



Homework Policy

Homework is an integral element of education and is viewed as a partnership between home and school. It is valued as a tool which fosters academic development, extends learning opportunities and prepares students for independent adult life. This policy outlines our approach to homework at Stratford Girls' Grammar School and the impact it will have on the intellectual development of students. Its purpose is to provide appropriate support and guidance to staff, girls and parents in order to facilitate a sensible balance with other aspects of her life both inside and outside of school.

The purpose of homework is to:

- develop and refine academic potential
- encourage intellectual curiosity and a love of learning
- establish effective study habits and ownership of independent learning
- embed essential research and presentational skills
- reflect upon learning to date or ensure preparation for future lessons
- enable subject content to be covered in greater breadth and depth
- embed a culture of high expectations across the school
- establish consistency of expectation to minimise the impact of girls receiving different levels of home support

The nature of homework will:

- have a meaningful purpose and be achievable
- be challenging and encourage interests to develop
- afford opportunity for initiative and creativity
- vary: it may take the form of reading, research, projects, presentations, drafting, reviewing, problem-solving, essay writing, learning vocabulary or specialist terminology or key facts, designing and making models, practice of written exercises or calculations, preparing for or completing class work or catching up after absence or music lessons
- foster a sense of personal responsibility for work set
- be followed through by subject teacher marking or by self or peer assessment – there should be a balance between these methods of marking (see *Assessment and Marking Policy*)

When conducting research independently students should:

- make use of more than one source where possible and appropriate
- complement website research with written sources (eg books or newspaper articles)
- treat such sites as Wikipedia with caution – it can be a useful investigative tool but information may be inaccurate and should be verified from another source
- routinely record the sources used for reference
- work actively on the research and apply it – ie bullet point the information, underline key ideas, key words or key information, or think about what it reveals and then produce a mind map
- be selective and focus upon relevant information only.

When using ICT / Moodle (VLE) students should:

- recognise that the effective use of ICT is a skill in itself which needs to be developed, but when used well it can be an extremely powerful aid to communicating ideas
- incorporate the use of ICT whenever appropriate to improve the quality of their work
- recognise that the Moodle may be used to enrich their learning in a number of ways, including providing a vehicle for receiving and submitting homework
- ensure that they are correctly enrolled on courses and know how to access them

- check regularly for links which may have been added to help with research and extended learning
- involve themselves in the development of discussion forums
- only use the Moodle for appropriate academic discussion.

The structure of homework:

All homework should be clearly recorded in girls' planners when it is set in lessons. Each student will have a copy of her homework timetable which mirrors the teaching timetable as closely as possible.

• Years 7 & 8

- Maths, Science, English, Languages will have one half an hour slot per week.
- All other subjects will have one slot of 45 minutes per fortnight.
- Subjects are only allowed to set homework on their set night.
- This means that in total pupils will complete an hour and fifteen minutes of homework per evening for 9 days across the fortnight plus a half an hour on the additional day: a total of 11 hours and 45 minutes across a fortnight - an average of c. 5¾ hours per week.
- This should allow pupils the capacity to travel home and be able to have some school-life balance during the week.
- Our expectation is that homework is done on the night it is set but, allowing for the pupils to manage their after-school commitments, no homework is to be set for the next day.
- Finishing off tasks are not permissible unless they are part of the scheme of work and thus part of the planned lesson.
- Tasks need to be set with clear objectives, outcomes and success criteria.
- Departments who want to adopt a project based approach to homework can do so, ie a six week half-term of homework for a non-core subject would amount to approximately 2¼ hours of work.
- Some departments may choose to do collaborative projects so allocated homework will be amalgamated ie if English and History were to set up a project homework looking at 'Stories from the Frontline' pupils would have approximately 5¼ hours given to it.
- The school preference is that homework is shared with the pupils and parents via the Moodle. The pupils appreciate homework tasks being placed on the Moodle homework area as this enables those absent or unsure to collect or check their homework. It also means that parents are clear as to what their daughter is being asked to do, which will enable them to both monitor and support their daughters more effectively.
- Staff are strongly advised to have placed the homework on the Moodle in advance of the lesson. Should homework need to be tweaked in light of the learning experience of that lesson then staff should modify the homework on the Moodle as soon as possible. The change should be verbally highlighted when the homework is set and written in the planner in order to avoid confusion.
- Homework is to be collected in the following week allowing the pupils the opportunity to use the weekend if their extra-curricular commitments mean that they need to have that extended time.

• Year 9 and above

The type of homework set differs as pupils move into examination classes and may be less rigidly structured as girls are encouraged to develop their independent learning skills and to reflect on where they are in their learning. Sometimes homework will be a short piece of work that needs to be completed for the next day or lesson. Teachers should only do this when there is a designated slot for their subject in the homework timetable. On other occasions the task will be a longer assignment set over a period of time. Deadlines for extended pieces will be agreed and clearly communicated by the subject teacher.

Communication about homework:

- Teachers may use the planner to celebrate individual pieces of work or inform parents about unsatisfactory performance.
- Tutors are asked to regularly check the planner and to take an interest in the homework tasks, as well as using it as a means to check communications with home.
- Parents are asked to check the planner carefully on a weekly basis and to take an interest in the homework tasks. This valuable engagement in the management of homework enables

parents to share in any teacher feedback, monitor the nature and amount of homework set and to comment if they wish.

- Any major difficulties arising over homework will be communicated separately by the subject teacher, form tutor or pastoral leader.
- The aim of all communications is to enable teachers and parents to support students in the learning. Parents should contact their daughters' pastoral leader if they have any queries or suggestions about homework in particular or progress in general.

Holiday Homework

- It is preferred practice not to set holiday homework for Key Stage 3 classes – all pupils benefit from a break from studies during holiday time, and younger girls particularly. It is understood, however, that the pupils may need to spend some time in the May half-term holiday revising if internal exams follow it.
- It is also preferred practice not to set specific homework tasks over holidays for KS4 and KS5 classes. That is not to say that pupils will not need to do some work, and especially in those holidays that fall before trial or public exams, but it is good for these older pupils to have some flexibility to enable them to manage their own revision programmes and independent learning in holiday time. This is especially the case for the Christmas holiday, as this follows a long and demanding term, and usually involves important family time. Staff may, however, set work over the summer if they feel that that would be beneficial to the girls. It should be acknowledged that Year 12 girls will have a lot to do over the summer in preparation for EPQ and UCAS, however, and staff are asked to take this into account if they wish to set work for their A-level classes.

How parents can help:

- Please try to provide a suitable working environment at home. This entails a quiet place with a desk or table and adequate light. Access to a computer and some storage space for books and materials would be ideal.
- Encourage pupils to establish a routine for their studies, appropriate to family life.
- Be aware of the resources a student might need to complete homework tasks successfully. For example, in practical subjects like Food Technology, homework may be to do some advance preparation of ingredients. We always try to give plenty of notice when setting tasks that require specific resources such as bringing in newspaper articles or going to the library. We will also aim to provide 'back up' resources available through school facilities.
- Any student is able to access the library and computer rooms at lunchtime if necessary..
- All deadlines should be noted in the planner. Please help students to organise and manage their time so that they do not leave multiple or entire tasks to the night before the deadline.
- If students are experiencing difficulty, taking an unreasonably long time or are unclear how to proceed, encourage them to seek out the subject teacher for guidance well before the deadline. The homework timetable contains approximate guidance on the length of homework for parents.
- Ensure students save work securely and make a backup copy of essential documents.

Use of information from published sources

For older students involved in controlled assessments for public examinations there are extensive regulations about acknowledging research precisely with quotation marks, whether sourced from articles, books or the internet. We seek to embed good practice throughout the school in this respect and actively discourage wholesale copying of original sources, even where this is acknowledged. Plagiarism is an offence which both we and the examination boards take very seriously. Copying homework from other students is not acceptable except in specific circumstances, such as following extended absence, and then only with the permission from the subject teacher concerned.

Revised May 2015 following whole school Homework Review in response to Y9 concerns; reviewed June 2016.