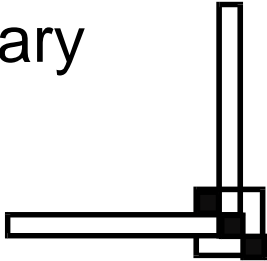
A decorative graphic element consisting of a horizontal line with a vertical line extending downwards from its left end, and a small square at the top-left corner.A decorative graphic element consisting of a vertical line with a horizontal line extending to the left from its bottom end, and a small square at the bottom-right corner.

# Homework Policy Primary and Secondary

## ***Introduction***

It must be acknowledged that parents play a key role in the education of their children. In early stages parent/child dialogue can promote language and numeracy skills and as pupils progress through primary and secondary parents can provide a supportive environment in which the young person can develop the necessary study skills to move towards independent learning. An establishment's homework policy will take account of parents as partners in learning.

Each establishment will, when drawing up their homework policy, agree with all teaching staff that this is a whole school policy to ensure a holistic approach. Thus children's homework experience should be consistent in both the amount and quality. Ensuring such consistency will be a monitoring and evaluation issue for the management team.

This document should inform the process of establishing an effective policy.

## ***Definition***

Homework is a relevant task or activity selected by the teacher, to be completed outwith classtime. While it may usually be done at home, it may also take the form of supported study/homework clubs.

### ***General Aims***

- to strengthen home/school links and develop further parental co-operation and support
- to provide an opportunity for parents to become involved in their child's education by encouraging,

supervising and checking such homework as is required

- to heighten parental awareness of the work their child is covering in class and the specific purpose of that work
- to help teachers monitor the effectiveness of teaching and learning
- to reinforce, review, consolidate and extend classroom learning
- to enable revision for assessment purposes
- to encourage the pupils to develop personal responsibility for life-long learning

### ***Specific Aims P1-P3***

- to encourage parents to read stories to their children
- to encourage the parental role in the development of spoken language through a range of relevant activities eg “show and tell”, recap on a story from class
- to raise awareness of the early years curriculum and appropriate strategies
- to practise words and vocabulary from the reading programme already taught in school by the teacher
- to practise and reinforce number bonds already taught in school by the teacher

### ***Specific Aims P4-S2***

- to encourage parental awareness of the relevant stages of the 5-14 curriculum
- to encourage pupils to be more aware of the purposes of homework and begin to take more responsibility for their own learning together with the development of organisational and study skills
- to promote self reliance and self confidence and encourage the habit of independent learning
- to encourage silent reading for a range of purposes especially enjoyment
- to consolidate the learning of spelling through a range of appropriate strategies
- to reinforce number bonds eg multiplication tables and further develop mathematical thinking such as problem solving
- to widen the learning experience by encouraging pupils to use materials and sources of information not available in the classroom

### ***Specific Aims S3-S6***

- to assist pupils preparing for National Qualifications to meet deadlines and target dates for SQA
- to provide opportunities for all pupils to further develop as independent learners
- to help pupils manage the workload relative to their individual curriculum

***Principles:***

To be effective homework should be:

- varied and interesting
- appropriate to the needs and abilities of the pupil
- well explained with a clear purpose understood by all
- recognised and rewarded by meaningful and helpful feedback given as soon as possible
- supported by parents and teachers
- related to the ongoing work of the class or group
- manageable within a reasonable amount of time
- designed to increasingly encourage self management and independence in learning

***Practice***

The allocation and marking of homework tasks should mirror the established policy and good practice established within the school. It should reinforce a positive learning experience and draw on the full range of exemplars covering all sectors. Establishments should consider setting up homework clubs or supported study groups to ensure equality of opportunity for all pupils to complete homework in an environment which is conducive to effective learning. Pupils and parents should be made aware of any additional opportunities and initiatives in this area eg Homework Helpline.

### ***Time***

The nature of the homework task and the amount will vary with the age, ability and needs of the pupil. It is impossible to give an exact allocation of time that a child might spend on homework but this should be secured through consultation and agreement with parents and the following guide might be helpful:

P1-P2	10 minutes per night
P3-P4	15 minutes per night
P5	20 minutes per night
P6	25 minutes per night
P7	30 minutes per night
S1	3-5 hours per week
S2	4-6 hours per week
S3	5-7 hours per week
S4	6-8 hours per week and appropriate amount of time for Standard Grade Portfolios
S5/S6	10-14 hours per week for pupils tackling 5 Highers and proportionately less for those tackling fewer Highers

### ***Frequency***

It follows that homework should be an integral part of the teaching and learning process. Statements on frequency and amount of homework ought to be made in the context of the purpose and quality of the homework set.

- from P1-P3 tasks should be set for completion the next day;
- from P4-P7 tasks could be allocated on a weekly basis to encourage self management and independence;
- primary establishments should consider the efficacy of setting homework over weekends;
- in S1-S2 it is important to recognise primary practice and to provide a framework that ensures smooth transition to best practice in secondary;
- S1-S6 pupils should be given a realistic amount of time for completion of their homework. Any homework issues for the next day will be short and usually for consolidation;
- management of homework tasks should be supported by teaching the relevant study strategies and the possible use of a homework diary.

***Framework for Support:***

The following support strategies should be incorporated into establishment practice:

- parent-friendly guides and workshops on policy and practices
- user-friendly guides to effective personal study for pupils

- tasks to incorporate the full range of effective teaching and learning strategies which will give pupils opportunities to practise effective techniques such as:
  - mind mapping
  - memory techniques
  - summarising
  - not taking
  - speed reading
  
- support for pupils who have difficulty in working or completing tasks at home by providing alternative time slots and venues as appropriate;
- mechanisms to inform parents when a pupil consistently fails to complete homework and to enlist their support;
- homework diaries/planners which act as a record of work set and as a liaison link between parents and the schools. The diaries may also be useful in the area of target setting and recording achievement;
- effective use of existing support mechanisms eg primary/secondary data transfer guidance, year monitoring, target setting;
- effective structures for monitoring homework policy in practice both from the perspective of whole school monitoring and stage/departmental monitoring.

## ***Monitoring and Evaluation***

Monitoring of effective practice is part of an effective support structure. The following can form part of a school's evaluation of the effectiveness to its policy.

- partnership with parents and the school board is crucial and the success of any policy depends on the ongoing active development of that partnership;
- surveys and questionnaires on homework should be used to review the effectiveness of current policy and practice. Establishments should also consider including pupil surveys and questionnaires and pupil councils in this process;
- regular monitoring of this policy is part of the ongoing commitment to quality in education and the raising of attainment;
- the relevant performance indicators from "How Good is Our School?" should be used to inform the monitoring process and subsequent action.

### ***Areas for Consideration in the Future***

The 21<sup>st</sup> Century will see the embedding of far-reaching curriculum change in all sectors.

Schools already operate in the context of target setting, with its attendant intention to raise attainment. The development of core skills is increasingly a focus of curriculum planning. National and local authority emphasis on the development of the National Grid for Learning will also have implications for policy and practice in the classroom and potentially in the area of homework. The advent of supported study increases the access to ICT, by a greater number of pupils beyond the traditional school day.

There should be an awareness of the complexity and diversity of present day lifestyles and the impact this may have on parental involvement in children's learning at home.

Policy and practice in the area of homework should take account of the social reality of the wide spectrum of parenting and working arrangements. Supported study may therefore become more important to the successful education of **all** pupils.

## ***Bibliography***

The Homework File	SOEID 1994
Support Study Pack	including CD Rom
Partners in Education	SRC
How Good is our School	HMSI – Audit Unit
Interchange No. 1	Homework Policy & Practice SOED 1991

**This policy will be reviewed in 2007/08**