

*Sent via In Touch email on 03/12/2018.*

Dear Parents and Carers

I write as we approach the end of the Autumn Term which, I trust, has thus far been a positive one for you and your son. It has certainly been a very productive time for all at Forest Hill School, with much progress having been made following on from our improved examination performance last summer. There will be more information relating to this when I report to you before the end of term on how we're doing with our Ofsted Action Plan.

In this letter I will be focussing on homework, a subject which never fails to generate an interesting debate! It's generally something on which everyone holds a view whether it's on the validity of setting it at all, how much should be set or what it should consist of. At Forest Hill we believe that homework is a very important part of pupils' education and should be taken seriously by all interested parties, namely pupils, teachers and parents.

It is one of my key priorities as Headteacher to ensure that our homework policy is implemented rigorously and consistently across the school. The homework policy can be found on the school website by following the link below:

[http://foresthill.lewisham.sch.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/POLICY\\_Homework.pdf](http://foresthill.lewisham.sch.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/POLICY_Homework.pdf)

The reasons for the setting of homework are clearly set out in the policy, but I would like to concentrate on the theme of its importance in developing pupils as independent learners as they progress through the school. You may be aware of the significant changes to the school curriculum and examination syllabuses (GCSE and A Level) which have been implemented over recent years. There has certainly been an increase in the volume of factual content which pupils are expected to learn, as well as a ratcheting up in the rigour of the examination system which assesses them. It is a real challenge to ensure that all content is covered in the school week, and so the role of homework is brought into sharp relief.

I want to develop learners who are happy and confident in studying on their own as well as in the classroom. The sooner they can feel comfortable with this, the sooner they will be able to establish positive study habits which will be invaluable as they progress towards GCSE, A Level and beyond. I understand that getting on top of homework can be a challenge and this is why we build the expectations of how much is set as boys move through the school. Positive engagement with homework from the outset will make it much easier to cope with the increase in the amount set from year to year and will help avoid the shock which some pupils encounter when the realities of GCSE study dawn.

Attached to this letter I have included a summary table of the regularity with which homework should be set for each year group and each subject in the school. It goes without saying that we would like to hear from you if you feel that there are issues with the setting of homework for your son whether it is too much, too little or none at all.

I know from personal experience how difficult it can be as a parent to monitor your son's homework habits and support him to improve them. Below are some pointers which have proved useful:

- Have somewhere suitable for him to study which has as few electronic temptations as possible. He may need to use the internet from time to time but it's highly unlikely he'll need his mobile phone. It is worth saying at this point that our library is open for one hour Monday through to Thursday after school finishes, specifically to support boys with their homework. It is open to all.
- Support him to get into a routine which takes some of the pain out of the process. It's usually better to get the homework out of the way early in the evening before doing other things.

- Work on his organisation - leaving homework until the last minute is a recipe for disaster in the long term. It will help you to have a knowledge of your son's timetable and when the homework is usually set and due in. This can be a game of cat and mouse and so to help you now have access to 'Show My Homework' software (and a phone app) which will allow you to see exactly this information. I hope that you have this set up and are using it to support your son. If you need any help please contact the school.
- There are sanctions for non-completion of homework and if detentions are issued these will accrue points in our new behaviour system. It may be worth speaking to your son about the possible impact of a repeated poor attitude to homework.
- On the other side of the coin, reward your son for showing a positive attitude to homework/ improving his attitude/producing excellent work. We certainly try to!
- Contact the school early to discuss any emerging issues.

Pupils who engage properly with homework develop good independent study habits quickly, and these support them in the challenge to achieve as highly as possible. It won't surprise you to learn that, year after year, our most successful pupils are those who have an excellent work ethic both in and out of school. This is the case at GCSE and A Level, when the amount of private study expected rises significantly in order to prepare pupils for university, where the majority of study will take place independently.

Before signing off I'd like to share arrangements for the end of term on Friday 21 December. This will be a shortened day, with lessons ending at 12:10, at which point pupils will be dismissed to make their way home. There will be a 'grab and go' sandwich lunch available for those who wish to purchase food before they leave. **The Spring Term begins at 08:25 on Monday 7 January 2019.**

It only remains for me to thank you for your ongoing support, and to wish you a restful and peaceful festive season.

Best wishes,

***Michael Sullivan***  
***Headteacher***

## HOMWORK SCHEDULE

The expectation is for **Homework** to be set in accordance with the tables below:

	Number of Homework(s) per week at Key Stage 3 (Years 7, 8, 9)		
Subject	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9
ENGLISH	two	two	two
MATHS	one	one	one
SCIENCE	one	one	one
HISTORY		one	one
GEOGRAPHY		one	one
HUMANITIES	one		
MODERN LANGUAGES	one	one	one
RE	fortnightly	fortnightly	fortnightly
COMPUTER STUDIES	fortnightly	fortnightly	fortnightly
* ART AND D&T	two per half term*	two per half term*	two per half term*
Dance	one per half term	one per half term	one per half term
PE	one per term	one per term	one per term

Music and Drama do not routinely set homework at KS3.  
 In Years 7, 8 & 9 one of the English homework pieces will be a reading homework.  
 \*Art rotates with D&T; homework is research and project-based and designed to be on-going.

	Number of Homework(s) per week at Key Stage 4 (Years 10 & 11)	
Subject	Year 10	Year 11
ENGLISH	one	one
MATHS	one	one
DOUBLE SCIENCE	two*	two*
BIOLOGY	one	one
CHEMISTRY	one	one
PHYSICS	one	one
All Option Subjects	one	one

Core PE do not routinely set homework.  
 Double Science - two\* pieces of homework : one homework a week from **each** teacher.  
 It may be that some teachers will set additional homework tasks, for example, a learning vocabulary homework in MFL or a reading homework in English.