



THE MARCHES SCHOOL and TECHNOLOGY COLLEGE



HOMEWORK POLICY

WHY SET HOMEWORK?

At The Marches School and Technology College we believe homework is essential for academic success

We believe homework:

- provides pupils with the opportunity to work by themselves, independently of the teacher, and to develop perseverance and self discipline;
- allows pupils to practice and consolidate skills learnt in the classroom;
- allows pupils to extend work started in the classroom;
- enables classwork to concentrate on those activities that require the teacher's presence;
- allows pupils to develop research skills, including investigation and discovery, by encouraging them to exploit materials and sources of information in the local environment that may not be accessible in the classroom;
- set on a regular basis, encourages the development of good study habits and ensures that work becomes part of the whole culture of the school;
- allows staff the opportunity to set tasks in accordance with the ability of the pupil;
- can help strengthen the home-school partnership by involving parents (and other adults) in pupils' work.

HOW MUCH SHOULD BE SET?

Homework should be set in accordance with the Homework Timetable that is produced at the beginning of each school year. A copy can be found in the pupil planner. Each year is different, and Years 7, 8 and 9 also issue a parent information leaflet on Home Study.

Homework for all years, in each subject, should last at least half an hour and should gradually increase in terms of demands as the pupil progresses through the school.

As a guide this would mean that on average, pupils in Years 7 and 8 will do one to one and a half hours per night.

In Year 9 we expect one and a half hours and in Years 10 and 11 two hours per night.

WHAT SORT OF HOMEWORK SHOULD BE SET?

- Homework tasks should be clear and wherever possible should be open-ended or differentiated.
- Ideally homework needs to be an integral, planned part of the learning process and should arise naturally from the work being undertaken in the classroom.
- Effective homework requires teachers to be clear about the aims and objectives of a particular module of work in terms of the knowledge, skills and processes that are necessary and how these can be extended through homework.
- When setting homework teachers need to make sure it is relevant and takes full account of the age and ability of individual pupils.

(NB Staff should set homework according to the Homework Timetable for each Year group, which is published at the start of the year).

FORMS OF HOMEWORK

Homework provides an ideal opportunity for setting a range of differentiated and/or open-ended tasks where differentiation may be by outcome, by rate of progress, by enrichment (including both extension and support) or by task.

Homework may take a variety of forms including:

- Written Assignments

Coursework, project or topic work, writing up or completing work begun in class, preparation of talks.

In setting written assignments as homework teachers need above all to make sure that pupils are clear as to what is required of them, both in terms of quality and quantity and that they have noted this in their Planners.

Where the task is open-ended or where work is likely to span more than a week we need to make sure pupils have clear deadlines and that their progress is monitored and the work they have completed is checked at regular, short term, intervals.

Do not be afraid to demand high quality homework.

- Research

This may involve parents or other adults, use of the school library, use of ICT or use of town library.

Here, it is essential that we check that information is readily available before setting the task.

As a matter of courtesy inform the school/town library if a whole class of pupils is likely to go in search of information.

Setting research tasks allows pupils to develop the skills of working independently (thinking as well as working by themselves) and should ideally give pupils opportunities to exercise initiative as well as pursuing areas of interest to them.

However, we must first make sure that the pupils are equipped with the necessary information handling skills to cope with the research task. Staff should allow sufficient time for research homework to be completed.

Make absolutely sure that the pupils KNOW how to:

- Find the relevant section in the Library;
- Use an index or glossary;
- Take notes and write these up in the form you expect.

These are skills that have to be taught and reinforced by all areas of the curriculum

- Learning

Spellings, vocabulary, revision for a test or exam. All learning homework should include a framework and structure for evaluation.

- Collecting Materials or Ingredients

This can be an acceptable homework and helps the pupil learn basic organisational skills.

POINTS TO REMEMBER

- ✓ Homework may be set at any time during the lesson.
- ✓ If homework is set at the end of the lesson, we must make sure that enough time is left to explain clearly what we expect pupils to achieve, and by when.
- ✓ It is always a good idea to look at one or two pupils' Planners to check that they have noted the information down accurately.
- ✓ Staff should write homework on the board where possible, or use handouts and check that it has been recorded in the planner.
- ✓ Some pupils may require homework to be written in their planner for them.

In setting and marking homework we should be aiming to:

- develop a sense of achievement in all pupils.
- provide experiences and opportunities that challenge, stimulate yet maximise an individual's potential by allowing them to demonstrate what they know, understand and can do.

In setting any homework task we must ensure that pupils have precise information as to what is going to be assessed and how it is to be assessed.

HOW SHOULD HOMEWORK BE MARKED AND ASSESSED?

Essentially to show the importance of homework and to maintain motivation, homework needs to be marked or checked very soon after it has been set (ideally in the next lesson).

This shows that homework is important and also enables us as staff to spot any problems pupils might be having over a particular piece of work.

The knowledge that homework will be checked in the next lesson also helps maintain pupil motivation “to get it done”.

When marking homework it is essential that the whole school and departmental marking policies be adhered to.

Comments should, as far as possible, be positive, diagnostic and should provide both feedback on the work handed in and targets in terms of pointing out to pupils what needs to be done to improve work.

MONITORING OF HOMEWORK

Homework is monitored in a number of ways. This monitoring is an integral part of the teaching and learning process. Homework is monitored using the following systems:

- Leadership Group pupil planner review – half termly
- Head of Year pupil planner reviews – twice half termly
- HOD book and folder reviews
- Departmental review cycles
- Teacher planner reviews – from September via IIP interviews
- Lesson observations
- Form tutor planner review

Furthermore issues related to homework are discussed with parents at Parents’ Evening.

The purpose of such a system of reviews is to enable the Leadership Group to gain an insight into the range and quality of homeworks set across the Departments and also to assist Heads of Department in their evaluation and development of homework materials.

AREAS FOR REVIEW BY HEADS OF DEPARTMENT

PURPOSE OF HOMEWORK

- What are the particular aims and objectives in setting homework in the subject area? (ie what makes a “good” piece of [subject] homework?)
- Are these written down? (eg Departmental Handbook/Schemes of work etc).
- Are the aims shared and acted upon by all members of the Department?

QUALITY OF HOMEWORK

- How relevant is the homework?
- How much variety is there in the types of homework set?
- What provision is there for differentiation?
- Do pupils have any choice in homework tasks?
- Is there a formal opportunity for staff to share ideas about successful homework?
- How does HOD monitor quality of homework within the department?

AMOUNT OF HOMEWORK

- How often is homework set?
- How much homework is given?
- Do pupils have varying deadlines/amounts of time in which to do the homework?

- Is there any provision made within the department for those pupils who have difficulty with understanding homework/completing homework on time?

COURSEWORK

- What strategies does the department employ to help pupils' plan/manage coursework/project work?
- Are there departmental procedures/sanctions for those pupils who are failing/likely to fail to meet coursework deadlines?

RESPONDING TO PUPILS' WORK

- Is the school assessment policy suitably adhered to by the department?
- Are teacher comments relevant and helpful to the pupil?
- Is there an opportunity for dialogue between teacher and pupil on homework?
- Do homework activities inform pupil target setting procedures?

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