

Menzieshill High School

Homework Guide

For pupils and parents

Homework at Menzieshill High School

The purpose of this guide is to provide to parents an outline of the school policy for homework. This guide contains information on the types and frequency of homework you can expect for your child as they progress through the school. In addition this guide outlines our expectations for pupils, what procedures we have in place to build partnership with home and advice for parents on how they can support their child to take on greater responsibility for their learning.

Homework plays a crucial role in the learning experience for our pupils. Homework is an integral part of the learning process and fulfils some important functions. By supporting the school homework policy your child can improve their learning, increase attainment and develop key skills which will help develop their capacity as lifelong learners, able to meet the challenges of a rapid changing world and labour market.

We believe that parents can play a crucial role in supporting their child's educational progress by encouraging their child and providing a suitable environment for home study.

Developing a regular routine for completing homework tasks provides a number of benefits for pupils:

Benefits of homework

- Promotes independent learning and effective study habits
- Encourage and develop skills in planning and organising time
- Give pupils a sense of working on their own and encourage greater responsibility for their learning
- Prepares for examinations and tests
- Help to assess pupil progress
- Challenges and extends gifted and talented children
- Reinforces and consolidates learning from the classroom
- Develops research and investigative skills
- Help prepares for the introduction of new learning and concepts in the classroom
- Provides opportunities for pupils to develop their interests in subjects.

Types and Purposes of Homework

Homework can come in a variety of forms and should not be thought of as merely a written task and it can be issued for different reasons. It could be issued to consolidate and reinforce learning that has taken place in class or can require pupils to apply learning in new contexts which leads to deeper understanding. Homework can also be issued to practice and improve skills such as problem solving. Alternatively homework may be issued to develop time management and independent learning skills. Some homework might be issued to prepare for the introduction of a new topic or concept. Homework can come in a variety of forms and it does not necessarily have to be completed at home.

Homework can take a variety of forms and can differ from subject to subject. Examples of homework activities could include the following:

Written tasks

Research and investigative activities

General or specific reading

Listening tasks

Composition

Finishing class work

Project work

Folio work

Drawing/ sketching

Revision or studying prior to assessment/exam

Practising words or phrases

Collecting items

Making or designing something

Observing and recording

Carrying out a survey or questionnaire

Watch television programme or reading a newspaper

Answering exam style questions

What pupils and parents told us about homework

We recently consulted with parents, pupils and staff to identify ways we could alter our homework procedures to make them more effective. From the returns from the parental consultation we established the following

- Parents would like to know in advance when homework is issued and when it is due to be returned. Parental returns indicated strongly that they would support the aims of the school homework policy and ensure that their child completed homework
- Parents did not think that pupils used homework planners as they get older though they did feel that planners were useful for pupils in the junior school (S1/2).
- Parents were not convinced that the system of sending letters to inform parents if homework had not been completed was effective

We also consulted with pupils via pupil surveys and focus groups. From the returns we established the following:

- Pupils in S1/2 preferred the use of planners to organise their homework but older pupils did not. Older pupils indicated they preferred the use of alternatives such as mobile phone functions to record homework deadlines. Pupils did not feel on the whole that they had difficulties organising their time and they did not feel that they received too much homework. The vast majority of pupils indicated that parents encouraged or insisted that they complete homework.
- Pupils expressed a preference for a regular routine for homework. Pupil responses indicated that they found it easier when departments had set days for the issuing of homework and set days for the return of homework.

As a result we have altered our homework procedures to respond to some of the issues that were identified through our consultation process. (see **Revised Homework Procedures at Menzieshill High** below)

Our expectations of pupils at Menzieshill High

- Pupils should bring homework planner (or alternative) to school on a daily basis
- Record homework in planner (or alternative)
- Hand homework in on time
- Complete homework to the best of ability
- Plan time effectively so that help or support can be accessed prior to homework deadlines

Homework- How You Can Help

Parents play a very important role in fostering good home study habits. Parents can support their child by monitoring the quality of homework and encouraging their son/daughter to complete homework to the best of their ability. In particular parents can help by providing a suitable environment for homework and by engaging their child in discussion of progress in and out with the classroom. We would also advise that parents monitor the amount of time your child spends watching TV or using video games etc.

Tips for parents:

- Provide a quiet place for your child to work undisturbed by distractions
- Help your child get into a regular routine for completing homework
- Discuss homework with your child, check their planner or ask them what they have to do
- Read over the homework when it is finished. It should be well presented with a date and a title. If you think the work is poor, careless or untidy ask for the work to be done again
- Find out how successful they were with their homework, what feedback did they get
- Pupils preparing for SQA exams will always have revision to do. This could involve going over work and making notes, completing past paper questions or other study techniques.
- Check the school website- there may be useful links which can help you and your child
- Contact your child's Guidance Teacher if you have any concerns over homework.

Support Available at Menzieshill High

If your child is experiencing difficulty completing homework they should contact their teacher in the first instance for additional support prior to the deadline for submission of any homework tasks. Consequently we would recommend that, where possible, your child attempts homework tasks a few days prior to any deadlines so that help can be accessed if they find some aspects of the homework difficult to complete.

If there are not suitable facilities at home then pupils can make use of the learning resource centre for homework. This is available for pupils from 8:30 every morning, at lunchtimes then after school from 3:30 till 4:30. Most departments also offer study support or homework clubs which run either at lunchtimes or after school on set days. In addition most departments will offer drop in sessions if pupils request this. If required your child should contact the head of department to discuss this.

If you would like to discuss any aspect of support please contact your child's Guidance Teacher.

Homework in the LRC

As well as providing a good environment for study with individual study carrels and shared tables, the LRC has an extensive range of resources selected to support the curriculum. Miss Scott, the Librarian, is always available to support and help with homework. The LRC also has 18 fully networked PCs which allow pupils to access their homework on Glow and complete any homework which requires computer or internet access.

Revised Homework Procedures at Menzieshill High

In response to consultations with staff, pupils and parents we have updated our previous homework procedures and intend to pilot a number of initiatives over the next 2-3 years aimed at enhancing the flow of information to parents and the responsibilities we place on pupils.

Homework on Glow

From June 2013 Departments will store homework activities which have been issued on Glow. All pupils have access to this and will be able to download homework tasks if they have mislaid the homework issued by the class teacher.

Planners/use of mobile devices

In response to feedback from pupil focus groups and a parental consultation pupils in S3-6 will be allowed to record homework tasks on handheld devices if pupils wish to. This option will be at the direction of the class teacher and will be reviewed. Pupils are expected to follow the acceptable use guidelines that apply across the school regarding the use of handheld devices. Pupils in S3-6 will be issued with a slimmed down planner. Pupils in S1-2 will be issued with the standard planner and we would encourage parents to check this regularly.

Procedures for non-completion of Homework

In session 2013-2014 we will trial the use of the Group Call texting facility to inform parents when homework has not been completed. This is in response to responses from pupils, staff and parents regarding the effectiveness of sending letters to parents. The school Learning and Teaching working group will evaluate the effectiveness of this approach. If you receive a text informing you of non-completion of homework please encourage your child to return the homework at the next immediate opportunity.

Parental information

In response to parental feedback we have provided information on the following pages on homework issued by each department. This information refers in the main to set homework tasks. Pupils should engage in regular revision and study in addition to set homework. Some departments may also issue ad hoc homework tasks as appropriate to the nature and content of courses.

DEPARTMENT- ENGLISH

Purposes of Homework –

- To develop key skills in reading, writing, talking and listening
- To develop or consolidate knowledge of texts and aspects of writer's craft
- To improve language skills and spelling
- To extend vocabulary
- Types of homework

S1-S3

- Language exercises
- Vocabulary to learn and revise
- Spelling exercises to learn and revise
- Essay planning and essay writing
- Research
- Reading –library books

S4-S6

- Research
- Vocabulary to learn and revise
- Spelling exercises to learn and revise
- Close Reading
- Essay planning and essay writing
- Revision

Frequency of homework issued for each stage

S1 Fortnightly language exercises and vocabulary work

S2 Fortnightly language exercises and vocabulary work

S3 Fortnightly language exercises and vocabulary work

S4 Weekly for National 5 pupils; approximately fortnightly for National 4 and 3 pupils

S5/6 Weekly for Higher pupils; approximately fortnightly for Intermediate1 and 2 pupils

Department- Mathematics

Purposes of homework

To reinforce elements of the curriculum and to still good study skills in our students.

Types of homework

- Investigative pieces of work that relate to those topics being covered in class.
- Homework exercises written on sheets or within homework booklets.

Frequency of homework issued for each stage

S1 Fortnightly homework

S2 Fortnightly homework

S3 Weekly homework. For students in S4 3Ma1 and 3Ma2
Fortnightly homework for those tending to N3 & N4 in S4

S4 Weekly homework for N5 pupils
Fortnightly homework for those taking N3 & N4 in S4

S5/6 Weekly homework

Department- Modern Languages

Purposes of homework

S1 – S3

- Vocabulary learning
- Preparation of talk and writing pieces
- Preparation/learning for presentations/writing lists
- Cultural research

S4 – S6

- Writing texts for internal assessments
- Grammar practice
- Past paper practice

Types of homework

S1 – S3 Selections of cultural tasks (27 Aug – Dec)

S1 – S3 Booklets (8 pieces of work Jan – March) Extended reading OR phrase building

Relevant set page(s) from vocabulary booklets (for vocal tests)

S4 – S6 Individuals tasks/worksheets issued

Frequency of homework issued for each stage

S1

- Vocabulary x 1 per week
- Cultural task OR piece of work in homework booklet x 1 per week or 2 weeks
- Revision for tests

S2

As above

S3

As Above

S4

- Preparation of speaking/writing texts x 1 per 3 weeks
- Vocabulary/grammar x 1 per week
- Reading x 1 per 2 weeks

S5/6

- Directed writing phrases x 1 per week
- Prep of writing/speaking texts x 1 as required
- Grammar as required (approx 1 per week)
- Reading text x 1 per 2 weeks

Department - Chemistry

Purposes of homework

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To consolidate learning, check understanding of content covered in lessons, give pupils opportunity to find information for themselves.

Types of homework

- Research
- Past paper questions
- Model building

Frequency of homework issued for each stage

S1 2/3 per topic

S2 2/3 per topic

S3 Every fortnight especially when studying a difficult topic

S4 Every fortnight

S5/6 Every fortnight

Department- Biology

Purposes of homework

- To complete some aspects of classwork on occasions
- To reinforce and consolidate work done in class
- To give pupils opportunities to research and expand their knowledge and particular topics
- To give practice in answering exam questions

Types of homework

- Questions (past papers) – knowledge and problem solving
- Research
- Use of Scholar (senior only)
- Producing posters/models (junior classes usually)

Frequency of homework issued for each stage

S1 2/3 per topic

S2 2/3 per topic

S3 3/4 per topic

S4 Issued every 1/2 weeks

S5/6 1/2 homework items per week

Department - Physics

Purpose of homework issued by the department

- To complete work began in class and not completed, where most of the rest of the class have completed, or to complete work class have not completed
- To help the learner who has been absent catch up on missed work
- To revise for a formal piece of assessment.
- To reinforce learning as part of a larger assessed project.
- To reinforce recent learning.
- To prepare for a new piece of learning.

Types of homework issued by the department

- Reinforcement of recent learning: Problems using formulas or answering questions based on recent lessons. Worksheets to fill in missing words.
- Larger project: (given a brief and over a few weeks), demonstrate knowledge gained from recent lessons.

Frequency Of homework issued for each stage

S1 2/3 per topic

S2 2/3 per topic

S3 Formal set homework every 2 weeks plus additional homework as appropriate

S4 Every week or 2. Set homework sheets per topic. Usually odd or even questions so some questions are available for self-revision or exam revision.

S4/6 Every week or 2. Set homework sheets per topic. In addition some questions are available for self-revision or exam revision. Pupils in S5/6 are also expected to work through Scholar materials

Department- Geography

Purposes of homework

Senior classes – to practice writing model answer

Junior Classes – to relate to or reinforce information related to class work

Types of homework

Higher – Exam questions

Advanced Higher – On-going coursework

S1 – S4 CfE – worksheets

Frequency of homework issued for each stage

S1 Every week or 2 of 6 week rotation

S2 Every week or 2 of 6 week rotation

S3 On average every 2 weeks

S4 On average every 2 weeks for formal set homework plus additional homework as appropriate

S5/6 Every week

Department- Modern Studies

Purposes of homework

- Develops/Strengthens skills and knowledge particular for assessment purposes
- Purposes of progression / feedback to pupils
- Practice
- Coursing for final exams

Types of homework

- S1 & S2 – Sheets which cover level ES and occasional research record.
- S3 & S4 – Homework jotters. Past exam type questions
- S5 & S6 – Essays / past paper questions / reports

Frequency of homework issued for each stage

S1 1 or 2 per unit or ½ unit

S2 1 or 2 per unit or ½ unit

S3 2/3 per unit (3 units in total)

S4 2/3 per unit (3 units in total)

S5/6 weekly or two weekly depending on place in course / time of year

Department- History

Purposes of homework

S1 S3 – To further their learning in relation to BGE

- To assess pupils against Es and Os

S4- S6 – To prepare pupils for assessments / national qualifications

To monitor progress through courses.

Types of homework

- Extended writing pieces : letter to a pen pal, newspaper reports
- Source work
- Closed passage Qs
- Exam Assessment – for revision
- Essays and source work (senior)

Frequency of homework issued for each stage

S1 2 homework tasks per rotation

S2 2 homework tasks per rotation

S3 2 formal homework tasks per rotation + informal homework tasks as appropriate

S4 Every 2 weeks for National 5, every 3 weeks for National 4

S5/6 homework every week

Department- Philosophy

Purposes of homework issued by the Department

- To raise attainment and achievement.
- To develop independent learning skills
- To extend home school links/

Types of homework issued by the department

Literacy, research, vocabulary, reflection, evaluation, personal search, citizenship. H + w Model answers.

Frequency of homework issued for each stage

S1-6 2 pieces of homework per unit in core classes

S4 1 piece of homework each 2-3 weeks

S5/6 1 piece of homework each 1-2 weeks

Department- Art and Design

Purposes of homework issued by the department

To reinforce and support work covered within the class. To generate evidence of personalised learning within practical projects. To help with recognition of how art and design and the visual elements impact on their lives out with school.

Types of homework issued by the department

- Research tasks
- Collecting visual materials
- Drawing
- Draft critical analysis of designer / artist work
- Attendance at Vocational classes (seniors only)

Frequency of homework issued for each stage

S1 – once a term

S2 – once a term

S3 – once per unit

S4 – Drawing practise alongside expressive unit

- Collecting visual materials alongside design unit
- Research artists and designers at beginning of each unit

S5-6 - Drawing practise alongside expressive unit

- Collecting visual materials alongside design unit
- Research artists and designers at beginning of each unit
- Complete sample question papers prior to prelim and exam diet.

Department – Business Studies

Purposes of homework issued by the department

- To reinforce learning
- To assess pupils level of understanding

Types of homework issued by the department

S1 – Workbook to write in – homework is a mixture of research and written responses

S3 – Workbook to write in – written responses.

S4 – Homework booklet and jotter

- Administration & IT – Workbook to write answers in
- Business Management – Workbook to write answers in

S5/S6

- Administration & IT – Homework booklet and a Homework Jotter are issues to all pupils
- Business Management - Homework booklet and a Homework Jotter are issues to all pupils

Frequency of homework issued for each stage

S1 – 5 pieces per year

S2 – N/A

S3 – 1 per unit of work (10 pieces per year)

S4 – 2 per unit of work

S5/S6 – 2/3 pieces per unit

Department- Computing

Purpose of homework used by the department

- Developing a pupil's sense of responsibility for him/her own learning
- Improve motivation
- Developing study skills
- Consolidating classwork
- Identifying teaching points which have/have not been understood
- Providing pupils with an additional opportunity for remediation or extension/formulating original ideas as applicable.

Types of Homework issued by department

The following types of homework can be used to support effective learning and teaching

- Completion of worksheets / exercises started in class
- Planning a solution or gathering of source information ahead of a practical lesson e.g. design a form layout for a database file on football teams or bring in a magazine page that you think has a good layout.
- Investigating an area of computing e. g. find out the names of three different bank ATM's or "Who invented the first computer?"
- Revising and memorising key information already covered.
- Past papers, ink exercise and revision exercises available in the department teaching notes.
- Annotating computer output e.g. indicate 4 different types of data used on this page or newspaper advert.
- Practising practical skills e.g. practise using a spell checker whenever you use a word processor this week
- Formulating new ideas/predicting results / applying knowledge to an unfamiliar situation e.g. describe how you would use the computer to help with the school's tuck shop accounts
- At Standard Grade some pupils may wish to attempt work of a more demanding nature e.g. a Foundation pupil may wish to attempt a General revision exercise or exam question.

Frequency of homework for each stage

- S1/S2 one research and one practical homework per topic
- S3 one research, one practical and two theory homework per topic
- S4-S6 one homework per week

Department- Music

Purposes of homework issued by the department

To reinforce and support work covered within the class.

Types of homework issued by the department

- Music literacy – S1-S6
- Practise instruments on weekly basis (S4-S6)
- Research – S1-S3
- Composition S3-S6
- Worksheets (Writing frames) S1-S3

Frequency of homework issued for each stage

S1 – once a term

S2 – once a term

S3 – once a term

S4 – Practise musical instrument(s) at least 3 times a week for 15 minutes.

- Twice a term

S5/S6 – Practice musical instrument(s) at least 4 times a week for 15 minutes

- Twice a term

Department- Home Economics

Purpose of homework – To support learning and attainment

S1-S3

- Develop good study routines
- Encourage pupils to take responsibility for their own learning
- Apply learning in the home environment
- Develop practical skills

S4-5

- Re-inforce material presented in the classroom
- Introduce pupils to a topic
- Give pupils the opportunity to see what they can achieve independently
- Help pupils master individual skills

Some types of homework

Type	Examples
Homework to support investigations	
Research	Using the internet, visiting the library, interviewing family members
Watching particular television programmes	The food Inspectors, Masterchef
Finding information from newspapers. magazines	Contemporary issues e.g. articles about fizzy drinks and diet
Homework to reinforce classwork	
Preparation	Preparation of work to be completed in class i.e. reading and / or finding out about a new topic
completion	Completing work started in class i.e. information in a food diary
Written Exercise	Undertake an additional exercise to reinforce learning in class
Homework to develop practical skills	
Develop skills learned during the lesson	Improve outcome and speed through practice e.g. vegetable chipping, simmering, washing dishes (S1)
Maintain records	Pupils need to record and evaluate practical activities, this may need to be completed at home
Revising for an assessment	
Practice practical skills	Identify skills being assessed and work on weaker areas i.e. finely chipping, preparing garnishes
Ensure knowledge and understanding can be recalled	Test ability to recall information ie. Revise and answer questions.
Prepare for presentations	Presentations include posters, leaflets and oral Find information and illustrations./

Frequency of homework

S1 – every 3 weeks

S2 - every 3 weeks

S3 – fortnightly

S4 – weekly / fortnightly

S5/S6 weekly / fortnightly

Department- Design and Technology

Purposes of homework issued by the department

Homework is issued for all separate subject areas in order to reinforce prior learning. Homework for specialised areas like drawing board work may be issued as theory in order to free up time in class for more specialised work. All homework is designed to complement class work.

Types of Homework issued by the department

Design research, Mathematical theory to support technology sketching, question and answer, computer searches

Frequency of Homework issued for each stage

S1 Fortnightly

S2 Weekly while 2 periods a week rotating between subject areas

S3 Fortnightly

S4 Weekly

S5/S6 As required but minimum of weekly

Department- Physical Education

Purpose of homework issued by the department

Homework is seen as an essential part of the curriculum and offers pupils the opportunity to further reinforce knowledge they have acquired during class time. Regular and scheduled homework also generates a good work ethic in pupils and allows them to be more independent in their learning. Completion of homework will also improve pupil's attainment within Physical Education.

Types of homework issued by the department.

S1- S3

- Homework will be issued to pupils twice a term and will develop understanding within physical education, activity and sport.
- Pupils will have one week to return homework
- Pupils who do not return homework will be given another date by the class teacher
- If on the second date the pupil fails to complete the homework the PT will meet with them to resolve this issue.

S4-S6

- Homework will be issued once a week during the knowledge and understanding class
- Pupils have one week to complete homework. Homework should take 45-60mins to complete.
- Staff keep an accurate record of homework that is distributed and returned.

