

GHS Policy

August 2010

CONTENTS	Page No.
Rationale	1
Purposes of Homework	1
Principles of Good Practice	2
Developing Policies and Programmes	4
Support with Homework	5
Quality, Quantity & Duration of Homework	6
Homework & Expectations	7
Evaluation & Monitoring of Homework Policy	8
 Appendices	
1. Departmental Homework Quality Assurance Checklist	9
2. Homework Guide for Pupils (in Planner?)	11
3. Pupil Homework Questionnaire	13
4. Parent Leaflet – Supporting Your Child’s Learning	15
5. Parents’ Homework Questionnaire	19
6. Parental Letter – non-completion of Homework	21

Gairloch High

POLICY ON OUT OF CLASS TASKS (aka HOMEWORK)

Rationale

Homework is part of a range of 'out of class tasks' that build on classroom activities. These include weekly homework clubs, Easter Study Clubs, Duke of Edinburgh's Award, educational visits, creative ventures and other events traditionally referred to as 'extra curricular'. Homework is recognised as having an important role to play in the education of pupils and evidence suggests that it can be equivalent to an additional year of study over the course of a secondary school career.

These tasks should be an integral part of the total learning experience enhancing learning, improving attainment, developing organisational skills, promoting independent learning and developing the good study habits that are essential for examination success.

All departments are expected to set appropriate homework tasks for pupils at all stages.

The purposes of quality homework

- Provide opportunities for individual learning
- Allow the practice and consolidation of work done in class
- Prepare for future classwork or assessment
- Provide opportunities to assess pupil progress and mastery of work
- Provide evidence of learning and teaching
- Provide training for pupils in planning and organising their time
- Encourage responsibility for learning and the development of good study habits
- Provide opportunities for enrichment of work done in school and develop interests beyond the syllabus
- Provide opportunities for individualised effort and initiative
- Provide parents with an insight into their child's learning
- Provide parents with an opportunity to support and encourage their child in cooperation with teachers

Principles of Good Practice

When departments are developing homework policies, programmes and tasks, the following principles of good practice should be used as criteria against which to judge their effectiveness.

1. Development of homework policy

- All staff should set an expectation that out of class tasks will be completed to deadline and to a high standard
- Where appropriate, there should be formal recognition of homework achievements through the reporting system
- Out of class tasks:
 - should be purposeful and be a natural extension of ongoing class work
 - should be varied to suit different learning styles
 - should be manageable within the time and resources available to all pupils
 - should develop self confidence and understanding
 - should allow for individual initiative and creativity
 - should be appropriate to pupil ability
 - should develop a variety of skills
 - should enhance learning or study skills
 - should be course based not teacher dependent i.e. pupils at the same stage on the same course should have the same planned programme of homework
- Homework marked by the teacher should constructively identify strengths and weaknesses
- There should be a development in both the amount and difficulty of homework from S1 to S6 based on the individual pupils on the course

2. Management and monitoring of homework

- Homework should be given with a regularity that takes into account the demand homework places on pupils and teachers
- Consideration where possible should be given to the homework workload across all subjects
- Adequate time should be allowed in the lesson for noting tasks
- The purpose of the homework and instructions about it should be clear
- Homework should be supplied in written form as well as given verbally
- Homework tasks should always be written in due date space within the planner
- Adequate time should be given for the completion of tasks
- Some pupils may require homework to be written for them
- Pupils should know where and how to get help with homework and should be encouraged to seek help before the homework is due
- The amount and type of homework set should not take up a disproportionate amount of teacher non-contact time
- Homework should always be checked and recognition or reward given for work done (including use of credits where appropriate)
- Checking homework in class should not take up a disproportionate time nor should speaking to those who have not completed the task
- A variety of marking/checking approaches should be used to help manage the homework workload
- Teacher assessed homework should be fed back as promptly as possible to maintain pupil commitment
- Recognition should also be given for other learning at home – eg relevant reading or family activities
- Quality Assurance of the recording and monitoring of homework should take place as part of the ongoing subject review process

Developing Homework Policies and Programmes

Each department's homework policy should be brought in line with this school homework policy and should include:

- a statement on the purpose of homework within the subject
- a description of the types of homework issued
- an indication of the frequency and amount of homework (to be agreed across school)
- a statement of the procedures for issuing, recording, providing feedback and monitoring homework

Departments should have a planned yet flexible programme across the course, which includes an appropriate selection of tasks.

Differentiated work should be provided. This can be achieved in some subjects by setting an open-ended task in which all pupils will achieve some degree of success. In other subjects, the task may need to be the same for all pupils, with differentiation being achieved through increased levels of teacher support. Differentiation by task should be used where appropriate.

During the planning and development of homework programmes, the Support for Learning department should be consulted to ensure that appropriate tasks are set to accommodate the needs of all learners. Consideration should also be given to developing a homework programme that has sufficient variety to motivate all learners across the ability range.

Consideration should be given to the different ways in which homework can be set. These may include planned tasks that are an integral part of coursework, spontaneous work arising from classwork and from time to time, finishing off work begun in the classroom. Group homework using email and telephone is another example. Staff may negotiate with pupils thereby supporting them in their own planning of study schedules. Care should be taken to ensure that finishing off classwork is not used as a substitute for a planned programme as this can result in little or no homework for some, while those most in need of help are left with the greatest amount of homework with the least support. There may be legitimate situations where finishing off classwork is appropriate where there has been deliberate time wasting in class.

When evaluating existing homework and developing new programmes, staff should make use of the checklist in Appendix 1.

Departments should work towards, where feasible, the creation, publication and maintenance of a plan of subject homework.

Support with Homework

Support for pupils may be provided in the following ways:

- Statement of learning intention for each task
- Providing a planner to record and manage homework
- Guidance on homework (Appendix 2)
- Guidance on the use of the planner
- Highlighting the importance of homework and study skills through PSHE
- All staff actively encouraging and overseeing the use of the homework planner
- SMT, Pupil Support and Register teachers monitoring the use of the planner on a regular basis
- Pupil Support monitoring the use of the planner and parental signatures in the planner during PSHE
- Taking regular feedback from pupils on homework issues via the Pupils Council and the use of questionnaires (Appendix 3)
- Ensuring that pupils have access to resources required to complete homework tasks including access to ICT resources, buddies and the use of the library as an appropriate place to complete homework

Support for parents can be provided in the following ways:

- Information about the type and duration of homework tasks set
- A summary of the homework policy
- Advice on how to support their child with homework (Appendix 4)
- Feedback on their child's achievements in homework
- The planner as a means of communicating with their child's teachers on homework issues
- Opportunities to give feedback on homework (See Appendix 5)
- Opportunities to discuss homework policy through the Parent Council
- Issuing pupil reports which include reference to the quality of homework completed and the regularity of meeting deadlines (PT input)
- Information accumulated in the homework referral conference

Support for staff will be provided in the following ways:

- The policy document will give clear recognition of the workload associated with the setting and marking of homework
- Possible strategies for managing homework
- Support strategies for dealing with late, sub-standard or incomplete homework (Appendix 6)
- Procedures for monitoring pupil use of the planner

Quality, Quantity and Duration of Homework

In terms of quality, the key factors are that homework be appropriate, enjoyable, engaging and enhancing. The amount and duration of homework will vary. Some subjects will provide small amounts regularly. Others will require pupils to involve themselves in considerable research, investigation and drafting which may be spread over a considerable period of time.

Consideration should be given to the time of the year and the pressure of exams.

Timings below should therefore be considered in general terms and be weighted accordingly across the course.

- The amount of homework in S1 and S2 is expected to be approximately 5 hours per week
- Pupils in S3 and S4 should have approximately 8 hours per week, allowing 1 hour minimum per Standard Grade subject
- Pupils in S5 and S6 should have approximately 10 hours, 2 hours minimum per subject

Homework and Expectations

All staff will have high expectations with regard to the completion and standard of homework. Verbal and written praise is used to motivate pupils to complete homework. Comments on the quality of homework also form part of the report to parents as an additional motivating factor.

While there are no specific punishments for failure to return or complete homework, it is a crucial aspect of learning. Teachers aim to set tasks that are useful and relevant.

Since it is accepted that pupils can gain considerably from the development of good homework habits, failure to submit work on time and/or of a reasonable standard should be acted on as follows:

- It should be noted by the teacher
- The class teacher will explain the consequences of non-completion of homework in terms of progress and provision of constructive feedback
- If appropriate a short extension to the homework deadline may be given with its duration determined by the type and length of work to be submitted and this should be noted in the homework diary
- It may be appropriate to arrange a time for the pupil to complete homework at school
- If the pupil has experienced difficulties with the homework task then further assistance should be given although it is expected that the pupil will have attempted to seek help ahead of the deadline
- Teachers should record failure to produce work in the homework referral conference for the information of other staff.
- If the original deadline is not met and, in the judgement of the teacher, there are no extenuating circumstances, or if the new deadline is not met, the class teacher should issue a letter for the parent
- A pattern of poorly prepared, late or non-existent homework represented by three referrals should result in Pupil Support staff discussing this with the pupil and contacting the parent
- **Homework Club organised and run by S6 pupils available for all but encouraged in the case of pupils finding homework completion a problem.**
- **Punishment exercises for late homework, sub-standard homework or non-completion of homework are not appropriate.**
- Where problems persist SMT will invite parents in to discuss

Evaluation and Monitoring of Homework Policy

At individual pupil level this will be done by:

- Checking use of planner (all staff)
- Issuing questionnaires
- Issuing parental letters where necessary (all staff)

At departmental level this will be done by:

- Using the departmental homework quality assurance checklist when evaluating homework (See Appendix 1)
- Issuing a copy of the departmental homework policy to the SMT link
- Developing a recording and monitoring system for the department as part of overall pupil tracking
- Periodic review of the homework policy
- Ongoing review of homework tasks where appropriate as part of evaluation of teaching and learning

At whole school level this will be done by:

- Providing every pupil with a planner
- Monitoring numbers of referral by pupil (Pupil Support)
- Contacting parents to discuss homework issues (Pupil Support)
- Regular review of the homework policy as part of the cycle of review
- Review use of the planner incorporating improvements where appropriate
- Formal evaluation of homework practice with pupils during checks by staff
- Formal evaluation of homework practice with parents e.g. at Parents' Evenings
- Providing opportunities for discussion of the homework policy for pupils, staff and parents
- SMT & Pupil Support meeting with parents to discuss homework issues where appropriate
- SMT liaises with Support for Learning and PTs Faculty regarding differentiation and whole school effectiveness of provision