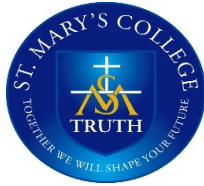


Homework Policy



Introduction and Rationale

Homework plays an essential part in the teaching and learning experience at St Mary's College. The school through this revised policy has carefully considered both the role homework can play in supporting every pupil's progress and latest evidence-based research to best inform our practice. The thrust of this policy is on quality not quantity and aims to take cognisance of the need for a homework balance to ensure pupils have time for other important activities. Homework requires an all-team effort with pupils, staff and parents / guardians needed to support, guide, feedback and encourage at all times.

Homework is a vital part of the learning experience that:

- Gives pupils opportunities to practice skills and extend their knowledge and understanding.
- Raises achievement and ensures progress in learning.
- Promotes pupil independence, personal responsibility and lifelong learning.
- Allows parents to get involved with their child's learning.

Evidence Based Practice on Homework

We strive to use the most up to date research to inform our homework practice. Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) collated a range of metadata on homework and their findings are that "homework has a positive impact on average (+ 5 months), particularly with pupils in secondary schools". In addition to this it is recognised that "pupils eligible for free school meals typically receive additional benefits from homework".

Key Points from the evidence available

1. Some pupils may not have a quiet space for home learning – it is important for schools to consider how home learning can be supported e.g. through providing homework clubs for pupils
2. Homework that is linked to classroom work tends to be more effective. In particular, studies that included feedback on homework had higher impacts on learning
3. It is important to make the purpose of homework clear to pupils e.g. to increase a specific area of knowledge, or to develop fluency in a particular area
4. While most homework set is individual, studies involving collaboration with peers have higher effects (+6 months)
5. Studies in homework which involved digital technology typically have greater impact (+6 months)

educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/homework

‘Five Hallmarks of Good Homework’

1. **Purpose**: homework needs to be meaningful and pupils must understand both why they are doing it and why it is beneficial to their wider learning.
2. **Efficiency**: homework should demand challenge and independent thinking, but should not become too time consuming as to waste valuable learning time or lead to pupil disengagement.
3. **Ownership**: pupils who understand the point of the homework, as suggested above, are more likely to be motivated and focused. Vatterott suggests that an element of choice could offer a greater sense of ownership.
4. **Competence**: pupils need to have the time, resources and ability to complete the tasks independently and well.
5. **Aesthetics**: Vatterott argues that the way homework looks is important as ‘presentation is everything’.

Cathy Vatterott is Professor Emeritus of Education at the University of Missouri and has written books on homework <https://www.ascd.org/el/articles/five-hallmarks-of-good-homework-aug-2011>

Quality and Observable Indicators of Effective Homework

- Homework is planned, purposeful & is revisited by the teacher
- Homework is understood by the pupils
- High levels of response in terms of completion & attempt
- There is a positive, encouraging & supportive classroom in terms of homework
- There is a pattern of regular and accurate homework record keeping by pupils

Recommended Time spent on homework

Pupils need to learn to manage their time so that they do some homework each evening. The amount of time spent on each homework task is flexible, but within the following guidelines:

Year Group	Recommended Times per night Monday – Thursday and one day at weekend
Year 8 & 9	45 mins to 1 hour
Year 10	1 hour to 1 hour 15 mins
Year 11 & 12	1 hour 30 mins *
Year 13 & 14	2 hours at home (non-school time) *

* It is expected that additional time is to be spent at home on independent revision and study activities.

Role of Parents

Parents can help their child succeed with homework by providing clear messages about the importance of homework and specific support strategies. As outlined in the learning agreement in the pupil daybook parents agree and sign to ensure their child will complete homework. The school will seek feedback from parents / guardians on a regular basis to ensure we are aware of the challenges and of course good practice.

Parents can support homework by:

- Checking the daybook each day and signing it weekly.
- Encouraging a positive attitude to homework.
- Ensuring a place at home that is quiet and suitable for homework.
- Having a supportive routine for the completion of homework.
- Assisting in the organisation of homework and books.
- Supporting their child to attend the homework club.
- Praising their child when they have completed homework.

Teachers can support parents by discussing homework at progress meetings and contacting parents when completion of homework becomes a concern.

Planning Homework Tasks

Homework tasks should be:

- Relevant, varied and short where possible.
- Meaningful and linked to the learning in class.
- Clearly explained and understood by pupils.
- Differentiated to provide appropriate challenge for differing abilities.
- Manageable for staff in terms of feedback and assessment.
- Where possible extension homework should be set.
- Varied homework tasks which can include:
 - Writing tasks e.g. answer questions
 - Reading tasks e.g. reading to prepare for a future lesson
 - Learning tasks e.g. practice a skill, revise and recall
 - Speaking task e.g. oral presentation
 - Planning task e.g. designing
 - Research task e.g. finding information
 - Revision task in preparation for assessments
 - Project task given over several days
 - Creative tasks e.g. drawing, making

Recording and Monitoring Homework

- Subject departmental handbooks / policy and schemes of work should reflect the homework policy and define an agreed approach to setting, recording, marking and monitoring of homework within that subject area.
- The pupil daybook must be present on the desk at the start of every lesson.

- Pupils should record their homework in every lesson in their daybook and teachers should plan time for this to happen during the lesson. SEN pupils could be offered additional assistance with writing it down.
- Teachers should write the homework on the whiteboard and oversee the accurate recording of homework.
- Homework should be acknowledged and checked on the due date / the next lesson.
- Parents should monitor homework completion, check the pupil daybook and sign weekly.
- Form Teachers should check the recording of homework in the daybooks and sign the daybook weekly. Concerns should be discussed with parents.
- Heads of Department should ensure that homework is set and marked regularly following the school and department procedures.

Feedback on Homework

- Effective and timely feedback should be provided to pupils to ensure progress.
- Feedback should be constructive and help the pupil improve. It can take the form of:
 - Written comments.
 - Verbal feedback.
 - Whole class feedback.
 - Pupil feedback using self and peer evaluation exercises.
 - Use of model answers are also useful feedback strategies.
- Feedback from teachers to pupils are recommended within the following timeframes:
 - Key Stage 3: feedback within 2 weeks;
 - Key Stage 4: feedback within one week;
 - Key Stage 5: feedback within one week.
- Good effort and success in homework should be celebrated to encourage pupils
- Rewarding and celebrating homework could include:
 - Verbal praise describing the areas of success.
 - Awarding a Learning Merit Sticker.
 - Subject prize, postcard, certificate or letter home.
 - Pupil work displayed in classroom and/or on social media.
 - Recording success on SIMS and sharing with form teacher, year head, etc.
 - Inviting a member of the Pastoral Team or Senior Leadership Team to view and join in with the celebration of good homework practice
 - Recognition at assemblies

It is imperative that homework and associated feedback is an integral part of lessons throughout the year. This will involve careful planning on the part of the subject teacher and Head of Department.

Special Educational Needs

Homework should be differentiated to allow every pupil the opportunity to succeed. Homework for SEN pupils should allow them to continue learning at a pace and level suited to their individual needs. It is not recommended to use homework to 'catch up' with classwork.

It would be useful to:

- Offer additional assistance with recording homework in their daybook.
- Refer to the recommendations in the pupils personal learning plan (PLP).
- Set a time limit for their homework task to ensure they are not overwhelmed.

Strategies for Supporting Completion of Homework

Pupils are encouraged to view homework as an integral part of the learning process which can be completed at home or at the homework club. We take a supportive approach to supporting pupils in homework.

Strategies to support the successful completion of homework can include:

- Provide another opportunity for the missed homework to be completed.
- Recommend the pupil attend the homework club and seek support.
- Be mindful of barriers to the completion of homework.
- Make use of positive behaviour strategies to deal with regular missed homework.

Teacher discussion about non-completion of homework can be found in Appendix 2.

Appendix 1 Homework Club (reviewed yearly)

- Homework club is a free provision that runs for most weeks of the school year.
- It operates from 3.15-4.30pm each day from Monday to Thursday in room F025 & 26.
- Pupils can register for Homework club in the MPH at 3.15.
- Homework club is supported by learning assistants who provide supervision and support.
- Pupils will have ICT, desks and printing facilities.

Appendix 2 Teacher discussion with pupil about non completion of homework

1. Before meeting with pupil consider the following using information on SIMS:

- Pupil Attendance
- If the pupil is SEN and at what stage
- Is the pupil a newcomer? (English not first language)
- Is the pupil on the medical register?
- Is the pupil entitled to FSM
- The number of homework tasks not completed
- The subject/s in which homework is not completed
- Data
 - Review the data on the pupil to determine an overall picture of academic ability
 - What does this reveal about the pupil's ability to complete homework

2. Discussion prompt to ask the pupil what she thinks prevents her from doing homework to identify barriers:

- Number of lessons missed-linked to poor attendance and poor punctuality
- Lacks understanding of what needs to be completed
- Not using daybook to record homework
- The value placed on completing homework
- Quiet space at home to complete homework
- Assistance at home with difficult homework tasks
- Is there internet access at home?
- Talk in terms of 'missed learning' time

3. Actions as a result of the discussion could include:

- Is there a need to reduce the number of homework for SEN pupils or reduce the number of tasks to be completed?
- Give the pupil time to refocus on homework
- In Key Stage 3 move forward rather than trying to catch up
- Encourage attendance at homework club
- Persistence of no homework contact home