

Homework Policy

“Homework is part and parcel of a good education.” DfE Teacher Standards (2012)

“Homework can help students to develop their self-discipline, time-management skills and independent learning abilities.” DfE Teaching and learning: Achieving high standards - guidance notes (2011)

At Devonport High School for Girls, we believe that homework is an essential part of a students’ overall curriculum that arises from a well-planned scheme of work. It plays an important role in reinforcing learning and developing essential skills, such as critical thinking, time management, and independent study habits. We recognise homework should vary in nature, both in focusing on diverse outcomes (e.g., essay, multimedia, creative / research projects, language practice) and skills development (e.g., consolidating knowledge, applying ideas, problem-solving, critical analysis, evaluating viewpoints).

Purpose of Homework

Homework assignments should reinforce and supplement classroom instruction. They should provide opportunities for students to practise skills and concepts they have learned in class, prepare for upcoming lessons, and develop independent study habits.

Quality and Quantity of Homework

Homework should be meaningful, relevant, and appropriately challenging. It should not be low-value tasks that have no link to the curriculum. The quantity of homework assigned should be reasonable and consider the age, year group, and learning needs of the students. In lower years, several subjects will set one task per cycle, which provides scope for students to complete a more meaningful task that develops many skills. The DfE's "Teacher workload reduction toolkit" (2018), highlights the importance of setting homework that is purposeful and manageable for students, to ensure that it is effective and supports student learning. To emphasise the significance of reading for academic progress across all subjects, we prioritise the implementation of two 30-minute reading sessions per week using Sparx Reader for students in lower school. For all other subjects the quantity of home learning can be seen below:

Lower years (Year 7-8)	To not exceed 4 hours per week	40 minutes per homework
Middle years (Year 9-11)	To not exceed 5- 6 hours per week*	45 - 60 minutes per homework
Upper years (Year 12-13)	To not exceed 10 hours per week*	60 – 75 minutes per homework

We will provide a homework schedule to students and staff, indicating the specific week in which each subject will assign a task

- *N.B. As internal and external examinations are approached departments may set extra work that specifically focuses on preparing for these examinations.*

Flexibility and Design

We recognise that students have different needs. Where possible, homework assignments should be flexible and adaptable to different student needs, including those with special educational needs or who are students with English as an additional language (EAL). When designing homework assignments, teachers should consider the sequencing of information and tasks to ensure that students have the necessary background knowledge and skills to complete the homework successfully. Homework tasks should also be broken down into manageable chunks, with clear instructions and opportunities for students to receive guidance and feedback, "Principles of Instruction: Research-Based Strategies That All Teachers Should Know" by Barak Rosenshine (2012).

The Student Support Team also offer Twilight sessions by invitation to students who would benefit from direct support from a member of the team. This is to promote engagement with home learning tasks and individualised approaches. It is also recognised that to support wellbeing there may be times where a pause in home learning is necessary, particularly where there is existing multi-agency work and recommendations.

Feedback and Support

Timely and meaningful feedback on homework assignments, through a variety of mediums, will be provided (e.g. whole class feedback, quizzing knowledge learned, or feedback via an online package). Teachers will also be available to offer support and clarification to students who may have questions or need additional help. Students are encouraged to seek help when needed and to communicate with their teachers regarding any concerns or challenges they may be facing. *To alleviate workload, our homework policy encourages staff to streamline the marking process by embracing online platforms or implementing whole class feedback strategies, thereby reducing the time spent on marking individual books.*

Technology and Resources

We recognise the importance of technology and other resources in supporting student learning. Homework is set through an online integrated school management platform called Edulink One, which provides students and their parents/carers with an easy way to track what work has been set and completed. Teachers may also incorporate digital resources and tools into homework assignments to enhance learning and engagement and make third party homework assignments in Microsoft Teams visible through Edulink One.

Time Management

We recognise that homework can be time-consuming and needs to be balanced with other activities and responsibilities. Therefore, we encourage students to manage their time effectively and prioritise their homework. To assist students with this, the school provides a timetable for setting homework over a cycle and provides ongoing guidance and support on time management strategies through the pastoral curriculum.

Late Work and Extensions

Teachers will grant extensions for homework assignments due to exceptional circumstances, such as illness or family emergencies. The teachers should consider the student's individual circumstances before granting extensions.

Academic Honesty

Students are expected to complete homework assignments honestly and independently. Cheating, plagiarism, or other forms of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and will result in appropriate sanctions.

With the advancement of technology, the use of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies has become more prevalent in academic research and assignments. When using AI technologies, students should cite the sources of their AI-generated content and explain how the AI technology was used in their work.

Students should not use AI technologies to engage in academic misconduct, such as plagiarism or cheating. Students must ensure that any content generated with AI technologies is original and properly attributed to its sources.

By following these guidelines, we hope to create a positive and supportive environment that promotes academic success, fosters critical thinking and independent study habits, and prepares students for lifelong learning.

Student Guide

1. Homework is an important part of your learning at our school.
2. It helps you to practise and consolidate what you've learned in class.
3. Doing homework will prepare you for education throughout your life and help you become more independent.
4. Homework is a great way to develop important skills like time management, self-discipline, and determination.
5. We expect all our pupils to take homework seriously and do their best.
6. Homework is set according to our school's Homework Policy.
7. If you're in lower school, your teachers will set you no more than 4 hours of homework per week using Edulink, following the published schedule.
8. If you're in middle school, your teachers will set approximately 5-6 hours of homework per week using Edulink, following the published schedule.
9. If you're in upper school, your teachers will set you approximately 10 hours of homework per week to be completed in study periods in school and at home.
10. Regular engagement in reading for pleasure is highly recommended as it fosters an appreciation of a wide range of texts, expands one's breadth of knowledge, understanding and vocabulary. Consistent reading habits exhibit a significant correlation with academic progress, while also contributing positively to overall well-being. "Twist, E., Harrison, C., & Crisp, G. (2012). The impact of reading for pleasure on attainment and attitudes to reading: Evidence from the impact of reading on attainment project. London: National Literacy Trust."
11. It is important to maintain academic integrity and avoid plagiarism. You should refrain from using AI chat bots unless agreed in advance with your teacher. When using any external resources, make sure to properly cite and credit the sources used in your work according. Plagiarism, including the misuse of AI chat bots to generate or copy content, is not acceptable and can have serious consequences. Always prioritise originality and honest effort when completing assignments.

TIPS FOR GETTING THE BEST OUT OF HOMEWORK

1. Make a note of any additional information your teacher provides when assigning homework shared through Edulink, and write it in your exercise book.
2. Understand the homework when your teacher assigns it, and if you are unsure, ask your teacher for help. If you are unsure, ask your teacher for help.
3. Aim to complete your homework on or by the scheduled due date, while the material is still fresh in your mind. Do not leave it until the night before it is due.
4. Set aside a regular time for homework each night and plan out your time carefully so you have enough time to do everything.
5. Find a quiet place where you can concentrate and work without distractions.

Staff Guide

1. Purpose of Homework

- Reinforce and supplement classroom instruction
- Provide opportunities for practice and skill development
- Foster independent study habits

2. Quality and Quantity of Homework

- Assign meaningful, relevant, and appropriately challenging tasks
- Focus on diverse outcomes and skills development
- Consider the following guidelines for homework duration:
 - ✓ Lower years (Year 7-8): Homework should not exceed 4 hours per week, with 45 minutes per homework task.
 - ✓ Middle years (Year 9-11): Homework should not exceed 5-6 hours per week, with a maximum of 60 minutes per homework task.
 - ✓ Upper years (Year 12-13): Homework should not exceed 10 hours per week, with 60-75 minutes per homework task.

3. Schedule

- Provide a homework schedule to students and staff
- Indicate the specific week in which each subject will assign a task
- Helps students manage their workload effectively

4. Flexibility and Design

- Accommodate diverse student needs (e.g., special educational needs, EAL learners, elite athletes and talented musicians)
- Make homework assignments flexible and adaptable
- Consider sequencing, background knowledge, and skill requirements
- Break down tasks into manageable chunks
- Provide clear instructions and opportunities for guidance and feedback

5. Feedback and Support

- Provide timely and meaningful feedback on homework assignments
- Find ways to reduce workload for staff e.g., using online platforms or whole class feedback
- Be available to offer support and clarification to students who are stuck
- Encourage open communication between students and teachers

6. Technology and Resources

- Set homework through the integrated school management platform, Edulink One or indirectly through assignments in MS Teams
- Incorporate digital resources and tools to enhance learning and engagement

7. **Time Management**

- Encourage students to balance homework with other activities and responsibilities
- Keep to the homework timetable for setting homework over a cycle
- Offer ongoing guidance and support on time management strategies
- Always provide more than one evening to complete a task

8. **Late Work and Extensions**

- Grant extensions for homework assignments due to exceptional circumstances
- Consider each student's individual circumstances when deciding on extensions

9. **Academic Honesty**

- Emphasise the importance of academic honesty
- Expect students to complete homework honestly and independently
- Apply school sanctions when addressing cases of cheating, plagiarism, or any other form of academic dishonesty.

10. **AI Technology Usage**

- Remind students to cite sources and not to use AI-generated content
- If you have permitted the use of AI-generated content insist that students explain how AI technology was used in their work and cited appropriately
- Ensure originality and proper attribution of content

Conclusion:

By following these guidelines, we aim to create a positive and supportive environment that promotes academic success, fosters critical thinking and independent study habits, and prepares students for lifelong learning. Your dedication and adherence to our Homework Policy will contribute significantly to the educational growth and development of our students.

