

RSD Homework Policy

What is homework?: Homework is the time pupils spend outside the classroom in assigned activities to practise, reinforce or apply newly acquired skills and knowledge and to develop the skills of independent study.

Why set homework? Assigning homework serves various educational needs. It serves as an intellectual discipline, establishes study habits, eases time constraints on the amount of curricular material that can be covered in class, and supplements and reinforces work done in school. In addition, it encourages pupil initiative, independence, responsibility and time management skills. Homework brings home and school closer together.

Types of homework: The following are the broad categories of the type of homework a pupil could receive:

- a) review and practice of material covered in class,
- b) preparation for future classes
- c) more in-depth exploration of topics introduced in class
- d) application of skills they already have to new situations; and
- e) integration of many different skills on a single task such as a book report or science project.

Homework Diaries

- When homework is not set it should always be recorded by pupils in diaries as “none set”.
- When a teacher is absent it should always be recorded as “teacher absent”.
- When a homework is set over a period of time, pupils should indicate this in their homework diary.

Parents of pupils in Years 8-10 are asked to sign the Homework Diary each week. Pupils in Years 11-14 are expected to be self-reliant and to manage homework independently and parents are not expected to sign the Homework Diary. If a pupil in Year 11 or 12 is not producing homework as expected then that individual pupil may be requested to have his or her Homework Diary signed by a parent until improvement has been noted.

Homework Diaries are checked periodically in School by the Form Tutor. This helps to ensure that pupils are using the Diary appropriately and that homework is being recorded accurately. It also provides a means of communication between parent and Form Tutor so that minor issues regarding homework and study in general can be noted or concerns raised. If a pupil loses his or her Diary then the Diary should be replaced immediately by purchasing a new Diary from the Bursar’s General Office. If a pupil in Years 8-12 is not in possession of a Diary then that pupil is considered to be acting irresponsibly and this would be regarded as a breach of School Rules.

It is not expected that parents understand how to complete homework, but it is permissible for occasional **guidance** to be given and acknowledged where this has been substantial. It is self-defeating if parents and pupils present homework as the pupil’s work when it has been largely the work of the parent. It is better in such circumstances, when a pupil has only been able to complete work with considerable assistance, to note that fact and to request the teacher’s assistance.

Marking of homework:

It is School Policy that the vast majority *of written* homework is seen and monitored by the subject teacher within two or three days of the homework being completed and/or handed in. The form of

marking may differ from subject to subject, teacher to teacher and indeed from homework to homework, but it *will* be seen and monitored by the teacher. In certain cases it may be appropriate for written work to be marked as a group exercise in class and the work checked subsequently. Reading or learning homework may form a weekly proportion of the homework in each subject and it will normally be tested in various ways in class. Homework which counts towards Report Card totals will always have been marked by the teacher.

Homework timetable: All pupils in years 8 – 12 will be provided with a homework timetable so that homework is distributed evenly during the week to ensure a manageable workload and so that staff and pupils know when homework should be set. This will be constructed annually based on the individual year group timetable.

Years 13 & 14 will have one homework per subject per night.

Duration of homework: The approximate length of an individual homework should be as follows:

| Year(s) | Duration per subject | Approximate total time per night |
|--------------------|----------------------|----------------------------------|
| 8 & 9 | 20 minutes | 1½ hours |
| 10 | 25 minutes | 2 hours |
| 11 & 12 | 30 minutes | 2½ hours |
| 13 | 45 minutes | 3 hours |
| 14 | 1 hour | 3 hours |

Homework should always be set according to the Homework Timetable. On some occasions a teacher may set a longer piece of homework which stretches across more than one allocated homework time on the Homework Timetable.

Sanctions for failing to attempt or complete Homework:

- Homework which has not been produced on time or which is seriously lacking in effort and completeness without good reason will be required for the next day.
- If the same homework is not produced the next day it will be required for the following day. Additional work should also be set at this point by way of a sanction.
- If the original homework or additional work is subsequently not presented then the issue will be referred to the Head of Year and the pupil will receive a Friday Detention (3 strikes approach).
- If a pupil receives a second Friday detention for homework related matters then the pupil will be warned by the Head of Year that a third offence related to homework will result in a third Friday detention and the pupil being referred to the Head of Key Stage.
- If a pupil receives a third Friday Detention for homework related matters then the Head of Year will refer the issue to the Head of Key Stage. The Head of Key Stage will work with the pupil to ensure homeworks are completed. Parents will be contacted by the Head of Key Stage and agreement reached for the pupil to work in the library from 3.45 – 4.45pm Monday to Thursday each week for a period of time. The objective is for the pupil to become self reliant and for the process to reach a good conclusion.
- During the period of time that a pupil is required to work in the library it is expected that all homeworks set by teachers will be completed on time. If this is not the case the Head of Key Stage should refer the pupil to Deputy Head Pastoral to receive a sanction – Saturday morning Detention.
- If failure to complete homeworks continues the matter will be referred to the Headmaster and the pupil may be suspended from school.

Pupil example

The pupil as 'refuser' – Original homework not done for the appointed day and also not done for the next day; not done for day 3 (or extra work not done). Outcome = detention from Head of Year.

Sanctions for persistent late homeworks:

The focus here is upon spotting patterns of behaviour from a pupil and dealing with homework problems as soon as possible and with the aim of changing the pupil's approach. Subject teachers should keep a record of the number of late homeworks produced by a pupil.

If a pupil is late with one homework but then produces the work the following day no sanction will apply.

If a pupil is late with homework for a second time during a 5-6 week period then the matter should be referred to the Head of Year and Head of Key Stage using the Homework Referral form (either on paper or via email). The Head of Year and Head of Key Stage will judge whether or not there is a broader pattern of homework concerns across different subjects and determine next steps for the pupil, including the use of sanctions (e.g. extra work to be set; detention).

If a pupil is late with homework for a third time during this period of time then the issue will be referred to the Head of Year and the pupil will receive a Friday Detention for persistent late homework.

A teacher who is concerned about any pattern of homework behaviour from a pupil should report the matter to the relevant Head of Year and Head of Key Stage using the Homework Referral form.

Where there are good reasons for homework not being done or not completed (such as illness or emergency/special family arrangements) parents should write a note explaining this and send it in with their child to the teacher/s concerned. If it is known in advance that there will be a forthcoming circumstance which will interfere with homework then the note should be sent to the Form Tutor who will in turn notify subject teachers.

Homework missed for any reason should **always** be completed as soon as possible: it should never be left incomplete or missed. Pupils who miss classes legitimately for music lessons, medical/dental appointments, sports fixtures etc. have a responsibility to find out about and to complete any set homework.

Pupil examples

Persistent lateness in one subject (within a 5-6 week period) – 3 homeworks late for same teacher/subject within the timeframe. Teacher informs HofY/HofKS after second late homework within the timeframe and HofY/HofKS assess whether or not there is a pattern for that pupil across a range of subjects at that point. Warning given to pupil by subject teacher after second offence – "no more late homework or detention next time". Third late homework for the same subject/teacher within the timeframe = detention issued by HofY (even if the pupil is catching up "next day" – the issue is a pattern of lateness in that subject which has to be changed).

Late homework across a range of subjects at a particular time ("a problem of the moment") – A pupil has homework late this week for history and for maths and also for French. These are all caught up on day 2 or day 3. It is unusual for this pupil or the teachers suspect something is wrong so the issue is notified to HofY/HofKS by each subject teacher. Outcome decided by HofY/HofKS on basis of all the information provided and pupil's individual circumstances (e.g. pastoral support; sanction).

The homework referral form should be used for communicating all homework issues to HofY/HofKS.

Teacher absence

- When a teacher has been absent unexpectedly, homework will not normally be set.
- When a teacher has been covered by a substitute teacher then homework will be set normally, according to the homework timetable.
- When a teacher is out of School on a planned absence work will normally be set and left for the covering teacher to give.

Staff Roles and Responsibilities

All teachers have an interest in ensuring that homework is productive and contributing effectively to pupils' progress. Particular members of staff play important and distinct roles.

- **Subject Teachers** plan, set, mark and review all the homework for their classes, including homework set during a period of absence. They keep a record of all homework issues including late homework and non-delivery of homework. They may also check their own pupils' diaries from time to time.
- **Heads of Departments** monitor homework within Departments, deal with persistent problems, set Departmental guidelines and ensure standards and consistency throughout their Departments. They also give guidance when staff are absent unexpectedly by providing homework and advising substitute teachers.
- **Heads of Year and Form Tutors** regularly check homework diaries and monitor defaulters and the system in general as it applies to their respective Year Groups/Forms.
- **Heads of Key Stage** scrutinise the overall academic progress of pupils and intervene when a pupil is in serious difficulty and requires significant support with all aspects of study including homework.
- **Pupil Tutors** act as mentors for an individual pupil who is in serious difficulty with his or her studies and supervise all aspects of homework from that pupil with the aim of providing guidance and strategies for the pupil which will enable improvement to take place.

The role of Parents

Parents have a key role to play in providing support for pupils when it comes to homework. In particular parents can help by:

- Providing a quiet place with good working conditions with no distractions (e.g. TV, music or games consoles)
- Ensuring that computers are used for research purposes and to construct homework if required and not allowed to be a distraction with aimless surfing on the internet, chatting in social networking sites or playing games
- Helping pupils establish a routine for working which allows for a sustained period of study and also accommodates clubs, societies and other aspects of busy family life
- Encouraging pupils to believe that telephone calls and texts can wait until after homework is completed
- Not pressuring pupils to undertake significant domestic/household/farm or other family tasks or chores instead of giving full and proper time and attention to homework
- Checking Homework Diaries on a regular basis to ensure that homeworks are being recorded and advice from teachers is being acted upon and in Years 8-10 signing the Diary each week
- Writing a note (separately or on the homework or in the Homework Diary) if there is a problem in completing a homework, explaining why there was problem. It is important for teachers to know that there may have been a difficulty in doing the homework, that time has been spent in attempting the incomplete work or that help has been given by parents
- Writing a note for the teacher or Form Tutor if homeworks are regularly taking more than the allocated time. This is important in helping teachers to understand where pupils are finding work difficult.

Appendix 1 - Additional notes for teachers

Number of homeworks: The number of homeworks for each individual subject per week is as follows:

| Subject | Year | | | | |
|------------------------|------|----|----|-------|-------|
| | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
| Art & Design | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 3 |
| Biology | - | - | 1 | 3 | 3 |
| Business Studies | - | - | - | 3 | 3 |
| Chemistry | - | - | 1 | 3 | 3 |
| Design & Technology | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 3 |
| English | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4 |
| Food Technology | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 3 |
| French | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 3 |
| Geography | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 |
| History | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 |
| ICT | - | - | - | 3 | 3 |
| Mathematics | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| Music | - | - | 1 | 3 | 3 |
| Physics | - | - | 1 | 3 | 3 |
| Religious Studies | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 3 |
| Religious Studies (SC) | - | - | - | 1 | 1 |
| Science | 2 | 2 | - | - | - |
| Science DA (Bi/Ch/Ph) | - | - | - | 6 | 6 |
| Spanish | - | - | 2 | 3 | 3 |
| | | | | | |
| Total Per week | 20 | 20 | 23 | 25/26 | 25/26 |

Notes: Year 8 – 10 ICT classes may be set additional short homeworks on some occasions.
Year 12 Careers classes may be set additional short homeworks on some occasions.

Years 13 & 14 will have one homework per subject per night.

Types of homework: The following are more specific examples of the type of homework an RSD pupil could expect to receive:

- a) essay planning
- b) extended writing over a single homework or a series of homeworks
- c) reading to answer pre-set questions
- d) reading as preparation for classroom work
- e) augmenting or redrafting work (using teacher feedback)
- f) preparation for oral work
- g) questions to reinforce class work
- h) directed research (including Internet research) on various topics
- i) using ICT resources to produce a piece of work, eg produce a MS PowerPoint presentation or an MS Excel spreadsheet
- j) revision for a test
- k) production of a piece of Art & Design or Design & Technology work (perhaps over a series of homeworks)

- l) review of work carried out in class – learning of key terms and definitions for some form of follow up in class
- m) practical or fieldwork reports, e.g. write up a report, including production of graphs of the results, based on primary data collection. This type of work would be carried out over a number of homeworks with pupils given specific direction on what was required at the each stage.
- n) undertake past examination paper questions
- o) directed research and preparation for controlled assessment
- p) on-going completion of a substantial piece of coursework with interim deadlines for each section with the work being subject to a regular progress review by the teacher

Planning of homework: Homework should be planned by the teacher in advance of a lesson where possible.

Setting of homework: Teachers may wish to explore a range of strategies as to when they set a particular homework. Homework can be set: at the start of a lesson, with an indication of what pupils need to learn during the lesson in order to accomplish it; in the middle of the lesson as an extension to the task currently undertaken during the lesson; or, at the end of the lesson, for reinforcement.

| RSD Homework Referral Form | |
|--|-------------------|
| Pupil's Name | Form/class |
| Staff Initials | Subject |
| <p>Outline the homework issue here</p> <p>It is important that you include details such as: the dates involved; the nature of the homework; what you have done already about this homework issue.</p> | |