

## **Homework Advice**

It is a great asset to a child to have parents or carers who are willing to support with the homework process. For example it is helpful to discuss tasks and ideas, and for children to have an adult at home to talk to about any concerns they have with their learning.

However, don't be tempted to do your child's homework for them; whereas it may solve a problem at that time, it will not allow them to demonstrate their own understanding of the subject and may also encourage them to become dependent on others for help when this is unnecessary. It will also prevent their class teacher assessing their progress realistically.

Encourage your child to write all homework in their diary, and to tick it off once completed. Not only will this prevent them forgetting to complete it, it will also provide them with a sense of achievement. Perhaps a copy of their timetable in the kitchen or a family area will help you to keep track of lessons and the days that homework is routinely given.

If your child has difficulties with homework, please use their planner to inform their teacher of the problem. You can also use the planner to document how long they are spending on homework, as this can also be an indication as to how they are managing overall. You may also wish to let the teacher know whether or not they enjoyed doing the homework. This is an important form of communication between you and the College, it encourages your child if you check it weekly, sign it and show an interest.

If your child is unclear about how to do their homework, then take a look- if you know the subject and you are able to explain it patiently- then look at it with your child, and then leave them to complete the task independently.

Conversely, if you are unsure about the subject, you could support with searching for information in books or on the internet or encourage them to ring a friend from the same class.

If no solution can be found at home, write a note in the homework diary and advise your child to see their subject teacher or form tutor the following day, rather than leaving it until handing in day, so that there will be an opportunity for a full explanation before the next lesson. This allows for continuity in the lesson and prevents the child from feeling that they are falling behind.

Learning to be organised is an essential part of learning itself. It is a skill that benefits us throughout life and is definitely an area where parents and carers can make a difference. The idea is not to organise them but to equip them with the understanding of what is necessary. For example, they should have a space dedicated to study, with pens, pencils etc. and a box or cupboard for their exercise books, files and text books. Do not assume that they can't work with music on, for some it can really help. However, television, computer games, social network sites (i.e. Facebook) or texting on a mobile phone, are all things to be avoided until homework is finished as they are far too distracting and will stop your child giving homework their full attention.

Praise them when they meet deadlines and don't show them that you are anxious if work is not being completed; this will probably only cause tension and be counter-productive. It is important to accept that sometimes they might get things wrong: be supportive, stay calm and reassure your child that it is better for them to experience mistakes and the consequences that will follow at College. It's all about encouraging independence and coping strategies.

Creating a routine is really helpful for everyone concerned. If there are after College or weekend activities that have to be taken in to consideration, then plan homework around these. This is all part of learning how to manage their time and developing self-discipline. This also helps with reducing anxiety over workload, particularly as they get older and revision becomes part of the weekly study programme.

As they move through College, especially in years 10 and 11, you may find that they are given coursework preparation to do at home so that they are organized and ready to carry out controlled assessments during school hours. These could take place in English, history, geography, languages or technology lessons, and good preparation can make a significant difference in their exam results at GCSE as the controlled assessment marks are part of their final grade, especially in technology where it amounts to 60%. This work will have set deadlines that your child will need to stick to if they are to ensure that they have all the work completed to a good standard within the timeframe set by the exam boards.

Above all, be constructive not critical, be encouraging not dismissive and remember that working together with the College to overcome any difficulties will always be a far more positive approach for your child and undoubtedly help towards their success in the future.