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Dear Parents and Carers

We are delighted to let you know that this year students will be completing their maths homework with Sparx Maths. Sparx is an exciting online platform that offers every student a personalised maths homework.

We know that you want to support your child's maths progress, so we've put together this letter to explain how Sparx works and why it is important to make sure that maths homework is 100% completed.

### How does Sparx homework work?

Sparx **personalises each child's homework**, creating a weekly set of questions **tailored to their level of understanding and learning pace**. The questions are designed to be achievable whilst offering the stretch that learners need to make progress.

Each week, topics are set by your child's maths teacher and will make up the majority of the homework questions. Questions from previous topics will also be included in the homework so that students can keep practising the skills they have learned.

### How can I help my child with their homework?

We appreciate that you will of course want to support your child with their home learning but please try not to help them with a question until they've had a go first! It is **really important that they complete their homework independently**, and that questions are marked as correct. They can watch the support video if they need to. This way, Sparx can make sure your child continues to see homework that's at the right level for them.

### Why does my child need to achieve 100% compulsory homework completion?

Sparx Homework is deliberately designed to **help students really get to grips with and understand the concepts and skills they are learning by ensuring they cover the essential building blocks needed to make progress in maths**. Sparx' research ([sparx.co.uk/evidence](https://sparx.co.uk/evidence)) has shown that this type of personalised maths home learning leads to clear progress. It is therefore advised that students do their homework as early as possible, so they have the time to have a go themselves and seek help from their teacher if needed. Homework is not marked as complete until **all** the compulsory questions have been answered correctly, so starting early is key to finishing before hand-in time.

You can keep track of your child's homework completion in the weekly email you will receive from Sparx.

*inquisitive • collaborative • persistent • disciplined • imaginative*

We hope you agree that Sparx will play an exciting and important role in helping your child's understanding, success and confidence in maths to grow.

If you have any questions, please contact me at [acayless@thomastallis.org.uk](mailto:acayless@thomastallis.org.uk)

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andy Cayless', written in a cursive style.

Andy Cayless  
DCL Mathematics

**Our approach to feedback at KS3 and 4:** We draw a distinction between formative assessment (using evidence about learning to adapt teaching and learning to meet student needs) and summative assessment (Determining to what extent the learning intentions have been met). Guiding our approach is the thought that feedback must be timely, meaningful and acted upon if it is to promote learning and progress. Ultimately all feedback serves the function of developing students' ability to make literary and linguistic judgements as communicators and critics.

**Formative Assessment:** is given during the teaching of a unit of work with the intention of diagnosing areas of strength and weakness. It will involve a mixture of personal and whole class approaches and will focus specifically on addressing misconceptions and identifying excellence. It won't result in a grade but rather success criteria moving forward. It is important to make clear that effective formative feedback is a product of the right classroom culture. It ultimately can't reduce to a series of bullet points and so the below is an *aide-memoir* rather than a definitive checklist.

**Summative Assessment:** is given at the end of a unit of work and determines to what extent learning intentions have been met. Depending on the nature of the assessment, students will be given a mark/grade accompanied by whole class feedback.

**How is this enacted?**

**Targeted questioning** - In general teachers call on students rather than rely on hands up. Questions aim to challenge, probe, and identify student understanding. Teachers adjust and intervene in a responsive and ongoing way.

**Live modelling** - use of visualisers and interactive white board to model both recurring mistakes and excellence

**A culture of peer critique** - teachers regularly circulate to identify exemplary work and share this with the class. Teachers ensure all students receive at least one individual conversation, within lessons, each half-term. This is recorded in green pen with the code 'VF' (if individual) or 'WCF' (if whole class). Students then continue their work in green pen. Students regularly read each other's work and are taught to give constructive, focused feedback

**Whole class feedback** - once per half-term students will complete a more formal formative assessment. Teachers will read all student work and devise a whole-class feedback lesson. Teachers will deliver the feedback lesson within a three-lesson cycle. Students reflect on this using a whole class feedback proforma and respond to in a new piece of work, putting into practice areas they need to develop

**How is this enacted?**

Teachers will mark individual pieces of work by highlighting where students have achieved success and giving a mark, grade or threshold depending on year group and assessment

Students will be aware of success criteria in advance  
Common misconceptions and errors will be shared with students at a whole class level after the assessment  
Examples of success will be shared with illustrations of how this success was achieved

All teachers refer to the threshold criteria exemplification booklet for KS3

**How do we monitor formative feedback and evaluate its impact on learning?**

An open-door teaching and learning culture in which staff collaboratively seek to share best practice  
Learning walks focused on formative feedback  
Feedback as a crucial part of our internal CPD training  
half-termly book meetings in which teachers of the relevant year group share student books and reflect on the successes and areas for development

**How do we monitor summative feedback and evaluate its impact on learning?**

There will be a process of standardising and moderating  
Measures are taken to mitigate bias and human error (this could be anonymising scripts, swapping/mixing teacher groups, seeding and sampling etc)  
Directors and deputies of English regularly analyse internal data to notice trends, identify underperformance and devise appropriate interventions