

HOMEWORK POLICY

PREAMBLE

It is generally recognised that homework can make an important contribution to the learning process and contributes to the development of sound study habits. This is clearly understood and requested by the vast majority of our parents.

Homework is valuable for the following reasons:

- It can help pupils to make more rapid progress in learning.
- It can allow pupils to develop the practice of working on their own without the constant presence of the teacher or other pupils. This way of working is vital at the later stages of secondary education and after.
- Work at home can provide the quiet and private conditions needed for work of all kinds.
- It can allow valuable practice of skills learned in the classroom.
- It can allow pupils to use materials and other sources of information that are not always available in the classroom.
- It can involve parents and others in the pupils' work for their mutual benefit.
- It can give opportunities for long term research and other work.
- It can form an important part of the pupil's notes.
- It gives pupils valuable experience of working to deadlines.
- It forms a link with the methods of study crucial to success at Secondary School.

POLICY

It is the policy at Porthcawl Comprehensive School to set and mark homework. It is also the policy of the school to advise and guide pupils to complete their homework. The type, frequency and duration of the homework is controlled by two variables:

1. a whole school requirement, with advice on its duration
2. departmental requirements embodied in its Schemes of Work

PROCESS

Homework will be implemented according to the following guidelines and recorded in Planners issued at the beginning of the academic year:

1. Though precision is not possible, the duration of homework is expected to be approximately:

Years 7, 8 and 9	20 to 30 minutes per item set
Years 10 and 11	40 minutes to 1 hour per item set
Years 12 and 13	According to subject need

2. It is understood that these times are a guide and that, on occasions, it will be inappropriate to set homework.
3. Pupils in Year 7 should be given manageable pieces of homework during their first few weeks at the school. This will require shorter/simpler pieces of work to be set at first that will become increasingly long and more difficult. Pupils should be offered guidance to help them to manage their homework. To encourage the development of good homework/ study habits Porthcawl Comprehensive School provides Year 6 pupils from our main feeder schools with a similar copy of the diary they will receive in Year 7. In the subsequent years at Key Stage 3, it is expected that the duration and complexity of the homework would increase according to ability and need.
4. At Key Stages 4 and 5, the demands of the external syllabus govern the type, complexity and frequency of the Homework. More detailed information may be found in the Schemes of Work prepared by every department
5. Planners should be used to record homework. Subject teachers should ensure that all pupils note their homework in their planners before leaving the room. Best practice is to write the task and deadline on the board for pupils to copy. If homework diaries are lost or poorly treated the pupil will be expected to pay for a new one. Parents and the Form Tutor should sign the diary on a fortnightly basis. Comments from parents or teachers may be recorded in the appropriate actions involving the Year Tutor if necessary.
6. Subject teachers should set and mark homework in accordance with departmental policy.
7. Each Head of Department has the responsibility for ensuring that subject teachers set and mark homework regularly. Suggested homework activities will be incorporated into each subject's scheme of work and assessment criteria and should form part of the continuous assessment of pupil's performance and progress.
8. Written homework should be marked promptly and returned to the pupil within a reasonable time. Positive feedback to pupils should be the objective with comments assuming as much importance as the mark or grade given. A learning homework should be tested, in appropriate ways, soon after it has been set.
9. Homework tasks must be differentiated in both content and lengths to be appropriate to the age and ability of the child.
10. The Headteacher and Senior Management will make random checks of homework diaries and books for pupils during Tutor Periods.

PROCEDURE

- The nature of the homework will vary between year groups, different classes and topics of study.
- We aim to return marked homework to the pupils as soon as possible, for inclusion in that topic of work and whilst the exercise is fresh in the pupil's mind.
- Each homework may involve some or elements of all of the following:
 - watching a T.V. programme
 - carrying out a project. This may involve research, collection of information for an individual or group project, sometimes by using the INTERNET
 - observing/recording
 - making a model to exemplify an item of work. This often involves the whole family in the discussion, e.g. a musical instrument, circuit games, digestive system
 - completing an exercise to practice, enforce or apply aspects of the class work, e.g. writing up practical work.
- The task selected by the class teacher is commensurate with the ability of the pupils.
- Support is given prior to the task being set by:
 - each pupil is given a homework diary at the beginning of the year to record when the homework for each subject area is set and when it is due in.
 - time for the completion of homework should be realistic to the age and ability of the pupil as well as the task given.
 - instructions concerning homework are clear to everyone in the class, and that all pupils have plenty of time to copy down what is expected.
 - the aim is to mark or respond to homework regularly, and in a way that is helpful to pupils.
- Parents will be informed at key meetings of the nature and importance of their role:
 - Check that homework details are filled in clearly and regularly in the Planner. There is space for their regular signature.
 - Help their child organise his or her time to best advantage so that things are not all left to the last minute or even forgotten.
 - Try to make sure that there are suitable working conditions at home.
 - Take a positive and active interest in their child's work at home rather than just insisting that it is done.
 - Let the school know if there are problems with homework that cannot be resolved. Perhaps their child seems to be doing too much, or not enough, or is finding it too easy or too difficult. Help can be gained by contacting the Year Tutor in the first instance.

FAILURE TO HAND IN HOMEWORK

We expect completed homework to be given in on time. If homework is not given in appropriate action is taken:

- the class teacher will have a discussion with the pupil to find out if there are good reasons for the failure to hand in the work and impose sanctions as necessary, e.g. class detention.
- in the event of persistency, the class teacher will contact the Head of Department, who may impose a detention and/ or contact the parents.
- In the interest of time, a direct approach by individual Departments with parents is encouraged. This may especially be the case at Key Stage 4 and 5. A Head of Department planning to take direct action must inform the Year Tutor of the intention and provide a written account of the outcome, using the *Cause for Concern* document.
- Again using the *Cause for Concern* document, the Year Tutor should be informed of problems and consulted to enable a solution to the problem to be found. It may become necessary for the Year Tutor to convene a meeting with parents, especially in cases of persistent non-compliance of homework across a number of subjects.