

*CARDINAL NEWMAN
CATHOLIC SCHOOL, HOVE*



**HOMEWORK
POLICY**

Introduction to Homework Policy

I am pleased to present you this new homework policy which is ready for implementation in September 2011.

The policy was written as a response to many issues; the changing curriculum for students aged 11-19, the demands to demonstrate skills and knowledge, new examination syllabi and the need to offer opportunities for independent learning and study skills.

Homework has always been a contentious issue. Some parents and students voice concern about the amount of homework set, whilst others feel there should be more. There is no evidence of a causal link between the completion of homework and high grades, however, it is generally accepted that too much homework or too little homework has a negative impact on progress.

As a result, we have produced a policy that challenges and stretches, supports and interests and also enhances and extends learning in the classroom. The policy reflects the different demands of the curriculum at KS3, 4 and 5 and therefore, as students go through school and college, they will experience different types of homework.

The policy was drawn up by a working party of staff and directed by the Lead Teachers. Students, parents and subject departments were consulted and following its implementation during the academic year 2011-12, the policy will be finalised for September 2012.

If you would like to voice any views about the setting of homework, please let us know. It is important that we use the implementation period fruitfully for the benefit of our students.



Malvina Sanders
Headteacher

‘Homework is work you are given to do by yourself so you can be more independent, increase your subject knowledge and identify your strengths and weaknesses’

(Definition of Homework - students at CNCS)

Homework is work that should be completed outside the timetabled curriculum. It contains an element of independent study that is not usually directly supervised by a teacher. It plays an important part in raising student achievement. Homework enhances student learning, improves achievement and develops students' study skills and as such is an integral part of the curriculum.

This policy sets out to underline how homework is expected to be carefully planned and integrated into learning and teaching across all areas of the curriculum at Cardinal Newman Catholic School. The policy has been drawn up following widespread consultation of staff, students and parents and as such it reflects the value of and place for homework within our Learning and Teaching Policy.

HOMEWORK OBJECTIVES

- To encourage the students to develop the practice of independent study.
- To develop perseverance and self-discipline.
- To encourage students to be self-aware, self-confident and use their initiative.
- To enable students to learn through the practice of skills acquired in the classroom.
- To permit more rapid progress to be made by each individual; to promote quiet reflection on the work covered in the lesson.
- To enable classwork to concentrate on those activities requiring the teacher's presence.
- To encourage students to investigate topics of study in depth, particularly through the use of effective follow-up questions.
- To open up areas of study and to make possible the use of materials and sources available outside the classroom.
- To encourage students to enjoy the skills, concepts and experiences related to each subject.
- To encourage students to talk, discuss and research using the rich variety of resources which our community provides.

HOMEWORK TASKS

The homework task should be meaningful with a clear purpose and contribute to a specific outcome. Students should be clear about the type of homework task assigned to them and teachers should ensure that students fully understand the purpose of the homework task set. Homework tasks do not always have to be written tasks. Neither should they be to complete classwork – whilst this may occasionally serve a purpose, this type of homework should be kept to an absolute minimum- as it does not support SEN and gifted and talented students. If a teacher asks students to complete classwork at home, there should also be an accompanying extension task which ALL students in the class are expected to complete. The ‘completing classwork’ tasks will not be formally recognised as homework.

Homework tasks can be broadly categorised as:

- **Practice homework** – where the skills and knowledge acquired in class are practised through a range of set tasks.
- **Practical homework** – for example the production of a model in Art or DT
- **Research homework** – students are asked to find out some background facts in preparation for a follow-up lesson
- **Revision homework** – learning subject specific vocabulary, consolidating notes or preparing for an end of unit exam
- **Project homework** – an extended piece of work which is set over several weeks supported by a clear set of differentiated instructions.

Owing to the size of our school and the range of key stages it is inappropriate to develop a 'one size fits all' policy. However, it is imperative that teachers apply the same degree of expectation and rigour regarding the setting, completion, submitting, marking and feedback of homework tasks in each Key Stage.

In an effort to ensure the homework policy can be applied as rigorously as possible across all Key Stages, elements of the policy have been broken into different sections for Key Stage 3, Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5.

For the purpose of our homework policy, the core subjects are English, Maths, Science, RE and MFL.

The humanities and practical subjects include History, Geography, Art, ICT, DT, Music and Drama.

Key Stage 3 Homework Policy

The following guidelines are expected to be applied to the setting and marking of homework in Key Stage 3.

From the start:

Explain from the outset the application of the homework policy in line with the guidelines given below.

- Fortnightly homework will be set in English, Maths, Science, Languages and RE. This should equate to approximately three pieces of homework per half term, two of which should be written homework.
- Each subject should set and collect the homework in accordance with the Key Stage 3 homework timetable which will be written on the recommendations of subject teachers and Key Stage 3 Curriculum Leaders.
- Other subjects – Humanities, Art, DT, ICT and PE will set half-termly project based assignments at the times signposted by the Key Stage 3 Curriculum Leaders on the cross-curricular homework map. During the periods when project work is not set, these subjects can set short fortnightly tasks that will continue to support the students' learning such as researching background facts, learning key vocabulary and completing a short worksheet. However, setting long pieces of detailed written work should be avoided. The amount of homework set for Drama in Years 7 and 8 will be in proportion to the number of lessons taught.

Setting the work:

Fortnightly homework in the core subjects (including RE) and Modern Foreign Languages should be:

- **Purposeful** - It should be planned and signposted in the Scheme of Work.
- **Given clearly and concisely to students** – the nature and detail of the task should be written on the board and students should copy it into their homework diaries.
- **Differentiated** - so that students of all abilities can access the homework task and opportunities for extension should be provided.
- **Explained and understood** – students should be given enough time and opportunity to think about the task and raise questions. Setting homework tasks near the start or mid-point of a lesson allows for this.
- **Challenging** – students should feel that the work is demanding and stretching and challenging their understanding of knowledge and skills acquired in lessons.

Half-termly projects in the Humanities and practical subjects should:

- **Have an enquiry title** – a key question the students are required to answer through the overall piece of work.
- **Have a detailed set of differentiated instructions** – chunked into different sections with a clear set of criteria for each section.
- **A specific collection date** – with opportunities in class for reminding and checking progress along the way.
- **A clear set of success criteria for different levels** – students should be encouraged to recognise the level they are expected to work towards and aim high.

Key Stage 4 Homework Policy

The following guidelines are expected to be applied to the setting and marking of homework in Key Stage 4.

From the start

Explain from the outset the application of the homework policy in line with the guidelines given below:

- One substantial piece of homework should be set in each subject area per fortnight. This piece of work should take between one hour and one hour and thirty minutes to complete. This should equate to approximately three pieces of homework per half term. At least two of these should be written pieces of work.
- Each subject teacher should identify on their timetable, a suitable day for the setting and collection of homework. This should be communicated to students and recorded in their planner.
- Homework tasks should support the students learning and exam preparation, including exam technique and the application of knowledge and skills. The purpose of the homework should be clearly communicated to the student.

Setting the work:

Fortnightly homework should be

- **Purposeful** – planned in line with the scheme of work and relevant to the particular area of learning.
- **Given clearly and concisely to the students** – the nature and detail of the task should be written on the board and students should copy it into their planner. It could also be posted on the portal along with links to relevant and helpful resources.
- **Differentiated** – it should be differentiated according to the requirements of students sitting Foundation and Higher Tier exam papers, where appropriate, and stretch and challenge tasks should be incorporated for both.
- **Explained and understood** – students should be given enough time to think about the task and raise questions or seek clarification where necessary. Teachers should aim to set homework near the start or mid- point of the lesson to allow for this.
- **Challenging** – students should feel that the work set is demanding and stretching and extends their understanding and application of knowledge and skills acquired in lessons. It should also enable them to assess the progress being made towards their predicted GCSE target grade.

Collecting, Marking and Assessing the work: Rewards and Sanctions.

The following guidelines are applicable at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4.

Be firm about collecting work and the quality of work you expect to receive. Collect work on the date given when the task was set. Stress the importance of meeting deadlines – set them and stick to them. Students who do not meet deadlines should be quickly followed up – it is an expectation that all staff will follow the procedures outlined below:

Collecting work:

- Establish a routine. Set and collect homework in a regular pattern, keeping to the agreed time frame. Mark and return their work efficiently- students want their work to be of value. Their time and effort needs to be recognised.
- Incomplete or missing work is expected to be accompanied by a note from home.
- First missed or incomplete homework with an unacceptable reason should result in a break time detention with the subject teacher.
- Persistent missed deadlines and / or incomplete work should result in an after school subject detention and a letter home to parents/carers. Pastoral leaders should also be made aware of the situation.
- If problems still persist after these sanctions have been applied, the subject teacher should contact the parents/carers of the individual student and call them in for an interview- the focus of which should outline the main concerns of the teacher and suggest strategies for moving forward.

Marking and Assessment:

Have clear expectations about the quality of work you expect the students to deliver. Where possible, show them samples of good work so they can see as well as hear what your expectations are.

- **Be fair.** Praise excellent work via letters home, written and spoken comments and record good letters on the SIMS database. Comments should outline the nature of the achievement represented by a particular piece of work. They should also define skills and knowledge which appear to be in need of further development.
- **Be consistent.** Work which is below standard should be rejected. Chase late work and missing assignments. Use the sanctions outlined above rigorously. If students produce assignments below the expected standard, send a green 'Y3' which notifies their parents. If a problem persists and progress is still not being made call the student for an interview with the subject teacher or Key Stage Curriculum Leader/ Subject Leader if necessary. If the problem persists, parents/carers should be called in for an interview with the student and subject teacher.
- **Lead by Example.** Students want to well! They need role models on which to base their approach for completing work and the quality of assignments they produce. Establish your expectations firmly by having homework tasks planned in advance. Share the assessment criteria with the students. Show them examples of good work- let them see as well as hear what your expectation of quality work looks like.
- **Review and Evaluate.** Reflect on homework tasks individually within your department. Establish which types of homework tasks are successful and which need to be tweaked. Keep a department-based portfolio of sample pieces of work which can be referred to by all teachers and students.

HOMEWORK GUIDELINES for SUBJECT LEADERS

Subject Leaders should establish a clear departmental policy which clearly reflects the principles and criteria of the whole school Homework Policy, taking account of the different arrangements for each Key Stage. The departmental policy must contain:

- a statement of aims and purposes of homework set by the department
- a statement of how much time students are expected to spend on homework specific to that department
- a statement of the departmental policy for assessing homework that reflects the whole-school policy
- examples of the types of activities around which homework in that subject will be based.

The policy document should be made available to the members of the department on the first day of the academic year- a copy should be centrally held.

The policy document should be consulted and referred to regularly by all members of the department- there is a clear expectation that all staff will be familiar with the content of the homework policy document and that its implementation will be evident in practice.

Subject Leaders and Key Stage Coordinators should monitor the setting and marking of homework. There should be opportunities provided at regular department meetings for teachers to share ideas and standardise approaches related to the setting and marking of homework. Teachers new to the department should be given opportunities to discuss homework issues and relevant support should be provided.

The department's Homework Policy should be supported by the development of appropriate resources relevant to specific year groups and syllabus/ specification content.

Subject Leaders and Key Stage Coordinators will be asked to contribute to the regular updating of the Key Stage 3 and 4 Parent/Carer Learning Guides.

Key Stage 5 - SIXTH FORM HOMEWORK POLICY

BACKGROUND TO POLICY:

This policy aims to harmonise the approach of all Sixth Form subject departments. It is a result of surveys of both Sixth Form staff and students which indicated that certain factors are more likely to lead to students producing quality work on time. These factors include whether the homework is perceived as important by students, clearly set, assessed and returned promptly, and likely to lead to praise and sanctions. It is also apparent that students are much more likely to respect and adhere to the policy when all staff and departments do.

MAIN POINTS:

- Staff will set **2-4 substantial homework tasks per term** (assuming two teachers per group) and therefore 4-8 homeworks per subject per term. They will **communicate clear advice and expectations** – using a proforma to help, if necessary. Students are encouraged to produce work before the deadline. If a student fails to produce the quality work by the deadline their work will not be assessed and they will be placed on the Stage Support System. If coursework, the student will need to arrange an appointment with the Subject Leader to appeal.
- Staff can still set other, less substantial homework which will not follow the protocols above.
- The policy will be evaluated by staff and students.

THE CONTEXT OF HOMEWORK: HELPING STUDENTS TO REACH HIGH STANDARDS

Private study is a vital component of all A-level courses as well as preparation for university study and working independently in careers. **Teachers are always willing to help students with homework particularly if they find it challenging. All staff want students to succeed.** The golden rule for students is: **‘If in doubt - ask’**.

If students do not produce high quality work by the deadline they will usually be placed on the Stage Support System and given advice on how to avoid this being repeated. Again, the aim of this is to support students and help them overcome their difficulties. However, If students do not respond to the advice of staff and repeatedly fail to produce quality work by the deadline, they may be withdrawn from the course. Staff will encourage students to continually communicate with them and avoid putting themselves in this situation.

TYPE AND FREQUENCY OF HOMEWORK:

Substantial homeworks (e.g. a longer essay, a report, a significant part of coursework, a major task):

As far as possible, students will be set **2- 4 substantial assessments per teacher per term** (assuming there are two teachers per subject). However, this is up to the discretion of staff and will depend on their particular subject and course requirements. These tasks should be **substantial** and **important** developing fundamental skills– rather than tasks for research or checking understanding. Students’ work should be able to be used to measure students’ progress towards examination grades and therefore contribute to UCAS predicted grades and final references when they leave college. Where possible, these tasks should also be varied and interesting to help maximise student motivation. These major homework tasks will be called **‘Private Study Assessments’ (PSAs)**.

Less substantial homeworks: Progress work

Other homework, apart from PSAs, can be set by staff. Staff can simply record whether or not it has been completed satisfactorily by each student. If three of these types of homework are not completed satisfactorily by a student the Stage System can be used at the teacher's discretion.

Independent work:

All students should also be encouraged to undertake independent work that is not set by the teacher. This can be learning previous work, studying future syllabus topics or learning topics outside the syllabus. Year 12 students can use Success packs to identify topics from the syllabus and record their progress.

SETTING OF 'PRIVATE STUDY ASSESSMENTS' (i.e. substantial work only)

Using PSA sheets: When setting these more major tasks it is important that detailed advice is given and expectations are clearly explained. This amount of information can be difficult for staff and students to remember and therefore the PSA sheet has been devised. It is therefore highly recommended that staff either...

- (a) use a *PSA sheet* from the 'Shared Folder' to type in the homework information and then hand-out the completed PSA sheet to students. (*Shared Folder → Depts → Sixth Form → Homework Policy*), OR
- (b) ask students to fill in a *PSA sheet* or fill in a copy of the PSA sheet that it is in the homework planners, OR
- (c) set the homework in a different way but ensure all the points on the *PSA sheet* are covered.

Expectations and advice that will be covered when setting work (summarised on the PSA sheet):

- **Clear advice:** To help students achieve the highest grade the 'success criteria' and 'how staff can help' needs to be clearly explained. Advice on 'the best approach' and 'resources to use' also needs to be given.
- **Expectation of the quality of work:** The grade students will be expected to achieve is their upper quartile grade. The minimum grade they should achieve is their median grade. If students produce more than one PSA below their median grade they may be placed on the Stage Support System. If students feel their median and upper quartile grade are not appropriate for them then this can be negotiated with their form tutor & teachers.
- **Plagiarism:** If a student is involved in copying work (plagiarism), either by sharing their work, or copying from another student or source, it will result in a U-grade, going on the Stage System and, for coursework, possible disqualification from the exam. The Headteacher will investigate coursework incidents and these will be documented on their college record.
- **Time-management:** At least 6 full college days will be given for students to complete the work. Students need to organise their workload, social life and paid work commitments so that they can produce work **before** the deadline rather than at the deadline. This will help them avoid rushing work and missing deadlines. A tray system in a departmental office may be used to take in work.
- **The deadline:** The deadline is the **time** set on the day. Work submitted after this time has missed the deadline. Students who are absent from college or the lesson on the deadline day need to arrange for the work to be submitted by the set time to avoid missing the deadline. Extensions may be awarded at staff's discretion if asked for at least 24 hours before the deadline and normally only for serious pastoral reasons. If a student deliberately misses a lesson in another subject to meet a deadline they may be placed on the Support System.

- **Missing the deadline:** If a deadline for a PSA is missed, the student will not have their work assessed and will therefore not receive feedback or a grade. This also applies to work that has a large proportion not completed. The student will then usually be placed on the Stage Support System (see below). In the case of coursework, the student must arrange an interview with the Subject Leader to appeal for it to be assessed.
- **Excuses:** Sixth Form staff are used to many different excuses. These often try to disguise the real reason for a student not producing quality work on time. Students should see the excuses listed below & avoid using them. If a deadline is missed staff may use the numbers to record the excuse used by a student!

What students say when they miss a deadline :

What it really means :

1) "I forgot to do it"	}	I have failed to be organised and committed.	
2) "I thought it was for tomorrow"			
3) "I left it at home"			
4) "It's nearly finished - can I bring it at 3pm?"		}	I should have planned to hand this work in before the deadline so the deadline was still met.
5) "I couldn't print it out"			
6) "It's on my memory stick but it's half-saved & corrupted"			
7) "I packed my bags for the wrong week"			
8) "I left it at my dad's house and slept at my mum's"			
9) "I couldn't get myself to start it"			
10) "I was doing other homework"	}	I have failed to be organised with my workload	
11) "I had family commitments / part-time work an important event."			
12) "I wasn't at the lesson, no-one told me"	}	I have failed to be committed enough to find out what I missed	
13) "I didn't understand"	}	I have failed to go and ask staff to explain	
14) "I have been very unwell / can't cope I have had serious family problems"	}	A possible valid reason which can be discussed!	

- **Putting students on the Stage Support System:** This **must** include a short interview with the student. This can involve using the Success Packs (p1-2) to identify the cause and solution to the problem and the outcome recorded on p 4. The 'spirit' should be a balance of encouragement and seriousness because if the students fail to improve, their place on the course is at risk. The use of the Stage System needs to be officially logged either at a Performance Review or using a Stage Support letter from records.

FOLLOWING THE SUBMISSION OF WORK BY STUDENTS

- **Teacher feedback:** Teachers should give students prompt, effective feedback - normally within 10 college days of the deadline. Students should try and record the feedback and advice as an ongoing log (e.g. in Year 12 Success Packs). Students should use the feedback to improve their work and then, after this, should learn the content so that they can recall it later on the course and in the examinations.
- **Praise:** Praise should be given to students for producing quality work on time and using feedback. This should be reflected in their Performance Reviews and may lead to further recognition with awards and Dome prizes.

