

POLICY STATEMENT : DEVELOPING INDEPENDENT LEARNING

RATIONALE

This policy is part of the school's overall teaching, learning and assessment strategy. To maximise their educational potential, all students should be provided with the opportunities to develop skills appropriate to their development as independent learners.

PURPOSE

- To provide opportunities for students to extend their knowledge and understanding, and to develop the skills associated with independent learning.
- To establish a regular pattern of homework for each student; this reinforces, and extends, the teaching and learning experienced within the classroom.
- To explore a variety of methods relating to research, presentation and the development of independent thinking skills.
- To ensure that such a programme also acknowledges the importance of participation in both extra-curricular and community activities.
- To encourage the development of personal time management skills.
- To provide opportunities for parents/guardians to participate in their children's education.

GUIDELINES

- Following consultation with subject leaders, Homework Timetables will be issued by the Deputy Head(Curriculum and Assessment) within the first two weeks of the academic year.
- Homework timetables will be, in the main, specific to either whole-year or half-year groups, and Option Groups at Key Stages 4 and 5.
- The homework will be regularly set, according to the designated day shown on the timetable. It is possible that homework may be set on a day in advance of that designated day.
- Staff will try to avoid the handing in of homework immediately following the designated homework day, to allow students to develop time management skills; the balancing of homework, extra-curricular and leisure activities. [The assistance of parents in this would be appreciated, particularly during the lower school years.]
- Homework will be set on the basis that it is realistic and achievable by the individual student, with an awareness of the individual's ability and circumstances. There can be a variety of tasks; it will not necessarily be a written homework.
- Time may be specified, at the discretion of subject leaders. Overall guidelines can be found in the Student Planner.

The possible variation in the individual 'rate' for accomplishing the task set is acknowledged, and parents are encouraged to take an active part by extending the work if they find it is insufficient on any particular occasion. ***This invitation is given at the foot of the timetable together with specific points relating to Technology and humanities subjects.***

- Staff and parents are encouraged to ensure that students use their Student planners, provided by the school, to record both the Homework timetable and the tasks set.
- Heads of subject areas will monitor the setting of homework within their subjects.
- Regular checks on Student Planners will be carried out by Tutors, Heads of Years and Directors of School Sections.
- To assist students in both consolidating their learning, and extending their knowledge, parents might find it helpful to access appropriate websites, e.g. Samlearning and BBC BITESIZE.
- Parents are also invited to contact the school in the event of clarification being needed. This is made clear at the first meeting of new parents in Year 7, and re-emphasised at the Information Evening at the beginning of year 10. ***Parents are also informed about the availability of an external study support agency.***

CONCLUSION

At this stage of the pupils' life-long learning process, this policy is directed towards maintaining their personal development in a well-balanced way. They will be helped to enjoy study and leisure activities, managing their time in such a way that varied facets of their life can be developed constructively. It will provide a sound basis for their future development, especially with regard to educational transition.