

Homework, Marking and Feedback

The College believes that completing and reflecting upon homework is essential to academic progress, intellectual enrichment, and personal organization. Student progress is most successfully driven via the provision of formative feedback by teachers, and its follow up and implementation by students.

WWW/EBI and SDC

Feedback on relevant homework (and classwork) in all subjects and for all year groups is regularly (but not necessarily always) What Went Well (WWW) and Even Better If (EBI). This targets the specific needs of a student in response to his or her own work. Students are expected to reflect on, and respond to, their WWW/EBI feedback and the impact or outcome of this is approved via an SDC driven by the teacher for 'Student Development Completed'.

Teachers record marks given and track the awarding of SDCs. They use their awareness of student strengths, weaknesses, and development to inform planning, task setting, classroom seating, and future feedback. The familiarity of this format across all subjects and year groups helps students to become ever more aware and responsible for their own academic development. It also encourages teachers to be aware of, sensitive to, and informed by individual learning priorities in any given class.

In recognition that specific knowledge, skills, and public examination assessment criteria differ from subject area to subject area, it is also the practice of the College that each subject Department outlines its own marking guidelines that supplement and complement the College wide format. Review and development of those guidelines is part of annual Department Handbook reviews and Department Development Planning.

WHAT ARE THE PURPOSES OF A HOMEWORK?

1. To provide an opportunity for students to consolidate and develop their understanding of lesson work, and for teachers to check this.
2. To provide an opportunity for students to demonstrate understanding and misunderstandings of lesson work, and for teachers to respond to this.
3. To provide an opportunity for teachers to provide differentiated, personalized and formative feedback in response to student understanding or misunderstandings of lesson work.
4. To provide an opportunity for students to prepare materials that will enhance the pace and nature of learning in a subsequent lesson.
5. To enrich the taught syllabus.
6. To promote independent study skills, organization, and self-discipline.

HOMEWORK: WHAT IS EXPECTED OF STUDENTS AND TEACHERS?

- All homework is explained by teachers in class and set out by teachers on Firefly so that students can access its details from anywhere with an internet connection.
- Teachers will explain the purpose of homework set. They should explain how it is linked to work already done and/or work to follow, and how its completion will contribute to student progress towards specific goals, outcomes, or examinations.
- In the Lower and Middle Schools, homework is set according to homework timetables. In the Sixth Form, and in line with the nature of Sixth Form study, expectations for student learning outside the classroom are high, and study skills guidance is more adaptable.
- All students are expected to complete the homework set ambitiously and thoroughly, and to hand it in on time. A student missing a deadline without having informed the teacher in advance should expect a sanction as a consequence. A student struggling with a task should seek advice from the relevant teacher prior to the deadline, and should expect support as a response.
- Teachers mark and return homework, submitted classwork and assessments promptly and use the College-wide feedback format of WWW/EBI whenever appropriate, and annotating SDCs where evidence of feedback being enacted is subsequently seen. Students should expect to receive feedback in this format at least once every half term from every teacher, and usually more often than that.
- Homework is normally set with an optional, extra, enrichment task that all students are encouraged to engage with whenever possible.

HOW MUCH HOMEWORK IS SET?

KEY STAGE 3: LOWER SCHOOL

Students should expect to be completing two homeworks per evening on week days, with time recommended at the weekend to catch up, get ahead, or consolidate. Subjects teaching the most lessons per week (such as Mathematics and English) will set weekly homework. Other subjects will set homework on a fortnightly basis. The timetable is designed to help students organize their time. By adhering to the schedule, a student can ensure that they never end up with multiple homeworks to be completed on the same night. In the event that the timetable leaves an evening with only one subject homework, or a student gets ahead, the extra time available should be used for consolidation/extension for any appropriate subject. Adhering to the timetable will mean no new homework over the weekend, creating a further opportunity for reviewing or extending understanding and pursuing wider interest. In the event that a student is unable to complete work on a set evening due to other commitments, he or she should plan to catch up on another day to meet the required deadline, or use the weekend for that purpose.

Each homework is designed to take 30 minutes, but the school recognizes that this will vary from student to student and from task to task. It is important that every student is suitably thorough and appropriately challenged. Students regularly taking significantly longer than 30 minutes to complete work in a subject should discuss this with their teacher or tutor. To provide an opportunity to pursue interest beyond the homework, it is normal for teachers to set an optional enrichment task alongside the main homework. We encourage all students to engage with that opportunity, and especially those for whom the set task is completed thoroughly in 30 minutes or less.

KEY STAGE 4: MIDDLE SCHOOL

Students should expect to be completing two homeworks per evening on week days, with time consistently dedicated at the weekends to catch up, get ahead, or consolidate. Each subject sets one homework per week. The timetable is designed to help students organize their time. By adhering to the schedule, a student can ensure that they never end up with multiple homeworks to be completed on the same night. In the event that the timetable leaves an evening with only one subject homework, the other slot is to be used for consolidation/extension for any appropriate subject. Adhering to the timetable will mean no new homework over the weekend, when time given to academic study can and should be spent reviewing and consolidating wider classwork. This is an expectation of GCSE students.

Each homework is designed to take approximately 40 minutes to complete, but the school recognizes that this will vary from student to student, and task to task. It is important that every student is suitably thorough and appropriately challenged. Students regularly taking significantly longer than 40 minutes to complete work in a subject should discuss this with their teacher or tutor. To provide an opportunity to pursue interest beyond the homework, it is normal for teachers to set an optional enrichment task alongside the main homework. We encourage all students to engage with that opportunity, and especially those for whom the set task is completed thoroughly in 40 minutes or less.

KEY STAGE 5: SIXTH FORM

In the Sixth Form, the quality and quantity of study undertaken independently outside the classroom has at least as much, if not more, bearing on student success as the work completed in class. Sixth Form students should expect to spend an average of four (Year 12) or five (Year 13) hours per week working outside the classroom on each subject studied. Students who fully realize their potential academically often spend significantly longer. Sixth Formers are expected to follow the advice provided by teachers and tutors, and to organize their time accordingly, reading and researching beyond set tasks, and making purposeful use of their study periods and the LRC so that not all of this wider learning needs to be undertaken after school or at home. It is especially important for Sixth Formers to be organised enough to approach tasks in several different sittings over a period of days in advance of deadlines. A common feature of underperformance at A Level is students ignoring this advice and seeking to complete complex tasks in one sitting, often the night before deadline.

HOW IS HOMEWORK SET AND MONITORED?

All homework tasks are explained on Firefly, which students can access via the internet from anywhere. If a student is ever in doubt as to whether they have homework, what it is, or when it is due, they can and should check on Firefly. Individual Homework Diaries are also given to all students in the Lower and Middle School. Diaries may be used as a means of communicating with parents to commend outstanding effort and achievement, or to engage in dialogue over incidents such as missed homework. Sixth Formers are also given homework diaries and are encouraged to use them.

Where a student struggles to manage their learning outside of class, systems of monitoring and checking will be introduced. This may involve an Action Plan to support the development of stronger learning habits. Action Plans are not viewed as sanctions where they are introduced to support better study. Students who choose not to follow Plans or advice are, however, choosing to receive appropriate sanctions for academic irresponsibility.

It is the classroom teacher's responsibility to follow up missed or inadequate homework with the student in line with the school's Behaviour Management Policy, seeking advice and support from colleagues as appropriate.

MARKING, ASSESSMENT, AND RECORDING

Students' work is regularly marked, reviewed, and assessed by teachers, and when appropriate also by peers. The environment in which children learn, the relationship between all individuals in any classroom, and formal marking and assessment procedures positively influence the quality of learning and teaching.

The process of assessment, and reflection upon it should:

- Improve the quality of learning and teaching
- Inform future teaching and learning targets
- Provide information about progress and attainment to students, teachers, parents, and other appropriate parties

We have a professional and statutory duty to provide information on the progress and attainment of students. Assessment underpins the provision of information to parents, and, where appropriate, other schools and colleges of further and higher education.

MARKING

Responding to regular and meaningful feedback is essential to progress. It is expected that the format for the marking of work across all subjects and ages will be WWW/EBI at least once every half term, and SDC when relevant. In most cases this will be more often. It is recognised that not every home or classwork task will lend itself to this format, and in Key Stage 3, not every subject sets homework every week. Teachers should not feel that every task, every week, must be marked in this fashion, but should guide their scheduling of, choices of, and responses to tasks with a recognition of the need for and value of regular formative feedback, and quality student response to it. The College system of book scrutiny by Heads of Department and SLT ensures best practice is followed and shared.

Specific expectations are outlined here:

1. It is expected that a teacher will normally see, and mark, each student's book/work at least once per fortnight.
2. When work is collected in to be marked, it should (except in the case of coursework which has to be retained, or project work) be returned to students within a week.
3. Numeracy, Literacy and fluency of expression are important. Due regard should be given to the quality of presentation, spelling and grammar, of the work, acknowledging that some students require particular support in this respect. Guidance should be sought from GMAT, SEN or EAL coordinators, where appropriate.
4. Errors and mistakes in work should be pointed out where appropriate, but always with constructive comment to enable correction and progress to be made as a result. These may be in the form of an EBI, for example. Work should never be marked as simply "wrong", without any formative verbal or written explanation.
5. Commendations should be given for outstanding work and commitment to study: work which is either excellent in itself, or which represents a significant improvement by the student. Specific aspects of strength within any given piece of work should be identified as WWWs. All Commendations should be noted and recorded appropriately.
6. When work is marked, there need not necessarily always be a mark/grade written on it. Whether a grade or mark is identified or not, there should always be a comment (written or delivered individually to the student verbally). The default format for this feedback is WWW/EBI. Reflection on and effective response to comments is the driver of sustained progress and should be recognised by an SDC.
7. Teachers are encouraged to consider peer to peer marking and review of sample work or each other's work as a strategy to drive progress. It can be a powerful tool to promote student understanding of mark schemes and mutual respect. It should always be managed as an exercise with clear parameters and goals to guide student interaction, and cannot replace teacher marking as a means of assessing and monitoring progress.
8. Individual subjects have their own marking policies that complement whole-school policy, and each Head of Department is responsible for checking that colleagues within their department are adhering to it via book scrutiny. Marking within departments should be in accordance with the relevant GCSE and A Level mark schemes.

LITERACY

Literacy and fluency of expression are important. Accurate Spelling and Grammar are important, as is the consistent use of Standard English. A collective approach to supporting student Literacy across all subjects and classes benefits all. A school wide Literacy policy is being developed to serve this aim.

NUMERACY

Numeracy is important. A collective approach to supporting student Numeracy across all subjects and classes benefits all. A school wide Numeracy policy is being developed to serve this aim.

RECORDING

Each subject area will record attainment and progress against appropriate criteria, including examination criteria in KS4 and KS5. Subject teacher records will be intelligible and subject to scrutiny from Heads of Department or SLT.

Specific expectations are outlined here:

1. All teachers have mark books (electronic or otherwise) and record their marking of work for every class they teach. Marks should be recorded with the date, and a note of the type of work undertaken. Staff are encouraged to consider the mark book potential of Excel, the MIS, or Firefly but no single format is compulsory.
2. The following should also be recorded, where appropriate and relevant: previous year's examination results; predicted grades; attendance and lateness; marks for assessed work; any lateness or inadequacy of work; commendations awarded and detentions given; relevant student profile information (including SEND, EAL, GMAT, STARS, Care List alerts, Medical alerts). A system of Class Profile data is in place to support this.
3. Departments are encouraged to provide students with their own mechanisms for recording and tracking progress and the impact of their responses to feedback. Students in all year groups should be aware of, and be able to discuss their own strengths and weaknesses in any given subject based on the feedback they are given by teachers.
4. Individual subjects should have a consistent policy about whether marks should normally be numerical, or in the form of grades, etc. Marks recorded should be of a format that can be used to track student progress, to predict future attainment and to inform planning and reporting. The compatibility of regular marking at KS4 and KS5 with published examination mark schemes is vital.
5. A 'class profiling' system exists alongside Department Schemes of Learning and Assessment that contain half termly Common Assessment schedules. This supports teacher capacity to stretch and challenge every individual in any given class appropriately by visualising and mapping individual needs and targets across time.