



Preparation for Learning/Homework Policy and Guidance

(See also Curriculum and Assessment Policy, Lessons at TGS document and Guidelines for the Marking of Student work)

Introduction

Homework or “Prep” has long been an integral part of teaching and learning strategies in schools. Numerous school based surveys have indicated that it is seen by parents, teachers and pupils alike as being of use and value to the educational process. This applies particularly when the homework set is planned as an integral part of the lesson, when support and guidance are available from home and school and when feedback on the work is prompt and meaningful. It is less successful when the homework is a bolt-on to the lesson and does not necessarily extend or consolidate the learning that has taken place in the classroom, where it is poorly supported at home and when follow-up, including its assessment is given a low priority.

Aims and Principles:

Therefore, the aim of this policy is to support **academic learning** beyond the classroom, develop effective study habits and build the resilience and stamina that students will need for the 100% linear assessment models they will be faced in the majority of public examinations.

Homework Policy Statement

At Thomas Gainsborough School we will set homework so as to:

- Create a sense of independence and personal responsibility amongst all pupils regardless of their ability.
- Extend students’ learning in all subject areas.
- Give students the chance to consolidate and practise work done in class.
- Allow students to demonstrate achievement at a level appropriate to them.
- Prepare work for a future lesson.
- Develop and maintain a sense of parental involvement in the learning process.
- Create opportunities, to establish how well children are doing through marking and assessment of the completed work.

Guidance and general expectations

- The success of homework depends as much as anything on its planning and assessment.
- If differentiation is needed for tasks in the lesson, it will be needed for homework tasks.
- While there may be an occasional place for “finishing off” and “poster” type homework tasks, they are unlikely to meet the stated aims of homework as laid out on page 1 if used too frequently.
- In KS3, 30-40 minutes of homework should, on average, be set, every second lesson in each subject.

- In KS4, 40-50 minutes of homework should, on average, be set, every second lesson in each subject. Those subjects where a significant element of the course is assessed through practical assignments may need more time at certain stages of the course.
- In KS5, students should be expected to complete 100 minutes of additional study and wider reading for every 100 minute lesson that they attend.

Responsibilities

Staff should:

- Set meaningful, varied homework or preparation for learning tasks as per expectations above, record these tasks on Go4Schools to aid communication between school and home and ensure that students enter details into their planner.
- Ensure that resources needed for successful completion of the task set are made available to all and that adequate time is given to explain the requirements of the task in the lesson.
- Collect and mark/assess completed work in line with department expectations and school guidance for the marking of student work. (this could include the organisation of peer or self-assessment as part of a subsequent lesson).
- Record the completion or otherwise of homework on Go4Schools.
- Set high expectations for the completion of work to a high quality and use sanctions where appropriate to address concerns.

In addition:

- Heads of subject/curriculum area should ensure that homework tasks are planned for as part of schemes of work. In addition, heads of subject should periodically monitor the setting of homework through their routine, calendared monitoring, both of Go4Schools and scrutiny of student exercise books.
- Form tutors should monitor all aspects of the student planner at least once weekly, including the recording and completion of homework. Where there is cause for concern they should liaise with their Head of House.

Students should:

- Record all homework tasks and deadlines in their school planner.
- Complete all work set by the deadline set by the class teacher.
- Seek support before the deadline if there are issues with completing the work by the deadline set.

Parents should:

- Try to ensure that there is a quiet space at home for homework to be completed.
- Check and sign the student planner weekly.
- Raise concerns or issues in relation to homework through the student planner, at Academic Review Days or by contacting the school whenever necessary.
- Show an interest in the work that is set, without doing it for them!

Monitoring

Monitoring will take place in a variety of ways, according to the calendared monitoring schedule, for example through;

- Checking of student planners by form tutors/Heads of House/SLT.
- Checking of teachers' planning and marking records by subject leaders and curriculum area leaders.
- Work scrutiny.

Appendices:

1. Guidance on how to set homework.
2. Suggestions for effective homework tasks.
3. A parents' guide to homework.

(1) Guidance for the setting of homework

1. Homework to be written on the board, displayed from Go4Schools or provided on labels.
2. Students asked at a certain, relevant point in the lesson to write down the homework (often the last 5 minutes of a lesson is not the best time).
3. Deadline for the work to be included.
4. Teacher/Learning Support Assistant to check that students understand the homework and that students have written it down.

(2) Suggestions for effective homework tasks

The best homework tasks exhibit five characteristics (not necessarily all at the same time)

- The task has a clear academic purpose, such as practice, checking for understanding, or applying knowledge or skills.
- Second, the task efficiently demonstrates student learning.
- Third, the task promotes ownership by offering choices and being personally relevant.
- Fourth, the task instils a sense of competence—the student can successfully complete it without help.
- Last, the task is aesthetically pleasing—it appears enjoyable and interesting. (Vatterott, 2009)
- Effective homework therefore, could allow for demonstration of consolidation of understanding of prior learning, practice of a skill learned, extension of a skill learned or acquisition of material or knowledge that will support learning in the next lesson.

(3) Parents Guide to Homework

1. Try to ensure that your child has a quiet place to work
2. Try to build up a homework routine so that your child gets used to studying at the same time each evening
3. Praise effort and achievement at every opportunity
4. Talk to your child about school
5. Try to provide the basic equipment such as pens, pencils, ruler, calculator etc.
6. Use the homework diary to help school monitor homework completion and quality; write notes to teachers, see how the homework timetable fits into the day to day curriculum
7. Allow your child to take on more responsibility for themselves while making sure they are doing the homework that is set. You could show them how to find out something rather than do it for them
8. Ask your child to explain the homework task to you before starting it and what relation it has to what was being studied at school
9. Be involved in your child's homework but don't do it for them; the teachers need to know how they are doing, not how you are doing!
10. If homework is becoming an issue contact the school as soon as possible.