



**ST. MARK'S CE SCHOOL**  
ONE SCHOOL - SERVING ALL - THROUGH EXCELLENCE

**St Mark's CE School**

# **Home Learning Policy**

**Policy Statement and Guidelines**

Policy Date: July 2024

Review Date: July 2025

## Home Learning

Home learning requires a consistent approach and a progressive development from year to year. In this way, we will provide students with the opportunity to develop an excellent approach to home learning through each phase, developing their knowledge as well as their learning skills and habits. For the learner, and for the learning itself, home learning is incredibly powerful. For staff, students and parents it is the way in which connection takes place to ensure a home-school partnership in which all students can thrive. Though the actual home learning experience will vary hugely across phases (Early Years to Key Stage Four) and indeed across subjects, some of our agreed teaching and learning principles are below will be incorporated into home learning as they are all learning in school, to enable our pupils to develop and retain a secure foundation of knowledge and lasting connections.

- **Sequences of learning over time** are broken down into small, manageable steps to prevent the working memory being overloaded and ensure that firm foundations of substantive knowledge are developed
- **Retrieval practice** is an integral part of every lesson in order to strengthen and recall previous learning to ensure the foundations are there before moving on.
- **Guided and independent practice** - pupils should be given time to practise what has been modelled through worked examples. Time should be taken here to question pupils on their understanding and address misconceptions that may arise. **Time for independent practice** should be provided in order for the skills and knowledge to become automatic.

### What does the research say?

From reading across many sources, what seems to be most important is how rooted our home learning is within our curriculum and our approach to teaching and learning. External research studies can easily contradict one another (for example, the benefits or otherwise of home learning on student achievement), but, as shown in our principles above, purposeful home learning, integrated within the curriculum and planned for in a progressive sequence of learning, can be very powerful indeed. Cepeda et al (2019), shown below, demonstrate, for example, how home learning can be planned to support 'learning': knowledge being retained in the longer term, retrieved and applied.

### Homework and Spaced Practice

The spacing effect refers to the practice of placing a temporal gap between study sessions before re-studying or re-testing; this increases the likelihood of information being remembered in the future. While this can be difficult to embed into lesson time and curriculum due to time demands, homework provides an opportunity to space student practice.

	Wb 20/01	Wb 27/02	Wb 03/02	Wb 10/02	Wb 24/02	Wb 02/03
Class	Topic 1		Topic 2		Topic 3	
Home work			Homework on topic 1	Homework on topic 1	Homework on Topic 2	Homework on Topic 2

From parental feedback to us, 'little and often' seems to be a very important mantra. If in Reception, daily reading at home is instilled, it will both be enjoyed, and more easily and gradually increased in relation to time spent each day. Home learning being completed regularly will help to instil learning habits which will develop and grow little by little. If our secondary students are in the routine of checking for home learning every day, they can be organised about prioritising tasks and spending shorter, more focussed periods of time learning, rather than leaving home learning until it has built up unmanageably.

We believe that it is important to avoid home learning activities which do not connect clearly to the learning in the classroom (stand-alone pieces are unlikely to be successful) - planning for home learning and its purpose therefore being as important as planning for class learning. A majority of our home learning from Year 3 to Year 11 will be based on Google Classroom and submitted electronically. However, we are fully aware that at some stages of learning, and in some particular subjects, this may not be possible at all times. Learners may often be asked to practice extended writing pieces in their books. The benefits of home learning are the consolidation of learning and knowledge, through deliberate practice and the creation and fostering of excellent learning habits and routines at home.

**Within home learning at St Mark's, teachers will:**

- Ensure that opportunities are available to allow students/children to practise in order to consolidate knowledge and/or skills from the classroom.
- Offer opportunities for students that support the retrieval of knowledge - perhaps, for example, revisiting content covered previously, which is needed to form the foundation for the next unit of learning. This could be through revisiting knowledge organisers or simply practising times tables or spellings. Teachers will be aware of the importance of interleaving knowledge because this supports knowledge being retained in the long-term memory.
- Ensure all home learning is purposeful, and in which the purpose has been explained to the students. These could include quizzes to ensure that knowledge has been retained, practise at exam questions, research (as long as this research has a clear focus) or activities that are paralleled in the classroom, either building on prior learning or preparing for future learning.
- Ensure all tasks are clear in terms of what the expected outcome is.
- Where appropriate, set home learning activities that are differentiated, inclusive and varied. This will ensure all learners of all abilities can achieve in their home learning.
- Give feedback on home learning. (See individual heading 'Feedback & Marking' below).

- Provide appropriate and incremental sanctions in line with our behaviour policy to students who fail to complete home learning adequately or who fail to hand it in on time. This will always be with the intention of students gaining an increased understanding of the importance of home learning, and support strategies must be offered.
- Set a guide for duration using the language of 'at least x but not more than y' - this, we hope, supports young people to put in their best efforts, but crucially supports their wellbeing too. It provides parents with approximate guidance to encourage appropriate time spent.

**We expect that parents/carers will:**

- Establish routines for home learning from Early Years all the way to Key Stage Four. This may include a focus on the right time of day (allowing young people to work efficiently), the best place in the home (aiming to avoid distractions).
- Provide the appropriate balance of support and independence. Whilst we appreciate this can provide a challenge, it is the long-term goal that as an inclusive school, all our learners complete home learning independently. Reaching this position, though, requires a pathway as children grow and mature in learning. Our youngest students will undoubtedly need parental encouragement, and also will require parents to guide them in relation to expectations.
- Support the school to ensure your child meets our expectations. As an all-through school, we are well placed to support children with a seamless progression in home learning - both in quantity, and in expectations for managing responsibilities to prioritise when home learning is due, and submitting home learning on time. It is very important that parents allow their child to develop this responsibility for themselves.

**All learners will:**

- Use Google Classroom and homework diaries (or even paper records within the younger primary years - for example reading records) to check the home learning which has been set each day and to ensure they understand what they are required to do. To create tomorrow's citizens, we expect our older learners to be able to self-manage and organise accordingly to keep up to date with home learning tasks and instructions.
- Allow adequate time to complete their home learning to a standard that reflects their understanding and best efforts. Learners are advised to stick to the timing guidance from their teacher and if they exceed this regularly, to make their teacher aware.
- Where possible, find a suitable environment to complete their home learning.
- Take initiative for their own learning, seek support from the teacher setting the home learning for any questions or support required.
- Hand in homework via Google Classroom or a physical submission on time. This is a minimal expectation. However, through dialogue with the teacher, reasonable adjustments can be made if a learner requires more time and support.

## Marking and Feedback

It is essential that students know that their home learning is valued by both parents and teachers in school. Feedback and marking can take place in various ways, including:

- If home learning is set, completed and submitted on Google Classroom, feedback will be given through the classroom, teachers can see exactly what students have engaged with and what they have found difficult - this can then be fed into future teaching.
- Home learning will sometimes be used at the very beginning of the next lesson - this forming the foundation in the next unit of learning. Home learning will sometimes be self or peer marked to support reflection.
- In the primary phase, parental and teacher comments in reading records are incredibly helpful for ensuring a connection and shared approach to the strengths of the child's reading, and the specific next steps.
- Where home learning has been extended writing (book-based or digital), then teacher feedback will be particularly important in relation to the specifics of what was achieved and targets for what next. This may result in marks or scores for exam questions.

## Guidelines and Expectations

It is very important that we as a staff work in a connected way to support students with the expectations of home learning. This grid provides an overview for students, parents and staff, showing the progression of home learning in each subject area from Reception to Year 11, as well as showing the home learning experience for a student in each of these year groups across subjects. The grid details the frequency of home learning (with the gradual increase in quantity aimed to support progression and transition), its aimed duration (recognising this will vary from student to student) and the platforms through which home learning is likely to be submitted. It is important that details here are used effectively by teaching staff so that all students receive a consistency and equity within home learning; that said, it is equally important that students and parents understand that there will be a degree of flexibility in order to ensure that home learning is always purposeful, and that teachers are responsive to what they see in the classroom - for example, identifying areas for particular classes, where further consolidation or practice, may be required.

Home Learning Guide	
Phase	
EYFS	Reading at least 3 times a week including completing reading book bingo. Phonics sheet to be read through daily at home.
KS1 Years 1 and 2	Reading at least 3 times a week including completing reading book bingo, phonics sheets to be read through daily at home, spellings, sound cards and times tables to be practised when sent home.
KS2 Year 3	Reading at least 4 x weekly including completing reading book bingo, spelling and times tables. Optional extras linked to foundation topics.
KS2 Year 4	Reading at least 4 x weekly including completing reading book bingo, spelling and times tables. Optional extras linked to foundation topics.
KS2 Year 5	Reading at least 4 x weekly including completing reading book bingo, spelling and times tables. Optional extras linked to foundation topics.

KS2 Year 6	Arithmetic, Spelling, English (SPAG focused), Reading at least 4 x weekly including completing reading book bingo and Times tables weekly (no more than 60 minutes)	
KS3 Year 7	English, Maths, Science once a week. MFL, Geography, History and RE once a fortnight. One task set a day due for 7.50am the next school day. Roughly 15-20 minutes of work a day.	
KS3 Year 8	English, Maths, Science once a week. MFL, Geography, History and RE once a fortnight. One task set a day due for 7.50am the next school day. Roughly 20-30 minutes of work a day.	
KS3 Year 9	English, Maths, Science once a week. MFL, Geography, History and RE once a fortnight. One task set a day due for 7.50am the next school day. Roughly 20-30 minutes of work a day.	One additional English and Maths task set offline each week. Weekly submission.