



KIRKHAM GRAMMAR SCHOOL

HOMEWORK GUIDELINES

FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

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INTRODUCTION

This booklet has been prepared by staff for parents and we hope that you will find it informative and helpful.

In it we explain the school's Homework Policy (School Policy Number 19) and seek to answer the questions concerning homework that parents most frequently ask.

The booklet will be reviewed annually. If you have any suggestions about how its contents and presentation could be improved, please let us know. We are always keen to improve the quality of the information you receive from the school. The School Homework Policy (Number 19) is available for viewing on the school's website.

WHY WE SET HOMEWORK

Homework plays an important part in the learning and development of all our pupils. We set it as a matter of good educational practice because we believe that it makes an important contribution to improving the quality of pupils' school work and raising their standards of achievement.

Homework encourages the habit of study and develops self-discipline. It also offers pupils the opportunity of working independently of the teacher, developing organisational skills, and can open up areas of study and sources of information that might not be available in school.

In one sense homework is an extension and enrichment of classwork. It gives pupils the opportunity to consolidate and use what they have learnt in school. This also means that classwork can be concentrated on those activities needing the teacher's presence. Homework also helps pupils prepare for future lessons.

We believe that homework has an important part to play in encouraging pupils to take more responsibility for their own learning. It encourages them to become more confident in working by themselves. It also helps them to develop the skills and habits of study, eg research, planning, presentation, organisation of time and meeting deadlines.

Regular homework is set for all our pupils and we expect it to be completed to a high standard. If homework is not done to our satisfaction we take steps to ensure that it is, such is its importance and relevance within our curriculum. As a general rule, homework should not be undertaken in school time when pressures of the school day could mean that it is completed in a hurried fashion.

WHAT TYPE OF HOMEWORK?

The nature and type of homework given varies according to the subject and the kind of task set.

A homework task may be a short, precise writing or learning exercise. More often than not, however, tasks may be extended assignments requiring planning and completion over a period of days or even weeks.

This, we believe, provides an excellent basis for learning the techniques of controlled assessment in readiness for GCSE in the Fourth and Fifth Year.

Homework assignments will not always require written responses. Nor will they necessarily be done sitting in silent isolation in a bedroom or study. They may involve watching a recommended TV programme, or talking with other people both in and out of the home, or visiting public libraries.

Just as lessons in school are likely to require research, investigations, experiments, discussion, problem-solving, designing and practical work, so, too, may homework.

HOW MUCH HOMEWORK?

At the beginning of each academic year all pupils receive a Homework Timetable which is recorded in their personal copies of the school calendar. This booklet also details the time pupils should spend on homework assignments.

All pupils will be set relevant homework in subjects they are studying and details can be seen by parents via Google Classroom's guardian email service.

In the first three years there should be two homeworks per week in English, Mathematics and French and at least one other homework in most of the other subjects taken. There will also be two homeworks per week in Spanish/German in the Second and Third Years. In the Fourth and Fifth Years, there should be two homeworks per week in each GCSE examination subject being studied. Project work and/or controlled assessment requirements will cover a period of time. Pupils will be made aware of the content requirements and deadlines for submission.

The Headmaster, in consultation with Heads of Department, shall decide the maximum time allocated to each subject for one homework. These are currently:

1st Year – 25 mins per subject
2nd Year – 30 mins per subject
3rd Year – 35 mins per subject
4th Year – 40 mins per subject
5th Year – 40 mins per subject

These details can also be found inside the front cover of the termly calendar.

Pupils can expect two or three subjects per night.

We would like to stress that when a time is stated it is only a guide. Pupils may be expected to work for longer or shorter periods. Children work at different speeds and as a consequence, the same homework task may take longer for some than others.

HOW MUCH HOMEWORK?

When a teacher believes that it may be appropriate, extension homework may be given. On the other hand it may be that a child experiences genuine difficulty with a homework assignment, spends a disproportionate amount of time on it, and is unable to complete it successfully. If this happens we ask that parents inform us either by letter or by making a note in the exercise book so that appropriate help can be given by the teacher concerned.

There may be times when it is not appropriate to set homework. On such occasions children could read, review their work or revise topics. The undertaking of private reading is as much a part of our pupils' secondary schooling as it is in the formative years of primary school. We expect our pupils to use their initiative in independent study and would ask that parents also encourage this.

This is particularly important in the Fourth and Fifth Years, where pupils are endeavouring to fulfil GCSE controlled assessment requirements. Pupils are helped through units on study and learning skills in their Form Tutorials.

HOW CAN PARENTS HELP?

We ask parents to support us in seeing that homework is done to a high standard and in the best possible circumstances. Some parents may feel there is little they can do to help with homework, but there are several ways in which a parent or guardian can help their child/children:

1. WORKSPACE

Some pupils like to work to the soft accompaniment of music, others like to work in silence. Whatever your child's preference, it is important that all pupils have somewhere to keep their books and other resources.

It is also helpful if pupils have somewhere to work. Older children may prefer to work in a room by themselves. Younger children may need their parents' company and encouragement and a form of control at first.

Pupils can make use of the school library after school. This is available until 5.15 pm.

2. EQUIPMENT

Pupils will find it helpful to have access to some useful books, eg a dictionary, thesaurus, an adult atlas, reference books.

Because of the growth in ownership of computers and other similar devices, many pupils have the Internet at their disposal. For those who have no such facility, school is well placed to meet any need.

The basic equipment of pen, pencil, rubber, sharpener, ruler and coloured pens or pencils is essential. Mathematical equipment, including calculator, will also be needed. The Maths Department will brief students at the beginning of the academic year as to which calculator to buy.

HOW CAN PARENTS HELP?

3. ENCOURAGEMENT

It is not helpful for parents to do their children's homework, but there is much to be gained by engaging in discussion and encouragement. Asking about their school day and what homework has been set is valuable. Much more can be achieved if a pupil knows that a parent is interested in what he/she is doing.

Testing vocabulary, listening to a talk that has been prepared, asking questions for revision work or checking presentation, handwriting and spelling, are all positive ways to help your child. Reading written work out loud is the best way for children to check for sense.

It may be that your child's hobbies or interests encourage their learning. Painting, drawing, model making, sports and games, reading, using a computer, playing a musical instrument, theatre, cooking, visiting places of special interest, being members of informal organisations, collecting things, working with, or helping, other people, are just a few examples of spare time activities, which may help in the development of knowledge, understanding and skills.

Listening to problems often makes things seem less of a mountain. Your child will benefit from your support.

HOW CAN PARENTS HELP?

4. ORGANISATION

It is best to establish a homework routine, and also a 'night before' routine as homework involves being prepared for the next day at school. A pupil will be well served if he/she has the books needed for lessons, PE kit, reply slips, completed homework to hand in, and so on.

It is helpful if your child has a copy of his/her school timetable prominently displayed at home so that the correct preparation can be made for the next day. It is better to remind them in advance and let them do the organising than get things ready for them, however easier it might seem at the time.

Your child may need your help in apportioning time so that work is spread evenly throughout the week, but s/he should be encouraged to do work the day it is set, or at least make a start if it is a long piece of work. It may well be advantageous for pupils to make a start on their homework before their evening meal; breaking work down into manageable units may save working late into the evening.

HOW CAN WE, THE SCHOOL, HELP?

When setting homework we aim to:

- Emphasise the importance of homework.
- Provide clear instructions as to what work has to be done.
- Provide access to the Library and ICT resources. The Library is open to pupils every break and lunchtime, and after school from 4.00 pm until 5.15 pm.
- T5 is open to pupils from 12.45 pm to 1.15 pm on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. Access to ICT facilities before and after school can be granted by staff arrangement.
- By staff arrangement, provide a study room at lunchtime or after school for those who require it.

- Give clear instructions about when and where homework is to be returned.

HOW IS HOMEWORK MONITORED?

1. By Pupils and Parents

All homework is set on the school's Google Classroom platform. The guardian email service enables parents to keep a check on homework set and handed in.

2. By Subject Teachers

We will check that homework is being done and handed in on time. Appropriate action will be taken if this does not occur. Subject teachers may seek to involve Heads of Department and/or Heads of Sector or Head of Year, even one of the Senior Leadership Team if problems persist.

3. By Heads of Department and Heads of Year

Heads of Department and Heads of Year support the work of staff, monitor the effective implementation of the homework policy, and review it regularly.

WHAT IF THERE ARE ANY PROBLEMS?

If there is general concern over homework we encourage parents to contact the Form Tutor or Head of Year. If the problem is related to a particular subject we prefer parents to contact the subject teacher in the first instance. Similarly, we shall contact you if we feel there are frequent problems over homework which you could help resolve.

It is also helpful, when homework has not been done for some good reason, to write an explanatory note to the subject teacher in the exercise book.

Homework is an integral part of the academic curriculum at Kirkham Grammar School. In order to maximise the achievement of all pupils the partnership of teachers, parents and pupils in this important area of school life is vital. We hope we can rely on your support.

April 2022