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Longdendale High School
Homework and Independent Learning Policy

November 2024

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1 Introduction

Learning which students complete outside of school at Longdendale is referred to as homework. We strongly believe that learning independently helps to embed knowledge and skills acquired in class and provides all students with an opportunity to develop a crucial range of learning habits including independent thinking, retention of knowledge into the long-term memory, resilience and initiative.

'Homework' refers to any work or activity which students are asked to do outside lesson time, either on their own or with parents and carers. At Longdendale we truly value the formation of partnerships between home and school. One of the ways in which this can be best achieved is through homework activities.

At Longdendale we look at homework as an opportunity to enrich the learning of our students and believe it is a valuable learning tool which also prepares our students for the demands that they may face later on in life. Homework is intended to be beneficial for students by broadening, consolidating and mastering and the learning achieved within school time, laying the foundation for future self-supported home study, and promoting the home/school partnership.

2 Expectations of Homework

All homework will be set on Class Charts, informing students and parents and carers of what is required and the deadline by which activities should be completed. The weekly expectations of our students are as follows:

Key Stage Three	Key Stage Four
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30 minutes of Masters of Knowledge work per day (five days per week). • 60 minutes of Sparx Maths per week. • 60 minutes of Sparx Reader per week. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30 minutes of Masters of Knowledge work per day (five days per week). • 30 minutes of Sparx Maths per week. • 30 minutes of Sparx Reader per week. • 30 mins (approx.) subject specific task per week.



- **Masters of Knowledge** is work students should be completing in the booklets they have been provided with and using the 'mastery sheets' for each subject. On these sheets are questions identifying the substantive knowledge students need to know for each of their subjects. Students have been taught study methods (look, cover, write, check and flashcards) and should be completing these as part of their Masters of Knowledge homework. Students practice recalling this knowledge twice a week in their morning Aspiration Briefings and at the start of each lesson in their Do Now activity. Teachers then check knowledge is secure through the Mastery Recall Tasks completed once per half term. The illustration below shows how Do Nows and Mastery Recall Tasks work with homework to create students that are Masters of Knowledge.
- **Sparx Maths** is the platform we use as a school for the students to be able to have access to regular and meaningful practice of the topics they are studying in class. Sparx starts all students at the same level and as the year goes on and Sparx collects data on how the students are doing, it adapts the work level accordingly. Students must write the question code and their working out down, ideally in the back of their exercise books. There is also a section on Sparx Maths called independent learning, this is where students can search specific topics they are struggling on and revise these! Students will be set this homework each Friday and it is due each Thursday.
- **Sparx Reader** is an independent reading platform, that develops students' literacy skills, as well as exposing them to a wide range of text types and genres. Sparx Reader intelligently tracks the quality of students' reading by asking short comprehension questions at particular intervals during their reading which result in the awarding of points. This allows teachers to closely monitor how well the students are reading and understanding their book. Students will be set this homework each Friday and it is due each Thursday. The minimum expectation is that each week students achieve 300 points through their reading, which equates to approximately 30-60 minutes of reading time. Students need to ensure they are reading carefully, as if they cannot answer the comprehension questions, they will receive fewer points, therefore taking them longer to reach the target of 300. Students can read for longer, earning more points, which will also be awarded with legacy points from their English teacher.
- **Subject Specific Tasks** will be set by class teachers for Key Stage 4 students, requiring them to complete work that will either consolidate substantive knowledge or give students the opportunity to practise applying knowledge (disciplinary and procedural knowledge). This could take the form of work set on an online platform such as Seneca or an extended writing task such as an exam style question. Students should complete the work in their exercise books unless directed otherwise by their teacher.

3 Setting of Homework

- Masters of knowledge homework will be set centrally on Class Charts by the Director of Education once per week.
- Sparx Maths and Sparx Reader homework will be set on Class Charts by the maths department and the English department respectively.
- Subject specific tasks for KS4 students will be set on Class Charts by class teachers.

4 Tracking of Homework

- **Masters of Knowledge:** In form time twice per week, form tutors will ask students to place their Masters of Knowledge booklets on their desks, open at the pages they have been completing that week. The form tutor will check that students are completing the equivalent of 30 mins work per day, five days per week. In addition, Heads of Year and

Heads of Achievement will quality assure the work students are producing on a fortnightly basis. This could be a learning walk of tutor time to look at booklets or collecting a sample of booklets to check. If students are persistently failing to complete this work, names will be passed to the Head of Year and students will lose legacy points.

- **Sparx Maths and Sparx Reader:** Maths and English teachers will check the online platforms each week to ensure students are completing the equivalent of 60 mins work. If students fail to complete this work, class teachers will make a phone call home, with a meeting arranged with the Head of Department for persistent non-completion.
- **Subject specific tasks:** Class teachers will track completion of these tasks on Class Charts. If students fail to complete this work, class teachers will make a phone call home, with a meeting arranged with the Head of Department for persistent non-completion.

5 The Role of Staff

The Senior Leadership Team will ensure that the quality assurance of the whole school policy is embedded firmly in departmental provision and that provision is regularly monitored and reviewed. The SLT will also take responsibility for informing parents of the whole school policy using the school website. The Director of Education will set the Masters of Knowledge homework on Class Charts each week.

It is the **Heads of department's** responsibility to monitor the setting of homework within their departments to ensure that the homework set is:

- High quality to facilitate progress, embed, monitor, review and enrich the learning of our students.
- Set regularly in line with frequency with realistic timescale for completion.
- Regularly marked to provide students with a feedback opportunity.
- Celebrated and rewarded.

Class Teachers and **form tutors** will monitor homework completion. All teachers should ensure that homework is set through Class charts as well as informing students in lessons, praising students for the consistent return of high-quality work. **Form Tutors** will raise any concerns with parents/carers or Heads of Year surrounding the completion or setting of homework. They can also be an initial point of contact if parents have any queries around the setting of homework.

6 The Role of Parents/Carers

We truly value the relationship that we have with Parents/Carers including the support that they can offer with homework.

Parents/Carers are encouraged to provide practical support for homework by:

- Establishing a routine whereby homework is given a recognised place in home life;
- Discussing homework with the student regularly;
- Checking homework issued through accessing Class charts.
- Providing an appropriate place where study can be undertaken;
- Encouraging students and praising them when they have completed homework.
- Communicating with school about any issues.