policy**

August 2011

### **Homework Policy**

The Homework Policy lies within the broader Policy on Learning and Teaching. Homework is given to consolidate and/or to extend a pupil's learning and, as such, must:

- have a clear stated purpose
- be well-planned by the teacher/department
- be varied
- be well explained and have a clear deadline
- be achievable within the time given and so, as required, appropriately differentiated
- be checked, acknowledged and rewarded where appropriate

If homework is carefully planned it promotes confidence through success. It enables children to develop as successful learners, fosters confidence and encourages them to take responsibility for their own learning.

For the Homework Policy to be successful, it requires the support of staff, pupils and parents. Each of these groups has responsibilities for ensuring its success.

#### **SMT Responsibility**

- to ensure homework policy is relevant, clear, up-to-date and manageable for all staff, pupils and parents.
- to communicate information about homework to all staff, pupils and parents on a regular basis
- to ensure that departments are following the policy guidelines
- to support departments in implementing the policy as required
- to arrange regular review and revision of the policy
- to ensure Diary Planners are available for all pupils

#### **Principal Teacher Subject Responsibility**

- to discuss and agree appropriate homework tasks related to courses for each year group with relevant staff
- to prepare information for parents about the type and frequency of homework and how parents might support their child
- to monitor the implementation of homework policy within the department
- to agree with department/faculty staff procedures for dealing with pupils who do not comply with homework expectations
- to support staff in dealing with pupils who do not comply with homework policy
- to arrange regular review and revision of department homework policy as required

### **Principal Teacher Guidance Responsibility**

- to discuss homework – its importance, its purpose, routines for homework – with pupils
- to communicate with parents and staff where problems with homework arise
- to encourage correct use of the Diary/Planner
- to deal with referrals for failure to do homework and to refer them on to year Head where problems persist

### **Class Teacher Responsibility**

- to establish routines for use of the Diary/Planner and for the issuing and return of homework
- to ensure homework tasks, including the learning intentions and success criteria are made clear to pupils
- to ensure homework tasks are varied
- to ensure that consideration is given to the range of abilities within a class and that appropriate strategies for differentiating homework tasks are applied
- to check that homework is completed on time
- to award points to pupils who hand in homework on time, at specified times each term
- to reward pupils who hand in consistently good work through the use of the positive referral system
- to give feedback on homework which helps pupils make progress in their learning

### **Register Teachers Responsibility**

- to ensure pupil note bulletin information in Diary Planner
- to award points, as directed to pupils who have Diary/Planner in school on specified dates

### **Pupil Responsibility**

- to bring Diary/Homework planner to school each day
- to note down homework and/or key information as directed by teachers
- to complete homework tasks to the best of one's ability
- to meet homework deadlines set by teachers
- on return to school following a period of absence, to find out what classwork and homework has been missed, and discuss with teachers what needs to be done
- to seek help/advice from teachers where homework is causing difficulty
- to plan personal study time to ensure all homework can be completed by stated deadlines
- to share information about required homework with parents/guardians

- to act upon advice/comments made by teachers about homework submitted

### **Parents' Responsibility**

- to be aware of the school's Homework Policy and Procedures as explained in Parents' Information Pack
- to ensure their child takes Diary/Planner to school each day
- to check that their child has recorded homework tasks appropriately
- to discuss with their child homework in general and, as appropriate, specific homework tasks
- to ensure their child completes homework independently to the best of his/her ability
- to be aware of the problems associated with plagiarism
- to sign their child's Diary/Planner every week to acknowledge that homework has been set and completed

### **Procedures**

All Departments must have a policy on homework, which covers:

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- the amount and frequency of homework to be given to each stage
- the ways in which homework will be differentiated and/or what support will be available to pupils in doing homework
- the feedback on homework which should be given – formative and/or summative
- the range of activities which will be covered in homework tasks

In addition, departments will produce information for parents, termly, in a simple format, on the homework to be set at each stage, the support which will be available, and the expectations the department has of pupils regarding homework.

### **Time Allocation**

It is not possible to be too prescriptive about the amount of homework pupils should be given as consideration must be given to pupils' age, ability and individual needs. As pupils progress through school and embark upon study for SQA qualifications, homework will of necessity increase according to the demands of the subject. Establishing that extended study (homework) is important for pupils to make progress and achieve all they are capable of, must be done in S1 so, from the outset, pupils must be given homework tasks regularly to ensure good habits are maintained and/or established.

Guidelines on time allocation for pupils:

S1/2: 30-45 minutes per week per subject.

It is accepted that homework may not always be necessary or appropriate every week but it is expected that in most subjects there will be some homework given as part of each unit. This work may not involve writing.

S3/4: 1hr to 1hr 15 mins per week per subject

It is accepted that homework in any one subject may not always be necessary or appropriate every week, but it is expected that most pupils following Standard Grade or NQ courses will be issued to pupils every two or three weeks. Routine homework should be suspended two weeks before formal examinations though directed revision could be set.

S5/6 (Higher and Intermediate): 2hrs to 2hrs 30 minutes hours per week per subject

It is accepted that formal written homework may not always be necessary or appropriate every week, but where this is the case, pupils should be directed to do independent study e.g. reading, revision, summarising work covered.

S5/6 (Advanced Higher)

S6 pupils have less class contact timetabled so have study time available during the school day. Given the varied activities and different demands of AH courses, staff must exercise professional judgement in determining the amount of homework that should be done.

Routine homework should be suspended two weeks before formal examinations though directed revision could be set.

### **Homework Issue**

All pupils will be provided with a Diary/Planner in which to record homework and any other important information such as school dates/events. Pupils will be encouraged to have the homework diary out on the desk from the start of each lesson. Homework will be issued as early as possible in a lesson so that pupils have sufficient time to record the information. It should not be issued during the last five minutes of a lesson. Staff must be aware of pupils who have difficulty copying/noting down information and take time to ensure that they have recorded information accurately. Peer support may be possible to free up teacher time. In classes where there are a number of pupils with additional support needs, where possible staff will arrange the issuing of homework when/if SFL staff are supporting the class.

When homework is issued staff will explain its learning intentions and, where possible, what the success criteria are.

## **Differentiation**

Within every class including set/broad-banded classes, there is a wide range of ability and staff must be mindful of this so that homework is appropriately differentiated. Advice on how best to differentiate homework tasks will be provided by SFL staff, where necessary.

Methods of differentiating homework tasks:

- provide help-sheet (NB this may be of little benefit to a poor reader)
- provide range of different homework tasks for different pupils
- differentiate by response
- allow responses to be submitted in a form other than writing
- give pupils more/fewer tasks/questions to complete
- provide choice to allow pupils to capitalise on their preferred learning style

## **Providing Feedback on Homework**

It is important that homework set is always checked by staff. This may involve collecting in and formally marking homework but could also involve other strategies such as peer/self assessment or question and answer sessions (using AIFL techniques to ensure optimum pupil involvement). Pupils must see that staff are making a conscious effort to check that pupils have completed homework. As part of this, staff will award points to pupils who complete homework satisfactorily at specified times each term, and may further reward pupils by use of the Positive Referral System. Where formal feedback is given staff will identify the strengths in a pupil's work and give clear guidance on how work could be improved/improved further.

## **Failure to Hand in Homework**

If homework is not handed in on time:

- Teacher records this on OTB. Automated e-mail message will be sent to parent.
- Teacher sets new deadline and notes in diary

If homework is not handed in on revised deadline:

- Teacher records on OTB and pupil is referred to PT and PTG
- PT will set a further deadline or, if the pupil is willing, arrange for the pupil to do the work in the department at lunch time/interval.
- Parents will be contacted by PTG – phone call or letter - or 2<sup>nd</sup> automated e-mail message.

If pattern of failure to do homework emerges:

- PTG will discuss problem with parents on phone or invite them in to school.
- If problems persist following parental consultation, a formal letter will be sent to parents making clear that school will no longer pursue pupil for homework and explaining the consequences of failure to do homework.
- Every failure to do homework will still be recorded in OTB so points will continue to be deducted and e-mail message will be activated.

## **Unsatisfactory Homework**

- Feedback/grades will be given.
- Unsatisfactory homework will be recorded on OTB and automated e-mail message sent.
- Pupil may be given the opportunity to re-do the work but if this opportunity is not taken this should be noted.
- If a pattern emerges, procedures for homework not done will be followed.