



Thomas Tallis School Home Learning Policy 2016-17

These are extracts from the school plan which inform this policy:

Excellence through creativity	What makes us special?
Creativity is central to young peoples' development. We offer an excellent educational experience with creativity in all our disciplines. We are committed to our habits of mind of being inquisitive, collaborative, persistent, disciplined and imaginative. We work with passion, dignity and style and we value individuality, playfulness and innovation.	
Excellence through engagement	What keeps us learning?
We want everyone in our community to engage with lifelong learning and powerful knowledge through excellent teaching. We educate them to become independent thinkers sharing high aspirations and expectations. We expect that learning continues well beyond lessons. We value participation, communication, praise, experience and empowerment.	
Excellence through challenge	What can we do better?
We take our responsibilities seriously and scrutinise our progress carefully so that all the doors in the world are open to our young people when they leave us. We hold one another to account with intelligence and thoughtfulness. We actively resist dehumanizing influences on education, and value learning, aspiration, risk and courage.	

At Tallis we believe that home learning assignments form a vital part of students' learning experiences, helping to embed knowledge and skills acquired in class and providing young people with an opportunity to develop a range of crucial learning habits including independent thinking, creativity, resilience and initiative. Research in the last decade has begun to focus on the relationship between home learning and student achievement and has shown a clear resulting improvement, particularly for students at secondary school. According to The Education Endowment Foundation the impact of homework on secondary learning is consistently positive (leading to on average five months' additional progress), whilst Hattie's Visible Learning assigns it an effect size of 0.64. However, beneath these averages there is a wide variation in potential impact, suggesting that how homework is set is likely to be very important.

The DfE recently released the findings of a study (published in the Guardian¹) by the Institute of Education at the University of London. This suggested that home learning provided a clear resulting improvement, particularly for students doing up to two hours a night.

Main findings of the research:

1. It is hard to isolate homework from other social factors causing impacts
2. Decades of research suggest some kind of positive impact of doing appropriate homework
3. Home learning can exacerbate social inequalities because disadvantaged parents struggle to help their child or do not value it – but doing it seems to exaggerate performance
4. It is best to assign home learning beneficial to student learning rather than as policy – purposeful home learning could be introducing new content, practising a skill that student can do independently, elaborating on information to deepen knowledge, encouraging exploration of interests
5. Assignments should be challenging but achievable; inappropriate homework can even detract from learning
6. Homework extends the school day which is the main reason for positive impact
7. Longer time should be spent on homework as students get older
8. The role of parents / carers is important if given clear guidelines and do not act as experts

¹ <http://www.theguardian.com/education/2012/mar/29/homework-linked-better-school-results>

9. There is some disagreement on whether feedback matters for all homework – but generally considered it does (although can be peer feedback or discussion)
10. A clear school wide policy with clear expectations for staff, students and parents is important

Why is home learning important?

- It can develop inquisitiveness, by providing opportunities for long term research and other work.
- It can develop collaboration, by involving parents and others in the learning process and so providing an important motivational function.
- It can develop persistence, by allowing students to develop their ability to work independently.
- It can develop discipline, by allowing valuable practice and extension of skills, knowledge and understanding learned in the classroom.
- It can develop imagination, by allowing students to use materials and other sources of information that are not always available in the classroom.

While it is important that we continue to have a dialogue about the nature of home learning, underpinning this is the systematic habit of setting, doing, checking and marking homework.

Home learning should:

- Be clear, well scaffolded, and be able to be done independently, with minimum support.
 - Have just the right amount of challenge. Not so challenging that students easily give up, but not so simple that they may as well not bother.
 - Have taken into account the resources that students will need, and any further support, to complete the work to a high standard.
 - Be monitored for completion and act as an integral part of the ongoing learning cycle.
 - Have elements that encourage curiosity and enquiry to flourish. Such homework can be completed in the time slot allocated, but that wouldn't stop a student going on a flight of excellence that sees him or her lost in learning that is wholly worthwhile.

Effective home learning strategies include:

- Flipped learning - preparing for the next lesson
- Online learning, eg SAM learning
- Research or presentation-based tasks
- Extended enquiries - there is some evidence that homework is most effective when used as a short and focused intervention (e.g. in the form of a project or specific target connected with a particular element of learning) with some exceptional studies showing up to eight months' positive impact on attainment.
- Revision for high frequency low stakes tests
- Preparing for formal assessments
- Reading (with something checking it has been completed)
- Home learning tasks which can be peer- or self-assessed

We will follow the following principles for home learning in 2016-17:

- We refer to 'homework' as 'home learning'
- We have a clear policy on using the above as a list of effective home learning tasks shared with students and parents
- We publish an official home learning timetable published and shared with parents

- Where possible, home learning tasks are built clearly into schemes of learning – the most obvious way of doing this is through extended enquiries
- We use some future development time to create some ‘flipped learning’ on PARS.
- Departments need to create a home learning catch up slot with escalation to an SLT detention for failure to complete

Frequency and amount

Studies imply that there is an optimum amount of homework of between 1 and 2 hours per school day (slightly longer for older pupils), with effects diminishing as the time that students spend on homework increases.

Key Stage 3 Home Learning Expectations

There are published timetables which have been drawn up to allocate home learning across all subjects, based on a careful timing for each subject. There is a suggested duration of around 30 minutes per home learning set in Year 7 and Year 8. Due to the complexities of the timetable, staff will have to pay close attention to when they teach particular subjects on the days marked for home learning in that area. It is also crucial that we set home learning following this schedule so that the weight of home learning is evenly spread and so that parents/carers are aware when they can expect homework to be set.

In Year 7, Year 8 and Year 9 we have introduced Extended Enquiries, which should be set with clear deadlines. Weekly homework can and should contribute to this. In the early stages the enquiries will need to be carefully structured and home learning should be clearly set to support students completing the wider research and enquiry.

Key Stage 4 Home Learning Expectations

It is expected that students should have between 60 and 90 minutes of home learning per subject per week. Staff should agree with students they teach in Years 9, 10 and 11 when home learning will be set and get them to note this carefully in the appropriate page of the school planner. This agreement must take place by the end of week three of term.

If longer term home learning is being set – for example based on ongoing work on a project, or a research task - a note of what the home learning should be over the consecutive weeks should be made in the planner. It is crucial that we set home learning following this rubric so that it is clear to students and their parents/carers when they can expect home learning to be set. Equally it is also important we do it so that we support students in planning their workload and to help them meet deadlines.

Key Stage 5 Expectations

It is expected that for every hour of lesson time students in the Sixth Form will do one hour of independent study as ‘home learning’. Staff should set home learning that amounts to this quantity and get students to note down clearly what is expected in their planners.

It is expected that all Home Learning will be set using PARS. Students in Years 7 to 11 should continue to write their home learning in their planner.

How to deal with failure to produce home learning

