



HOMEWORK POLICY

Reviewing Member of Staff: Mrs Antonia Lungley
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Committee: Academic Pastoral & Teaching

Homework Policy: Encouraging independence in students' attitudes to learning at Prince Henry's High School

Our Vision:

To offer valuable learning opportunities outside of lessons so that all our students become highly effective, interested, and independent learners.

Our Approach:

At Prince Henry's High School, our teachers have a deep understanding of the complex nature by which children learn. We apply this knowledge carefully when setting homework tasks and by encouraging our students to become independent learners. At our school, we believe that quality teaching matters and homework is regarded as an important piece of the teaching and learning picture. Consequently, homework is highly valued as it provides an opportunity for students to practise, develop and extend their learning, independently of their teacher, so that they can develop an appetite for learning that exists long after their time at school. For us, homework is never punitive but rather an opportunity to think deeply, prepare and consolidate understanding. The effort students put into homework is highly valued and recognised by their teachers but we hope that our students develop intrinsic motivation to learn, coming to regard homework as an important part of their educational development.

Working in Partnership with Parents:

The lives of our students can be extremely busy with competing legitimate claims on their time. With this in mind we work in partnership with our parents so that they are sufficiently informed and on board about homework; understanding for example that the quality of the learning is more important than the amount of time spent on homework (Vatterott, *Rethinking Homework*, 2009). We will work with our parents to ensure that they fully understand their role in encouraging positive attitudes and removing any barriers to independent learning at home. We support parents by providing opportunities for some students to work 'After Hours' in our LRC; providing access to showmyhomework; and ensuring that our website provides them with quality information about our expectations.

Working in Partnership with Students:

We understand that a progress or attainment gap can emerge between those students who regularly complete homework and those who do not. Therefore, we aim to teach the students how to manage their time and be increasingly independent of their teachers. This is done during the tutor programme, in assemblies, as well as in every lesson. We help students understand the purpose of independent learning and homework, hoping that they see its value in their educational progress. We support students by ensuring they are clear about how homework is assessed and that they have sufficient time to get the most from every task. By setting interesting, appropriate work and making the purpose clear to students, we want them to value the tasks and develop positive attitudes to learning.

Homework Objectives:

Every Head of Department will have a clear set of expectations relating to homework in their curriculum area. However, broadly speaking the purpose of homework at Prince Henry's High School is:

- To improve learning
- To provide an opportunity to practise skills acquired in the classroom
- To consolidate and extend work covered in class or prepare for new learning activities
- To enable class work to concentrate on those activities requiring the teacher's presence
- To stretch, challenge and explore subjects so students gain a deep understanding
- To instil in students, the value and joy of learning (extending and exciting learners by opening up areas of study and facilitating the use of inspiring materials and sources available outside the classroom!)
- To encourage students to develop the practice of independent study
- To encourage students to have self-awareness, self-confidence and initiative
- To encourage our parents to understand the learning that is happening both at school and at home

Responsibilities

The Role of the Student: Homework appears to be more effective for older students than younger students (Vatterott, 2009) and as such our students have an important responsibility to engage fully with their learning outside lessons. Specifically, we expect students to:

- Listen to homework instructions in lessons and record specific details about the requirements of the task (including the deadline) in their planner
- Regularly log in to showmyhomework
- Follow teacher guidelines about how to approach the work (eg not spending less time than is required to complete the work to a good standard)
- Ensure all homework is completed and handed in to meet the deadline
- Attempt all work to the very best of their ability
- Inform the class teacher of any genuine difficulties

The Role of Parents: Evidence indicates that parental involvement continues to have a significant effect on achievement into adolescence and even adulthood (DfE, *The Impact of Parental Involvement on Children's Education*, 2008). Specifically, research using data from the National Child Development Study (NCDS) found that very high parental interest is associated with better exam results compared to children whose parents show no interest. We encourage our parents to:

- Provide a quiet place to work, away from distractions
- Talk to students about their homework and generally taking an interest in their learning
- Ensure that time spent on homework is regular and balanced
- Remind students about deadlines (this can be done by logging into showmyhomework)
- Sign the school planner each week
- Provide the school with information about any problems through the school planner or by contacting the school directly

The Role of the Subject Teacher:

Homework should provide opportunities for maximum student success and minimum student frustration, with an emphasis on progress (Wright, 2006). It is important that subject teachers set authentic and relevant tasks, differentiated and well matched to learners' needs. Furthermore,

our teachers must be mindful that maximum learning is much more about the quality of the task rather than the amount of time spent on it.

Our teachers will:

- Set quality homework that directly contributes to student progress (as defined by the Head of Department)
- Ensure that homework is set on showmyhomework for all classes
- Set homework according to the whole school timetable (for Years 9-11)
- Give full and comprehensive instructions
- Set reasonable deadlines for the completion of work and to ensure that they are met
- Make clear to the students how the homework will be assessed (eg by the teacher/peer-assessment/self-assessment)
- Provide help and support for students
- Inform the Head of Department and follow the department procedures to deal with non-completion of homework (and recording on SIMS)

The Role of the Form Tutor: The Form Tutor has an important role in supporting students to organise their time and communicating with parents via the school planner. We expect Form Tutors to:

- Monitor and sign student planners every week (Yr9-11), checking that homework is recorded in detail
- Note and respond to any comments written in diaries by parents
- Check students know how to access showmyhomework
- Encourage selected students to attend 'After Hours' or other department 'Work Habits' sessions
- Support students by offering advice and guidance about time management
- Inform subject teachers and/or Heads of Department of student or parental concerns regarding homework

The Role of Heads of Department: Heads of Department are a key ingredient in successful homework, providing the vision for their department; clear guidance for subject teachers, students and parents. Every department will have a clear approach to homework that is directly linked to improving student learning in that subject area. Our Heads of Department will:

- Lead the development of homework within their curriculum area (including monitoring and evaluating impact on student learning)
- Ensure their curriculum page of the school website contains information for parents about homework expectations in that subject area
- Provide teachers with clear guidance about the amount, frequency and type of homework that might be set in that subject area
- Support teachers in dealing with issues of non-completion (eg by offering department 'Work Habits' sessions)

The Role of the Deputy Headteacher responsible for Homework:

- To monitor, evaluate and review the school homework policy
- To report to Governors about the school's approach to homework and independent learning (pre- and post-16)
- To support and challenge Heads of Department, holding them to account for their homework provision
- To communicate with parents about homework (via the school website and letters to parents at the start of each academic year)

Whole School Expectations (How much and by whom?):

Children differ in readiness and developmental level: some students need more direct instruction, practice, concrete experience or simpler reading material. Others students may benefit from tasks that are more challenging or provide the opportunity to explore topics in greater depth. Our teachers are the best judge of what constitutes good homework. In order to help students and their families to organise their time most effectively we publish a Homework Timetable each September for students in Years 9-11. We expect that most homework will fall broadly in-line with the Homework Timetable however occasionally teachers may set homework at different times for the benefit of the students in their class.

We write to parents of students in Years 9-11 at the start of each school year with specific guidance about the quantity of homework the students might reasonably expect as well as recommendations about the amount of time they might spend completing it. This information is published on our school website. www.princehenrys.worcs.sch.uk

Sixth Form Homework:

Generally, students in our Sixth Form will receive homework after every lesson. This will vary in amount as directed by their teacher. They are expected to complete this work in Supervised Private Study as well as at home. In addition to this, students will receive a Private Study Programme for each subject which contains activities to provide additional opportunities to develop a deeper understanding of elements of their course.