

BELL BAXTER HIGH SCHOOL



Homework And Learning Beyond The Classroom

A Guide For Parents

September, 2016

Homework provides an essential link between home and school and is an integral part of pupils' learning. Many of our pupils come to Bell Baxter High School with well-established homework habits and we aim to capitalise on these habits from entry into S1 right through to the stage at which a learner leaves school.

What Is Homework?

Homework is the responsibility of the pupil and refers to work that takes place outwith the classroom – either at home or using school facilities such as our Learning Resource Centre.

The traditional view of homework is one of written assignments and essays. As our curriculum has developed there now exists a whole range of activities designed to encourage home study, including directed work set by the class teacher who defines the tasks to be undertaken (including timescales for the completion of tasks) and independent study where the learner sets his or her own targets as part of their “learning beyond the classroom”.

Directed Study includes work such as:

- Investigative exercises in preparation for the next lesson.
- Preparing presentations.
- Learning vocabulary and formulae.
- Essay planning and completion.
- Completion of work sheets, answering set questions.
- Practising techniques and skills learned in class.
- Set text to read.
- Finishing off classwork.

Independent Study includes work such as:

- Revision of material covered in school.
- General reading.
- Organising and revision of course notes.
- Revising from past papers.
- Research using internet.

What Is The Purpose Of Homework?

Homework is set to help promote the practice of independent learning. It enables learners to check their understanding of work undertaken in the school environment and allows them to revise, practise and develop what they have learned in school but at their own pace. Additionally, it promotes self-discipline and encourages the development of responsible attitudes. It provides parents and carers with an insight into work undertaken at school and most importantly involves them in the learning process.

How Do I Know If My Child Has Homework To Do?

The key document to refer to is your child's "Planner" which each youngster in S1 and S2 is given at the start of the school session. The Planner acts not only as a diary but as a memory aid and home study record. Learners will be asked to write down any pieces of homework they are asked to do in their Planner and will always be given advance warning of major homework tasks and revision for tests to help them plan the use of their time effectively. Your son/daughter should be encouraged to leave home with their "Planner" each day and to view homework as a priority. Pupils in S3-S6 can make use of a school planner or choose to record their homework on their mobile phone.

How Much Homework Will My Child Receive?

The amount of homework issued varies within each curricular area and the nature of work being undertaken in class. A general rule of thumb is that as your child progresses through their secondary education the amount of homework expected of them will increase. **It is not the time taken which ultimately matters, rather the quality of work undertaken as well as the effort in the work produced.**

Homework In S1, S2, S3 - Broad General Education

Homework exercises given in First Year will continue to develop the study skills your child has already learned in primary school. Homework set will include some of the directed study activities highlighted above, including, for example, learning Modern Languages vocabulary. Pupils will also be expected to undertake independent study activities, e.g. general revision.

Homework In S4 – National Qualifications

Pupils in S4 can expect an increase in their homestudy workload. Homework is an essential part of National Qualifications and must be completed regularly and conscientiously, particularly when it is part of an internal assessment. There will be more regular revision for assessments and regular practice in examination techniques. Homework assignments will become more challenging and take longer to complete as the courses progress. Pupils will also be expected to undertake independent study activities as well as set homework.

Homework In S5 And S6 – National Qualifications

Homework is an essential factor in the progress and attainment of senior school pupils studying for National Qualifications. The quantity and challenge of homework tasks sets will increase in each subject, particularly in Higher, Advanced Higher and Scottish Baccalaureate courses. The quality of grades achieved significantly depends on good study habits and responsible attitudes. As well as set homework tasks pupils should build in time to undertake revision of course notes. Time management and set routines are even more important in S5 and S6 when young people have part-time jobs also. It is important to achieve the correct balance and to plan well!

What Can Parents Do To Support Their Child’s Learning?

- Encourage your child to see the importance of homework in supporting learning.
- Help your child to achieve a balance between the demands of homework, leisure activities and part time jobs.
- Ensure that your child is punctual in handing in homework.
- Help your child understand that regular revision is no less important than written formal exercises at all stages of their secondary education.
- Monitor your child’s progress by checking their Planner, or other materials used for homework.
- Offer praise, guidance and encouragement.
- Listen and support your child in their preparations for assessments.

A Final Word On Our Homework Policy

We positively acknowledge the involvement and influence of parents in their child's learning and ultimate progress and look forward to working in partnership with you. Where concerns are highlighted by teachers regarding non-completion of homework, we will contact you by letter or telephone. Please note that many of our Faculties provide course notes, revision materials and homework exercises on our school website. Materials available via the school website allow pupils to catch up on work missed through absence and allows further preparation for revision tests and exams. Each pupil is also provided with a password to access Glow. Glow is a national safe and secure online community for pupils, parents and teachers and gives access to information and activities including interactive educational games, revision papers, links to other sites and news features. These resources support pupils to learn in innovative and exciting ways.

Please note a number of other activities, aside from homework, are promoted to support learning beyond the classroom as outlined on the following page.

Should you be concerned about any aspect of your child's learning please contact the school.

Learning Beyond the Classroom Programme (Including Study Support)

“Learning Beyond the Classroom” involves any learning activity outside normal timetabled lessons in school. These activities are designed to raise achievement, build self-confidence and enable young learners to become responsible for their own development and progress - but on a voluntary basis! Participation in a range of activities beyond the classroom not only helps raise achievement in young people but also helps develop skills for later learning, life and work.

Study Support and out-of-school-hours learning activities at Bell Baxter High School include:

- Study Support classes. The majority of these classes run within our Learning Resource Centre which acts as a base for after school learning. Study Support classes run at various points throughout the school year and are promoted by each Faculty area via our weekly sheet (the weekly sheet is published on our school website)
- Informal lunchtime revision classes (promoted through our internal weekly sheet).
- An Easter revision school for S4/S5/S6 (subject to demand and availability of staffing).
- Pupil participation in workshops provided by Tree of Knowledge, and “Live in Learn” outside providers (details of year groups involved these sessions to be confirmed)
- Provision of support materials via our school website which is currently under further development. (Links to Faculties and support materials are clearly displayed on this site.)
- Provision of materials via **Glow**. (Glow is the world’s first national safe and secure online community for pupils, parents and teachers and gives access to information and activities including interactive educational games, revision papers, links to other sites and news features. These resources support pupils to learn in innovative and exciting ways.)
- Participation in a Mentoring Programme.

Informal lunchtime revision classes and the formal programme of after school Study Support provision aims to provide pupils with the following opportunities:

- Further explanation on areas of a course where difficulties are being experienced.
- Extra time to work on S.Q.A. coursework and exam technique with teacher support.
- Materials available via the school website and Glow allow pupils to catch up on work missed through absence and allows further preparation for revision tests and exams.

Whilst informal lunchtime revision classes and the formal Study Support programme are advertised through our internal bulletin to pupils, please consult our website which gives full details relating to our Out of School Learning Provision. The URL is: www.bbhs-online.co.uk Details will be updated on a regular basis.

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