



## Homework Policy

### This policy covers the whole School

#### Development process

Staff and pupils at NGHS regard homework as an integral part of the curriculum, to be planned and prepared alongside all other programmes of learning.

Each year the homework timetables and homework booklet are reviewed by department and pastoral staff to ensure tasks are set that help support learning. Parents and pupils are asked to comment on homework provision in the annual school survey and through the school council. Their views are always taken into account when reviewing the policy.

#### Aims

We believe Homework can help to:

- Review, consolidate and extend learning
- Provide opportunities for practice - learning by doing
- Encourage self- discipline by meeting targets
- Encourage independent learning by developing the skills of research, enquiry and investigation

Given the increasing need to work flexibly and the ability to learn independently, developing these skills and attitudes is a central aim at NGHS. We want to empower our students to be able to seek solutions to problems and have the confidence to examine issues in an independent way.

The whole aim of homework is to work in tandem with the requirements of the KS3 curriculum and KS4/KS5 examination syllabus. The emphasis is on quality not quantity; effective learning, not time consuming work.

#### Features of effective homework

Learning is an active process and reflection is a key ingredient. Research has proven that effective homework tasks involve rote learning (e.g. vocabulary) or practice (e.g. mathematics) or knowing subject matter (e.g. sciences). For other subjects, homework tasks promote the development of higher order thinking skills such as analysing and evaluating. We recognise that understanding develops over time and homework is a vital tool in this process.

#### Junior School

The nature of homework will change as children get older. For children in Reception/Key Stage 1, developing a partnership with parents and carers, and involving them actively in children's learning is a key objective.

Short activities of different kinds – reading together, learning spellings and number facts - provide a very important opportunity for young children to talk about what they are learning to an interested adult, and to practise key skills in a supportive environment.

As children get older, homework provides an opportunity for them to develop the skills of independent learning, which they will need to continue lifelong learning and this should increasingly become its main purpose. It is important that children should gradually get into the habit of regularly devoting periods of time, which may not be long, to study on their own. By the time children reach Year 6 their homework programme will cover a range of tasks and curriculum content, with a regular schedule. This approach will benefit their learning and also ensure that, in relation to homework as much as to other aspects, their transition to Year 7 is as smooth as possible.

### **Home Reading**

The importance of reading at home cannot be over-emphasised and we hope that children will read for pleasure in their own time as well as completing tasks set by the school.

Pupils will be provided with a suitable school reading book, which can be taken home to read with a parent or other adult person. Pupils are also encouraged to read books from home and make trips to the library.

### **Spellings**

Spellings will be given to each child to learn. Some spellings may be differentiated by pupil ability; others may be key words from topics.

Spellings need to be reinforced through learning the words, using them in context (verbally and in writing) and will be tested each week.

Parents can support their child through testing them on the words, providing short tasks and using the words in conversation.

### **Numeracy**

Homework will be provided for pupils to consolidate or revise particular mathematical skills. Teachers will provide ideas activities to practise key skills and to introduce pupils and parents to mathematical language.

Pupils will be given login details of 'Mathletics' and encouraged to work through the levels at their own pace.

Rote learning is essential in consolidating learning. All pupils will be encouraged to learn their number bonds and timetables at home. Parents can support this by practising with their children on a regular basis. This practise does not have to be provided for by the school, we encourage parents to support home learning through their questioning, practical activities such as baking and shopping.

### **Topic Work**

Occasionally, class teachers will set topic homework tasks where pupils will be asked research a person, place or subject. This will be specific and pupils will not be expected to spend too much time on it.

## **Strategies to support home learning:**

Occasionally, pupils may not be given formal homework activities by teachers, but that does not mean that home learning should not take place. Parents are encouraged to:

1. **Verbalise thinking** – Encourage their child to talk to about their learning at home. Asking them to explain something that they have learned. Asking them to explain something or articulate their thinking can help the brain organise its thoughts and clarify an issue in their mind.
2. **Ask questions** – Encourage their child to ask questions about the topics that day.
3. **Use information** – children need to use the new information they have learned. For example: If they have been learning about weighing in school they could undertake practical activities at home. The ability to **use** this new information means a movement from knowing to understanding.
4. **Reflecting** - Parents asking their children to think about what they have learned in lessons Reflection plays a central role in learning. It helps students develop a deeper understanding.

## **Special Education Needs (SEN)**

Setting the right type and amount of homework for children with special educational needs will need careful consideration by the class teacher and co-ordination with both Head of Educational Support and parents. The objectives of homework outlined in this policy should apply equally to pupils with special educational needs.

## **Senior School**

Each department has produced guidelines on the types of homework which they believe will be most effective in promoting learning in their subject. These guidelines are shared with parents and pupils at the beginning of the school year in a 'Home Learning' booklet. We have taken a flexible approach, with an emphasis on tightly focussed, appropriate tasks either preparing for learning in a coming lesson or consolidating learning from the lesson. Ideally, a choice of tasks and approaches should be offered to meet the individual needs of learners. Teachers will advise girls on how to extend their learning, including ways to extend learning beyond formal set homework and use Firefly to provide a wealth of materials for pupils to access at home to support their learning.

Departments have suggested the maximum time that should be spent on a typical homework task and pupils are asked to complete homework in this time frame or talk to the subject teacher if homework is taking longer than expected.

## **Assessment for Learning**

Homework can support AfL principles. Effective learning takes place when learners understand what they are trying to achieve. Sharing objectives for homework with pupils ensures they are aware of what they are learning and why. Pupils may be asked to respond to written or oral feedback in class

which explains what they have done well and where and how they can improve. To develop peer and self- assessment, teachers can:

- plan peer and self- assessment opportunities in homework tasks and activities in lessons
- train pupils over time to assess their own work and use homework time to encourage pupils' self-reflection on their learning
- guide pupils to identify their next steps and act upon them when learning at home

We see homework is an integral part of the learning process; preparing for a lesson, reinforcing and consolidation of learning from lessons or extending learning perhaps through research and or a choice of tasks. It is not, necessarily, a piece of written work to be handed in to the teacher, marked in isolation and given back to the pupil with a mark or grade.

### **Guidance**

Homework should be set in accordance with school policy and department guidelines set out in the Home Learning Booklet and departmental handbook.

*The Home Learning Booklet* sums up the responsibilities of staff, pupils and parents.

We aim to achieve a balanced amount of homework each week and provide a realistic, age-appropriate number of set tasks that promote effective learning. We understand that journey time to and from school and enrichment activities both in and outside school need to be taken into account. We recognise the importance of quality time together as a family, especially during weekends and holidays. Girls, also, need to recognise that home-learning needs to take place in a quiet space, away from the distractions of television, texting, social networking sites and Instant Messaging services.

### **Use of Homework on the Firefly App which is accessed through student iPads**

The Firefly app is a key element in supporting home learning and it seeks to:

- Aid pupils to manage their learning more efficiently
- Aid home/school communication
- Provide a mechanism for 'quick checks' on pupil homework
- Form the basis of discussions between individual pupils and form tutors
- Assist in the regular monitoring of pupil progress
- Show students how many merit they have been given for good work and progress.

If students are unable to complete their homework, parents are asked to supply a note to subject staff so an agreed date can be made for its completion. Subject staff are always available to discuss with students any difficulties they may have with the tasks. If homework still is not completed, a sanction will be given electronically through SIMS, which pupils can view through the Firefly app. Subject staff following these guidelines for giving sanctions:

- 1<sup>st</sup> sanction – verbal warning
- 2<sup>nd</sup> sanction – remove 15 minutes of the student's time
- 3<sup>rd</sup> sanction – remove 30 minutes of the student's time
- 4<sup>th</sup> sanction – remove 30 minutes of the student's time and inform either by telephone or email
- 5<sup>th</sup> sanction – parental meeting

KS3 form tutors do spot checks to ensure pupils are using the Firefly app, and parents are given form tutor's email address to contact them if they have any concerns. At Key Stage 4, students are encouraged to be more independent and 'spot checks' are used to check organisation. The planner is useful way of monitoring pupils' as part of target setting and one-to-one discussions.

Students who have an excellent attitude to homework and classwork will receive recognition when an 'Attitude to Learning' grade is reported, as well as receiving commendations through subject staff.

Homework will usually only ever succeed when parents or carers are supporting their child with learning activities. Together, school, home and child can work in partnership to achieve their fullest potential.

**LAST REVIEW:** October 2016

**NEXT REVIEW:** October 2017