

# **Grove Academy**

## **Home Learning Policy**

### **Introduction**

Grove Academy has a shared Vision and set of Values. Within the Grove Learning Community we aim to value learning in all forms, particularly home learning and encourage learners to aim to be the best they can be. We also want to build relationships where everyone feels included and valued. Suitable and appropriate Home Learning also helps learners to become more involved in their learning and allow their skills and talents to be developed so they are part of an inclusive community. Our school values – Honesty, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness and Determination – also impact on Home Learning. Our young people need to take responsibility for their learning be it at school or at home, and show a determination and commitment to achieve by completing their learning as well as they can.

### **What is Home Learning?**

Home Learning is any (and all) student learning tasks set by the teacher or undertaken independently for completion outwith the normal timetabled and taught classroom lesson. Home Learning tasks should most often be completed at home during scheduled times that can be planned around extra-curricular activities, sports clubs, hobbies, pursuits, chores and family-time. Home Learning will predominantly take place at home; however, there is scope for Home Learning support in the classroom at the start and end of lessons, departmental supported study or Home Learning Clubs, and more independently within the library at lunchtimes and after school.

### **The Value of Home Learning**

Home Learning serves a number of significant functions within learning and is of just as much value to the progress of young people as the teaching and learning process within the school environment. In a recent survey by the Sutton Trust, it was found that the impact of homework on learning is consistently positive, leading to on average five months' additional progress. However, beneath this average there is a wide variation in potential impact, suggesting that how home learning is set is likely to be very important.

Evidence also suggests that how Home Learning relates to the learning during normal school time is important. In the most effective examples Home Learning was an integral part of learning, rather than an add-on. To maximise impact, it also appears crucial that learners are provided with high quality feedback on their work, especially on how to improve it next time.

### **Why do Home Learning?**

- To reinforce learning done in school (revision)
- To check for understanding before progressing further (assessment)
- To introduce essential concepts required for subsequent learning to take place (preparation)

### **What does it enable learners to do?**

- Take responsibility for their own learning
- Improve attitude and motivation to learn
- Increase academic attainment
- Organise and manage their time effectively
- Develop the confidence to work independently
- Transfer knowledge and skills to the world outside school successfully

### **Examples of Home Learning tasks**

Home Learning tasks are varied and could include any of the following:

- Personal reading
- Worksheets
- Question sheets
- Essays
- Reading textbook pages
- Preparing for work to be done in class
- Practising or completing tasks or activities already taught or started in lessons
- Revision
- Research and enquiry skills
- Preparation of presentations
- Memorising

In setting Home Learning teachers are likely to consider the following:

- Planned and focused learning activities are more beneficial than activities which are more regular but routine, or work that is not linked to what is being learned in class.
- Home Learning should not be used as a punishment or penalty for poor performance.
- A variety of tasks with different levels of challenge is likely to be beneficial
- The quality of Home Learning is more important than quantity.
- Pupils should receive specific and timely feedback on Home Learning.
- The purpose of the Home Learning should be made clear to learners.

### **What Skills will be refined?**

Home Learning will enable learners to refine their skills for learning by:

- remembering,
- understanding,
- applying,
- analysing,
- evaluating and
- creating.

They will also improve their skills for life through:

- literacy (reading and communicating),
- numeracy (working with numbers, problem solving) and
- health and wellbeing (building resilience and confidence).

Home Learning also allows our learners to build on their skills for work, in being:

- motivated,
- conscientious,
- enthusiastic and
- completing their work punctually.

### **Frequency and time required to complete Home Learning**

Learners can expect to receive Home Learning from all subjects in their curriculum. In S1-3 when learners have subjects perhaps only once a week, that Home Learning will be for the lesson in the following week. Otherwise learners will be given fair notice of when the Home Learning is due in. A space of days is normally required, given that learners may have other commitments preventing them from completing any task for the next calendar day.

In the Senior Phase, it is generally accepted that learners will have a higher quantity of Home Learning and this may be for a specific day in the week. However, in practice, flexibility is essential to ensure that the needs of learners are met and course content has been covered in class before homework is issued. Learners will be given fair notice, usually a week, of when homework is due. They are expected to take responsibility for their learning and complete homework to a high standard and submit it to the teacher on or before the deadline date.

There is no obligation on subjects to supply Home Learning every week, unless it reinforces or prepares for the learning in class.

### **Accommodation to do Home Learning**

It is hoped that all learners will have an appropriate and comfortable place to do their learning at home. However, this may not be the case for everyone. Homework Clubs or Study Support classes operate voluntarily in most departments throughout the week where pupils can receive help and support at lunch times or after school hours.

It is proposed that the library also be made available during the whole lunch hour and after school to allow pupils access to learning, either in book form or electronically, so they can access the internet or GLOW. Discussions with the librarian and other staff who might voluntarily man the library at these times are required to take this forward. There may also be a role for prefects and senior pupils in supporting the use of the LRC for learning purposes.

The use of the library for a Home Learning Club would allow learners to do different subjects together, rather than just the subject offered by departments in their Home Learning Clubs.

### **Electronic Access to Learning**

It is hoped that all learners will have access to electronic learning throughout their time at Grove Academy. In order to facilitate this they must sign the internet access agreement and manage their personal electronic equipment within the boundaries of that policy when in school. This access can be through the library and computer room facilities at school, via their own handheld devices, through local library provision or at home. Each department within the school provides materials for learning, for example textbooks, worksheets, and workbooks; however there are many useful internet sites and computer programs which enhance classroom based learning and personal study at home which will be required to be accessed throughout their learning journey.

The use of electronic tools to engage learners and enhance their skills and understanding is an on-going development. In order to meet their needs and complete tasks, learners are being provided with the opportunity during class time and after school.

### **How Learners can take responsibility for their own learning by:**

Learners can take responsibility for their own learning by:

- Using a planner/diary/phone to note home learning tasks
- Having effective time management
- Completing the home learning task to the best of their ability
- Seeking help and advice **before** the deadline, if required
- Handing work in on time
- Acting on the feedback received from the teacher.

### **Feedback on Home Learning**

Effective feedback should directly relate to the learning intention and the success criteria of the task. Feedback

- is used to adapt teaching to the needs of learners
- gives advice on how to improve learning
- provides clear constructive comments to the learner on strengths and needs – during class discussions or before the next piece of work
- recognises, encourages and rewards effort and progress
- provides a record of progress and achievement
- helps parents understand clearly the strengths and needs of their child's learning

This does not mean that every piece of work must have written feedback – this can be done in groups, with the whole class or through Peer/Self-Assessment. Learners and/or teachers could also record verbal feedback.

Teacher feedback can take several forms, for example:

- Two Ticks and a Target (Two Stars and a Wish)
- Success Criteria
- Post-it notes
- Learning Logs
- Highlighting work

The important factor is the **quality** of feedback not the quantity.

### **Impact of not doing Home Learning**

In both the Broad General Education (S1-3) and the Senior Phase (S4-6) the impact of failing to complete Home Learning may prevent the learner from progressing and reaching their potential in that subject and any related subject area.

In the Senior Phase failure to complete Home Learning may lead to underperformance and missing SQA deadlines with an end result of No Award or a withdrawal from that level.

In not doing their homework, learners may not be able to participate fully in the follow-up lesson, they will lose out and become demotivated because they cannot understand the lesson. Learners will also lose an opportunity to gain feedback on work which they have completed that could help them to hone their knowledge and skills in a subject.

When a teacher is concerned that a learner in their class is experiencing difficulty in completion of home learning tasks, the **first action** is likely to be a learning conversation based on explaining to learners the negative impact that not doing Home Learning will have on their progress.

Teachers would want to emphasise the **positive rewards** of engaging properly with all aspects of learning including Home Learning, e.g. the increased chances of success

in examinations. Learners will also benefit from a reminder that all types of employment value the ability to complete work to a given deadline.

Learners not completing homework to a satisfactory standard or unable to meet reasonable deadlines for work should be encouraged to take advantage of the **Home Learning Clubs** that are offered by the majority of departments at Grove Academy. It may also take the form of an arrangement to stay after class or return to class at lunch-time or break in order to complete outstanding homework.

As teaching staff are under **no obligation** to correct work which is excessively late, learners may be deprived of invaluable feedback and guidance on how to improve their work.

It is expected that learners will be honest with their parents/carers about Home Learning which they have to complete. It is the learners' responsibility to be organised and liaise with staff when challenges or difficulties arise, including absence, incomplete work and lack of understanding.

Where teachers perceive that it will have a benefit in addressing the main issue, they may use their professional discretion to apply an appropriate **sanction**, such as a detention, where the Home Learning can be completed. It will be the responsibility of the teacher involved to follow this up.

Teaching staff are encouraged to use the support of Principal Teachers, Support for Learning Staff, Guidance Teachers and SLT as appropriate. It is only a small core of learners who do not do homework for most subjects, and in these cases referrals to the learner's Guidance teacher is advised.

### **Communication with Parents and Carers about their Involvement in Home Learning**

The responsibility of communicating which Home Learning activities have been set, completed and submitted on time (or otherwise) remains with the individual learner themselves. Regular discussion at home between the learner and their parent/carer regarding on-going Home Learning progress is considered to be a valuable part of the overall learning process alongside self-evaluation and target setting. Parental involvement with Home Learning is therefore encouraged and a leaflet detailing what Home Learning is and how parents/carers can become more involved is available on the school's website. A leaflet detailing what is involved in Home Learning and its value will be issued to parents.

In addition, if teaching staff identify recurring concerns regarding any learner's progress within Home Learning activities, it may be appropriate to contact home. In such circumstances any communication between school and home would be considered on an individual basis as to best meet the needs of the individual and work alongside any other forms of support that may be in place.

Any parental/carer concerns should be raised through the learner's Guidance teacher.

### **Parental Involvement**

How can you support your child's learning at home?

- Encourage conversation with your child about what was learnt during the school day and what Home Learning tasks have been set
- Set aside time after Home Learning activities to discuss how your child managed each task
- Praise genuine efforts made to complete tasks
- Check the presentation and quality of work produced

There is no expectation for you to teach your child at home. On the contrary, by allowing your child to teach you what they are doing at school and explain Home Learning tasks you will be contributing to the learning experience of your child within a positive, active and motivating role.

### **Further Information**

[www.educationscotland.gov.uk/parentzone/learningathome](http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/parentzone/learningathome)

[www.scotland.gov.uk/publications/2004/11/20237/46461](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/publications/2004/11/20237/46461)

[www.bbc.co.uk/schools/parents/secondary\\_support](http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/parents/secondary_support)

[www.familylives.org.uk/advice/secondary/learning-school/homework](http://www.familylives.org.uk/advice/secondary/learning-school/homework)

[www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize](http://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize)

[www.channel4learning.com/apps/homeworkhigh/](http://www.channel4learning.com/apps/homeworkhigh/)

[www.sqa.org.uk](http://www.sqa.org.uk)

### **Consultation on the Policy**

In formulating this policy there has been consultation with staff via questionnaires and professional dialogues, with pupils via questionnaires, PRC and Rector's "5 a Day" and with parents via Parent Council.

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