

Tain Royal Academy Homework Policy January 2014

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1) Our starting off point is that we as pupils, parents and staff share an appreciation of the value of home learning in fostering good study habits and attitudes to learning that will remain long after school. What is learned in school feeds into both skills for life and skills for work.
- 2) This policy fits in with our school aim whereby we seek to encourage all our pupils to attain their full potential as learners.
- 3) As such, we seek to promote an ethos of high expectation – in all our pupils
- 4) For this Homework Policy to be effective, we all agree upon the value and importance of the philosophy and procedures, on the specific responsibilities we have and on the steps taken to monitor practice.
- 5) Research evidence indicates that regular homework – particularly in relation to revision of work done in class – can significantly increase attainment.
- 6) Research also finds clearly that good communication between home and school is central to a successful policy.
- 7) This document sets down Tain Royal Academy’s Homework Policy

As a school, we should set homework:

- a) to complement and reinforce knowledge and understanding;
- b) to allow pupils the opportunity to develop skills taught in class;
- c) to prepare pupils for rigour in their planning and personal organisation;
- d) to encourage independent learning in our young people;
- e) to foster good links with parents; and
- f) to raise attainment and achievement.

2. DEFINITION

- 1) Home learning is learning which the pupil does outwith the classroom. This may be completed at home, in school at Homework Club, in the library, at a friend’s house, or some other location.
- 2) Home learning can consist of tasks set by teachers, study or revision for exams, independent research, private reading, and other activities that complement or extend the curriculum for the pupil.

This idea of learning, attainment and achievement taking place within and beyond the classroom setting is a principle embedded within our developing curriculum, both at S1-S3 and in the Senior Phase.

3) Homework can comprise a variety of forms, including, for example:

- regular use of subject textbooks/ booklets
- this may involve ‘finishing off’ assignments and tasks begun in class
- practising of musical instruments
- compiling sketch books
- collecting items, for example still life work for Art and Design classes
- practise recipes and processes done in Home Economics lessons
- speaking (English, Gaidhlig, Modern Language);
- listening to and subsequent reporting back on Gaidhlig and Modern Language radio broadcasts
- acquisition and revision of (key) vocabulary and technical terms;
- reading for information – books, newspapers, magazines, use of ICT
- revision and redrafting;
- discussions with family/friends on various topics;
- research tasks, investigations or project

4) As is established in study advice given to our pupils in PSE lessons, there cannot be any occasion - within agreed time allocations - when a pupil does not have any ‘homework’. On-going project work, practising of skills, reading and revision for forthcoming assessments ensures that, on any regular homework evening, there should always be something useful to do.

3. PARENTS AND CARERS’ RESPONSIBILITIES

1) Parents and carers play a crucial role in ensuring the success of this policy as our pupils strive to attain their potential as learners.

2) Showing an interest, engaging in dialogue about homework makes a real difference to pupils’ perception of homework – and to their performance.

3) Parents and carers are involved in consultation and formulation of our homework policy and are asked, through Parent Council and school home communications, to support it.

4) In so far as is practical, parents and carers are encouraged to maintain a homework routine for pupils. Regular ‘start’ and ‘finish’ times; a dedicated place at which to work; and minimal distractions all contribute towards successful and purposeful learning at home

5) Parents and carers are encouraged to check pupil planners regularly, to ensure full and regular completion of planners, to sign where appropriate, and to contact the appropriate member of the Pupil Support team where there is a concern.

6) Parents and carers are encouraged to ensure that pupils are supplied with a suitable bag so that proper care is taken of books and jotters.

7) Parents and carers are encouraged to write a note of explanation for the classroom teacher when a particular assignment has not been done. (There may, on occasion, be legitimate reasons).

4 PUPILS' RESPONSIBILITIES

Pupils should:

- 1) Take pride in the presentation of homework.
- 2) Do their very best to produce work of the expected quality.
- 3) Meet deadlines - this is good training for life and for work.
- 4) Accept responsibility for catching up with homework missed through any form of absence, including school activities. This might involve discussions with the subject teacher or with classmates. This is an essential life skill.
- 5) Take great care of their Study Planners. These should be taken out at the beginning of lessons, filled in appropriately and consulted as they meet short, medium and long term academic targets.
- 6) Make sure that it is signed by their parents / carers.
- 7) Always have the Planner ready for inspection by a member of staff.
- 8) If experiencing difficulty about managing homework tasks, meeting particular deadlines or homework workloads, let a member of staff know.
- 9) Make use of the help offered in Homework Club and Lunchtime sessions organised by subject departments particularly when trying to catch up through absence.
- 10) When involved in college courses or Skills for Work courses which require absence from other subject classes, make sure they do their very best to catch up on both class and homework which may have been missed.
- 11) For pupils in the Senior Phase there must be a commitment to more self-directed revision and study. This is in addition to on-going class and home work.

5. CLASSROOM TEACHERS' RESPONSIBILITIES

- 1) Each teacher should ensure that the importance of home learning is given due emphasis in class and that all pupils are clear on the nature, frequency and amount of homework that they will receive.
- 2) When issuing homework tasks, teachers should ensure that:
 - planners are produced at the start of each lesson;
(In some cases, for example in P.E. and Art and Design lessons, this may not, however, always be feasible)
 - pupils are given clear instructions regarding entries in planners;

- clear steps are taken to provide challenging and meaningful tasks and thought given to differentiation of tasks;
 - an expectation of rigour and high standards is communicated to pupils;
 - specific deadlines are given to pupils.
- 3) It is important that homework is given regularly, and that good habits and rigour are established from S1, so that pupils are able to continue and progress in their personal organisation and application as they move through the school.
 - 4) It is also important that homework is marked regularly - this validates it in the eyes of the pupils.
 - 5) Given the suggestions in the above 'Definition' section, not all homework needs to be written or to require separate marking by the teacher. Marking can, for example, be done 'round the class' as part of a lesson; exercises can be marked by pupils – in pairs, in groups. Marking can also be achieved by question and answer; pupils can produce other items such as posters, printouts, designs, recordings etc. as evidence of homework.
 - 6) Be aware that pupils like to have their homework 'physically' marked.
 - 7) There must be an awareness of the demands made upon pupils across the range of subjects.
 - 8) It is important that 'serious' homework is not reserved for senior pupils only because of deadlines, exams and so on when they may not have had the experience of personal organisation and study habits in earlier years.
 - 9) Teachers need to maintain agreed departmental record keeping of homework.
 - 10) Teachers must follow the agreed department and school approach to situations where pupils do not do homework. This may involve the issuing of appropriate classroom sanction and informing the Principal Teacher; Referral to the Principal Teacher in response to continued or repeated failure to complete homework.
 - 11) Recognise achievement and attainment in homework by using our Positive Referral system and by nominating pupils for effort and or achievement for our Awards Ceremony.
 - 12) Pupils should also be clearly informed as to the steps that will be taken to deal with anyone who regularly fails to complete homework.

The frequency of homework

S1 –S3 Broad General Education

- a. Our pupils come to us from a background of regular homework issued in primary school which takes up about one hour per night, not counting research, investigative work and personal reading.

- b. Teachers should issue pupils in S1- S3 with at least the equivalent of one piece of homework per subject, per week or fortnight depending on the number of periods pupils come to class per week.
- c. In subjects that have frequent contact with pupils, homework should be set more often than this.
- d. In cases where teachers see a class once per week only, the pace, challenge and frequency of homework should be monitored over the course of several weeks.
- e. Overall, it is reasonable to expect that pupils in S1 – S3 should receive, on average, one to two hours - across all subjects - homework per day.

S4 – S6 – The Senior Phase

- f. National Courses make specific demands on pupils, in classwork, and in homework tasks. Special investigations, evidence portfolio and tasks requiring independent study will inform much of work done at home.
- g. These complement the usual homework assignments – reading and writing papers, worksheets, textbook exercises and so on.
- h. The important factor here is the reinforcement of planning and organising skills.
- i. In addition, the pace of work and homework should progress from S3 into the Senior Phase.
- j. As young people take a more mature approach to their studies, it is reasonable to expect that they will take more responsibility for organising their own homework and study programme.
- k. Teachers should expect pupils to be doing - though this will be informed by the level at which a pupil is studying a subject - an average of 1 to 2 hours homework/study per evening, and more at the weekends.

6 GUIDANCE TEACHER / SUPPORT TEACHER’S RESPONSIBILITIES

- 1) Through Study Skills units in the PS E programme and other support contexts, pupils will be given guidance and advice in the use of planners.

Such advice will include:

- learning to plan homework tasks and study/revision;
- acquiring good study habits;
- using planners effectively; and
- self-assessment and good record keeping.

- 2) Ensure PSE programme also include advice on study techniques that will help pupils consolidate their learning and prepare for examinations and other assessments.
- 3) Particularly in the Senior Phase, encourage pupils towards attaining an appropriate balance between school, work and social commitments.
- 4) Regularly monitor – and sign - pupils' Study Planners;
- 5) Respond to particular issues raised by parents via the Study Planner;
- 6) Inform teaching staff, using due sensitivity, of issues which may be causing problems for pupils completing homework.
- 7) In working with pupils as they compile Learning Profiles, encourage an awareness of the importance of good time management and the meeting of deadlines in the worlds of further study and work..

7. MONITORING OF HOMEWORK

As part of our quality assurance procedures, PTs, and SMT have a key role in ensuring we have a successful homework policy.

Principal Teachers will monitor by:

- 1) Ensuring clarity and consistency of practice within departments regarding homework. This should involve agreement on appropriate programmes and the amount to be given to pupils.
- 2) Periodically checking planners in classes;
- 3) Allowing, at least once per term, discussion of homework issues at departmental meetings; and managing record keeping within the department. These discussions should centre on the impact homework is having on pupils' learning and attainment.
- 4) Support departmental colleagues in dealing with issues of the non-completion or poor quality of homework. Within a restorative approach, this may involve discussions with individual pupils, the issuing of sanctions, including, if necessary, placing of pupils on detention.
- 5) Liaising with Guidance, Support, EMT and SMT colleagues on issues arising from our homework policy.

Senior Management will monitor homework by:

- 1) Formulating policy, having due regard to all partners – pupils, parents /carers, teachers - in that policy.
- 2) Promoting the value of home learning among pupils, at assemblies and in classes,

- 3) Ensuring provision for and monitoring of Homework Clubs – either general or for specific subjects.
- 4) Supporting departments in the formulation and implementation of departmental policy on home learning and by ensuring a consistency of approach across the school.
- 5) Support Principal Teachers in instances of persistent non-completion of homework.
- 6) Have an overview of homework loads for pupils at key pressure points in the academic session. Particularly in the Senior Phase, this will involve ensuring internal assessments and preliminary examinations are planned so as to minimise pressure on pupils.
- 7) Initiate periodic audit and review of this policy through consulting Parent Council, Pupil Council and teaching staff.