

Gairloch High School
Policy on Learning out of Class
(Homework)

SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD'S LEARNING

A GUIDE FOR PARENTS

2010

How can Homework help pupils?

Homework is an important part of school work and can benefit your son or daughter in a number of ways.

- training for pupils in planning and organising time
- developing good habits
- encouraging responsibility for learning
- providing information for parents
- providing opportunities for parental co-operation and support
- sustaining a line of communication between parent and teachers
- allowing practice and consolidation of work done in class
- allowing preparation for future classwork
- allowing assessment of pupil progress and mastery of work
- providing evidence for the evaluation of learning
- providing opportunities for creative and individualised work
- developing skills in using libraries and other learning resources
- offering access to resources not available in school

What sort of Homework exercises should your child be doing?

All pupils are given a planner in which to record homework tasks and assessment dates.

There are various types of work which pupils are expected to undertake at home e.g.

- Written exercises – set by the teacher to consolidate work done in class
- Project work/Investigation tasks – usually done over a longer time period and open ended, allowing pupils to follow up interests and enthusiasms
- Reading non-fiction or fiction - to find information, in preparation for classwork or for pleasure
- Revision for an assessment or examination - this may be a written paper, a practical exam, a talk or a speaking test
- Research – where information requires to be gathered in order to complete a specific task
- Finishing off work started in class

When is the best time for Homework or Study?

At whatever time suits the individual, but it is advantageous to establish a routine. Some pointers to sensible homework management include:

- Pupils should plan homework or study at regular times. Agree a time which suits your child best and stick to it
- Several shorter sessions are better than working late on the night before the homework is due
- Time should be set aside for homework most nights but some times of the week should be set aside for other activities
- The planners should be used to PLAN AHEAD in order to meet deadlines.
- Avoid leaving everything until the last minute

How can you support your child's studies?

The most important thing you can do is simply to take an interest in your child's work. Apart from assisting by establishing a good routine and providing a suitable place for homework completion you could consider the following:

- Ask what work has to be done, check the homework diary and while your son or daughter is in S1 to S4, sign it each week
- Don't send children to a room for several hours and think all problems are solved
- Check regularly whether help is needed and give assistance if and when you can
- Arrange for homework to be done with a friend/s if this is more effective and supportive for your child
- Offer advice but bear in mind methods may have changed since you were in school
- Suggest ways of learning which will help with understanding e.g. get your child to make up a quiz on the homework and test someone else on that quiz
- Encourage your child to seek help from the class teacher in advance of deadlines
- Discourage your child from turning up with incomplete homework
- Contact your child's Pupil Support Teacher as soon as problems arise or if your child regularly claims not to have any homework
- Above all, offer encouragement at all times

How much time should your child be spending on Homework?

It is not possible or desirable to set prescribed limits. The amount or duration of homework will vary from subject to subject and from pupil to pupil. The following is simply a rough guide to what, on average, is expected.

- S1/S2 - approximately 5 hours per week
- S3/S4 - a minimum of 1 hour for each Standard Grade subject i.e. approximately 8 hours per week
- S5/S6 - pupils in S5/S6 should expect a minimum of 2 hours per week per subject i.e. approximately 10 hours per week

What is the most suitable environment for completion of Homework?

Individuals have their preferences, but in general the following conditions are considered best:

- In a warm part of the house
- On a flat surface, preferably a table/desk
- In a well lit area
- Away from distractions such as siblings, TV and pets

Many children claim that they “can’t study without music on” – different conditions suit different people and, if the work is getting done, music may well help. Vocal music is not good for study and using it to blot out noise is not a good idea. Learning to cope with odd distractions is important. As the level of concentration required to complete the task increases it is likely that music will become another distraction. For some, learning is a social activity and they may learn better along with others – provided they stay on task. Circumstances are always relative to the task and the child may not be the best judge of that. That is why your support is crucial.

What will happen if Homework is not completed or is unsatisfactory?

We believe that homework is a crucial part of the learning experience. It can help to raise attainment and it helps to prepare pupils for the independent work they may need to do in the future.

If your child fails to complete a homework task, the teacher will record this, offer help if required and if appropriate, give an extension of time to complete the task.

If your child fails to meet the original or new homework deadline, the teacher will record this and send a letter home to you. When pupils fail to return three homework tasks or complete them unsatisfactorily, their Pupil Support Teacher will contact you to discuss the situation.

What should you do if your child is having difficulty with Homework?

If your child is having difficulty in completing a particular task then advise them to ask the class teacher for help as soon as possible and certainly before the homework is due to be handed in. If you have any queries about the homework in a particular subject or if your child regularly has difficulty completing homework in that subject then you should contact Pupil Support to discuss the matter.

If your child is having general difficulties with homework tasks that have been set in a range of subjects then you should contact Pupil Support to discuss the matter.