

Homework Policy (Senior School)

Reviewed: August 2023

Next review: August 2025

Reviewed by: Deputy Head (Teaching and Learning)

Introduction

At Bedford Girls' School we firmly believe that independent learning through the completion of activities outside of directed curriculum time is a valuable part of the education of every student. Tasks and learning opportunities completed at home or outside of the classroom make a significant contribution to raising attainment across all year groups. As an integral part of the development of the learner profile, it should be planned and prepared alongside all other programmes of study. A successful homework policy depends on staff, students and parents working together. The tasks should be considered as more developed than the more traditionally based concept of homework, and the students' engagement with these learning opportunities is likely to combine a range of approaches.

Rationale for Homework opportunities:

Homework opportunities can help raise attainment by

- Allowing independent research and work
- Fostering confidence in their learning
- Instilling self-discipline and personal organisation
- Encouraging parental awareness of the student's school work
- Allowing broader research than might be possible in the classroom
- Reinforcing class work
- Giving students the opportunity to work at their own pace
- Giving opportunities for more flexible responses to a task set

Self-Management

Students at BGS undertake a variety of co-curricular activities as well as travelling from a wide catchment area to attend school. Both of these factors create challenges for the effective completion of Homework. The students' capacity for self-management is therefore a crucial factor in ensuring positive outcomes from the Homework set by teachers. Our systems and approaches allow for the flexibility required to accommodate the wide range of needs of students, whilst still providing the rigour and focus required to ensure effective outcomes.

Operational Procedures

Key Stage 3 – Homework Programme

To help structure the process of students becoming effectively self-managing a homework programme is created for Years 7 – 9. The programme sets out the frequency of homework task setting by staff, and gives a structure of when students can expect to have tasks set for them. The programme is designed to coincide with the students' timetable as far as is logistically possible.

To allow for the flexibility needed to accommodate the individual circumstances of the student's deadlines for homework completion will be a minimum of **3** working days from the task being set by the teacher.

At Key Stage Three homework slots are allocated for some subject areas (Mathematics, English, the Sciences, MFL, Geography, History, ICT, Latin and Classics) for each year group. For most subjects these are

weekly slots. A homework programme for each year group will be published by the Head of Year at the beginning of the academic year so that parents are aware of the school's expectations. Students will also have a copy.

The completion of homework is a vital tool in assessing the progress being made by a student. Adherence to the recommended completion times for homework is therefore vital. If a student is spending too little time on a task then it is important that this is fed back to the teacher to allow for appropriate adjustment of tasks. Equally if a student is spending over the recommended time this should also be communicated to the relevant teachers. Teachers, however, can only refine their practice with effective information. It is vitally important therefore that parents and guardians play a pro-active role in the monitoring of the effective completion of homework.

The expected completion time for homework is as follows:

- Year 7: 15 mins per subject except Mathematics, English and Science which have 30 mins per week;
- Year 8: 15 mins per subject except Mathematics, English and Science which have 30 mins per week;
- Year 9: 20 mins per subject except Mathematics and English have 45 mins per week. Science subjects each have 40 minutes per week.

For subjects not included in the homework programme in Years 7 and 8 (Art, Textiles, DT, Food and Nutrition, Music and Drama):

- Work set for completion outside of lessons should be of a project-based nature, and should have a deadline for completion of at least 2 weeks from the time set.
- An interim deadline should be set for students to allow teachers to check progress being made (it is not expected that the work should be assessed at this point however).
- HoDs should inform the Deputy Head (Teaching and Learning) of the main deadlines for work to ensure there is an even spread of deadlines across the year and to avoid grouping around certain dates.

Key Stage 4 and Sixth Form

As the curriculum becomes more specialised at Key Stages 4 and 5, the students should also become more effective in their self-management around their homework. As such, the school moves from a homework programme to implementing the following guidelines:

- GCSE: 45 minutes per subject per week
- IB: 120 minutes of independent study per subject per week
- A Level: 300 minutes of independent study per subject per week

As at Key Stage 3, to allow for the flexibility needed to accommodate the individual circumstances of the students, deadlines for homework completion will be a minimum of **3** working days from the task being set by the teacher.

Delivery

To enable the effective facilitation of homework, it is recommended that all subject areas plan out their homework alongside their Units of Study (schemes of work). These should be shared with students at the beginning of a Unit of Study, thereby allowing students to pro-actively plan their workloads. This is particularly important for Key Stage 4 and Sixth Form students that are likely to need timely information to allow them to accommodate the range of demands from subjects and other activities.

Teachers will assign homework using Google Classroom to assist students in comprehending assigned tasks and efficiently managing deadlines, notably by ensuring task visibility in Google Calendar.

Design

Differentiation should apply to homework as well as to lesson practice in general. Differentiation by outcome is not the only option. Numerous strategies exist:

- Choice of tasks
- Quantity of work required (e.g. number of words to be written)
- Directed tasks for specific groups/students within the class
- Different levels of support (e.g. writing frames at different levels, sentence starters for some students)
- A range of resources to be used

- A choice of presentation methods
- An additional extension activity for those more confident

Units of Study will include clear suggestions for a range of homework. It is important that homework is varied and should not regularly be the completion of work started in class.

Homework present the opportunity to praise and reward students through verbal/written comments and through the commendation system. The power of praise should not be underestimated particularly for the student who often does not get recognition. The use of the school's Assessment, Marking and Feedback Policy in setting targets and in identifying the strengths of work should also be applied.

Students will be more motivated to produce work and work of good quality if they receive speedy and positive feedback. This could be verbal or written. Setting a range of tasks can be useful as can using a range of assessment methods. For example

- Peer assessment
- Self-assessment
- Verbal Feedback
- Issue students with mark scheme and encourage them to cross reference it
- Mark with a specific focus
- Setting tasks which do not require assessment but prepare students for the next lesson
- Sharing of worked solutions

Subject teachers should use a range of assessment methods and not overuse one method.

Details regarding sanctions for not completing homework can be found in the **Positive Behaviour Policy**

Monitoring and Evaluation

Each student has a responsibility to:

- Keep her parent informed about her homework programme
- Record on her iPad the details of all homework
- Find a suitable place to study, well away from likely distractions
- Persevere with difficult tasks but have the confidence to stop working on homework when she has with diligence done as much as she can in the time allocated
- Complete the task, with care and concentration, to the standard expected and by the deadline given
- Ask for help and support as necessary but prior to the deadline set so that the work can be completed on time
- Remember that reading and learning homework are important
- Respond positively to feedback given by teachers

Parents have a responsibility to:

- Support the school's policy on homework
- Provide a space for their daughter to work, away from any distractions if possible
- Check that their daughter is recording and completing her homework
- Write a note or email the member of staff if the work cannot be completed for any reason
- Contact staff about any concerns relating to homework
- Ensure that family activities take into account the time their daughter needs to complete her homework

Each subject teacher has a responsibility to:

- Set homework according to the programme and use Google Classroom to assist students in comprehending assigned tasks and efficiently managing deadlines, notably by ensuring task visibility in Google Calendar.
- Keep accurate records of the homework set
- Give clear instructions to students about the homework, including a clear deadline

- Offer appropriate help to a student if she experiences difficulty with her homework
- Provide meaningful feedback to students in line with the school's Assessment, Marking and Feedback Policy
- Follow the school's Positive Behaviour Policy if the homework is not completed on time
- Inform their Head of Department, relevant Form Tutor and/or Head of Year of any concerns
- Advise parents of any continuing difficulty their daughter is having
- Respond promptly to any queries parents may have about homework

Each Head of Department has a responsibility to:

- Include suitable homework in the Units of Study (schemes of work) which follow good practice
- Monitor the implementation of homework by subject teachers
- Support subject teachers in cases where the completion of homework is a persistent problem
- Ensure that homework is regularly discussed so that good practice can be shared and developed across the department

Each form tutor has a responsibility to:

- Monitor students' iPads on a fortnightly basis to check that homework is being recorded and to encourage them to complete outstanding tasks
- Contact subject teachers if homework does not appear to be set
- Help students develop good self-management skills
- Use the commendation system to praise students who are conscientious in recording and completing homework.

Each Head of Year has a responsibility to:

- Manage the effective monitoring of homework by tutors
- Monitor overall patterns of homework completion in the year group
- Liaise with relevant HoDs, subject teachers and SLT to ensure effective communication of issues
- Support tutors and subject teachers to ensure conscientious recording and completion of homework

The Senior Leadership Team has a responsibility to:

- Maintain an overview of homework line management meetings, department reviews and tutor team meetings.
- Ensure that students and parents are regularly informed of their responsibilities regarding homework
- Support the Departments and Pastoral teams with students who are having difficulties in completing their homework

Marking

Constructive feedback and guidance are at the heart of our Assessment, Marking and Feedback Policy so that individual students fully understand how they are progressing and how to move forward.

Work is set regularly in all subjects, in line with the homework programme, and marked in line with the School's expectations. Marking guidelines and criteria within each subject are made clear to the students and are kept in their exercise books/ work folders. Marking is used as a way of enabling students to understand how they have met the learning intentions set in subjects and to set their own targets based on the feedback and advice provided by their teachers. It enables teachers to respond to individual needs and inform planning and individual target setting. Teachers keep a record of work set and students' results in their mark books/planners and these, along with students' exercise books/work folders, are to be made available to Heads of Department upon request.