



Homework Policy

February 2021

Homework Policy

When teachers design homework to meet specific purposes and goals, more students complete their homework and benefit from the results. Epstein & Van Voorhis (2001)

Introduction

Homework has been found to have a valuable impact on student learning outcomes. This is most likely to be the case when there is a definite purpose regarding student learning, underpinned by clear instructions. By linking homework directly to what has been done in class, learners can practise skills, deepen their understanding, and learn how to review content that will be useful in an examination setting. Similarly, it is hoped that students will learn the benefits of perseverance and hard work so that they are able to 'stick with' tasks as the tasks become more challenging.

Therefore, we assert that:

1. Homework should be 'doable' and relatively 'low stakes.' This means that most learners should be able to approach the work set, confident that they can finish it on their own.
2. Learners need feedback to improve the standard of their work. This feedback can be given in a variety of ways, for example, in a written or formative comment, orally where the learner is asked to write down the feedback, in peer-to-peer assessment where learners are told the rubric for assessing and where they identify features of quality.
3. Although, homework may be given to 'pre-teach' or engage students in an initial activity, homework is not used to cover large sections of content or curriculum.
4. Punishing learners for not doing homework by giving them more work to do is unlikely to have a positive outcome.

How we create an ‘everyone does homework’ culture.

Teachers in Goatstown ETSS will set homework that is *suitable to their subject, is linked directly to their subject specifications* and which *allows learners to demonstrate their knowledge, understanding and skills*.

Goatstown Educate Together Secondary School

POSITIVE APPROACH TO HOMEWORK

IDENTIFY DIFFICULTIES

EXTENSION
EXTRA TIME GIVEN TO COMPLETE TASKS

SIMPLIFY
MAKE THE TASK ACCESSIBLE

HELP
SCAFFOLD AND SUPPORT THE STUDENT

RAISE CONCERN
TUTOR - RESTORATIVE CONVERSATION -> SET GOALS

RAISE CONCERN
YEAR CO-ORDINATOR - RESTORATIVE CONFERENCE

KEEP PARENTS/GUARDIANS/CARERS INFORMED

Teachers will ensure homework is manageable by differentiating so that the homework is accessible for all and allows for challenge, stretch and enrichment opportunities.

There is a strong expectation that learners will do homework that is set and that they will ask for clarification about homework that they do not understand **before** they leave class. Teachers also understand that from time to time, students may need additional support to complete tasks.

If a student does not have their homework completed, then they will be offered the following supports:

- **Extension (E)** – extra time to complete assignments.
- **Simplify (S)**– a paired back and streamlined assignment.
- **Help (H)**– scaffolding, for example a supportive step by step guide to complete assignments.

Subject teachers will take a restorative approach to encourage students to identify obstacles and barriers to homework completion while ensuring the students fulfil their duties as outlined in this policy.

Parents/Guardians/Carers will be informed via the school journal when students have not completed an assignment and which option the student has been given an extension (E), simplify (S) or help (H).

Where a teacher has completed three attempts to enhance a learner’s approach to homework and where there is no improvement, the subject teacher can raise a concern with the student’s clan tutor. The clan tutor will engage in a restorative discussion and together the tutor and student will agree what the student will need to Stop/Start/Continue doing. These will be translated into student goals using the tutor report page in the school journal.

If the need arises, the tutor will raise their concern with the Year Co-ordinator who will organise a restorative conference with the student and their Parents/Guardians/Carers.

Once a student has engaged with the process at any stage, (subject teacher, class tutor or year coordinator) and there has been an improvement, there is a reset, and the student starts again. However, the records are retained on VShare for future reference. Either way, students start with a 'clean slate' at the start of each half-term.

How the policy and the way we set homework links to our vision statement

Our school vision statement:

Goatstown Educate Together Secondary School is an equality-based, democratically run, inclusive and student-centred community of life-long learners which is underpinned by positive relationships. We value, encourage and reward kindness, effort, and creativity. We support and challenge students to develop the ability to persevere and to learn the value of working hard. Our community encourages students to develop critical thinking skills.

We prepare students for responsible global citizenship and help them to contribute to sustainable development and to challenge social injustice. Our aim is to be an exceptional school which values highly effective teaching and learning. Our school places great store in a positive partnership between home, school and the wider community ensuring that we can be alert and responsive to the changing needs of our students.

Our Vision says:	Our expectations around homework are that:
<i>Student-centred community</i>	Students/ Learners will learn the value of study and homework in helping them to become independent learners.
<i>We value effort</i>	Doing homework well requires effort and perseverance.
<i>We encourage critical thinking skills</i>	Students can learn to learn by doing homework themselves knowing that their teachers are there to support them if they do not understand something.
<i>Underpinned by positive relationships</i>	Positive relationships underpin highly effective learning and teaching which are supported by highly effective homework practices.
<i>Positive partnership between home, school...</i>	Families will support the school in helping students to acquire good work habits around homework and study.

It is the responsibility of teachers to:

- Regularly set suitable homework with **clear steps and instructions**.
- Make the purpose and benefit of the homework evident.
- **Differentiate** as appropriate insuring that assignments are accessible to all.
- Provide a range of **manageable homework tasks** that develop knowledge, understanding, skills and which offers **stretch and challenge**.
- Ensure students write homework in their journal.
- Check homework and offer Extension (E), Simplify (S) and Help (H) when appropriate.
- Provide good quality formative feedback (e.g., **What went well & Even better if...**).
- Use peer and self-directed feedback as appropriate (written or verbal).
- Keep records (e.g., in VShare).
- Keep parents/carers/guardians informed of progress.
- Help students to identify and overcome obstacles and barriers and work towards a common goal.

It is the responsibility of students to:

- Follow the clear steps and instructions given by teachers.
- **Ask questions** when they need to.
- Appreciate the purpose and benefit of the homework.
- Complete homework to the very best of their ability, remembering **'Don't stop until you are proud.'**
- Develop their knowledge, understanding, skills and take on stretch and challenge opportunities.
- **Write their homework in their journal.**
- Ask for an Extension (E), Simplify (S) and Help (H) when appropriate.
- Act on feedback (e.g., What went well & Even better if) and apply it to your work next time.
- Show journal notes to parents/carers/guardians.
- Tell teachers when you are experiencing difficulties and **work towards a common goal**.
- **Catch up** on missed work due to illness or absence (including school business).

It is the responsibility of parents to:

- Help students set up good routines for completing homework e.g., finding a quiet space, getting organised, making a plan, time keeping, and taking breaks.

- Check on journal and homework assignments regularly until students develop good independent skills.
- Encourage students to complete work to the best of their ability.
- Encourage students to communicate difficulties with teachers.
- **Check the journal** for notes from teachers regarding homework and initial these as a way of acknowledging them.
- Support students and teachers in **working towards a common goal**.

Links to other policies:

The Homework policy is embedded in the school’s vision statement.

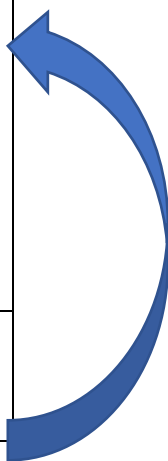
The Homework Policy is purposefully not linked to the school’s Code of Positive Behaviour because there is normally a good reason why a student cannot complete a task. In supporting students to complete their homework, students will be reminded of their responsibilities and their parents will be informed using a note in the journal.

The Additional Support Needs (ASN) Policy refers to supporting students with additional needs in completing their homework.

Homework policy Implementation – FOR STAFF HANDBOOK

If students do not complete homework:

<p>Teaches should</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask why and assist the student to identify obstacles/barriers and difficulties they are having • Offer E/S/H and further differentiate homework • Record no homework and the E/S/H in students notes section in VShare • Write factual note in journal to ensure Parents/Guardians/Carers are kept informed • Remind students of their duties as outlined in the homework policy
<p>Students should</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain why homework was not completed • Chose E/S/H and complete the agreed homework • Get note initialled by Parents/Guardians/Carers



The subject teacher should **repeat** this process and work to encourage a positive approach to homework. **Each half-term should be a fresh start and a blank canvass. To discuss.**

If after three attempts to improve the situation the issue remains, then the subject teacher can raise their concern with the clan tutor via the “assign to” function in VShare

Tutors should	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask what has been going on • Discuss what the student should start doing/stop doing/continue doing • Translate these into SMART goals in the journal (using the tutor report page) • Remind students of their duties as outlined in the homework policy • Record update in notes section in VShare • Write factual note in journal
Students should	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain what has been going on • Agree on start/stop/continue doing and SMART goals • Get report filled in and signed by teachers and Parents/Guardians/Carers

If progress is not made. The tutor should refer the student to the year coordinator.

Year Co-ordinator should	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organise the restorative conference with students and Parents/Guardians/Carers • Ask what has been going on • Discuss what the student should start doing/stop doing/continue doing • Translate these into new SMART goals in the journal (using the Year Head report page) • Remind students and Parents/Guardians/Carers of their duties as outlined in the homework policy • Record update in notes section in VShare
Students should	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain what has been going on • Agree on start/stop/continue doing and SMART goals • Get report filled in and signed by teachers and Parents/Guardians/Carers

Features of good homework

The following features were co-constructed in a staff meeting in 2021 and drawn on the parent survey and ASN homework document.

Homework:

- Is written in the journal by student and posted in teams by teacher.
- Has a clear purpose with clear instructions.

- Revises and reinforces classwork.
- Offers flexibility in the ways students access material, engage with it and show what they know. This is referred to as a multi-modal format.
- Is accessible to all and allows all students to use their strengths.
- Offers stretch, enrichment and challenge e.g., use of open-ended questions, analysis, application, synthesis and explanation (evaluation) type activities.
- Develops and demonstrates knowledge, understanding and skills.
- May form the basis for a future classroom activity.
- Is linked to subject specifications and their action verbs.
- Is manageable and meaningful.
- Allows for formative feedback to be given by teacher, peer, or self (verbally or written).
- Encourages independence and good study habits.
- Has associated Rubrics/Success criteria used to outline expectations and what success looks like.
- Is interesting and stimulating.