



Extended Learning Policy

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Aim:

This policy statement has been produced on the basis of consultation with staff. It is designed to provide a coherent framework from which departments/faculties can develop a consistent and effective approach to extension studies taking into consideration students of all ages and levels of ability. Extension Studies is seen as one of the principal ways in which student achievement can be raised

At Melior Community Academy we believe that extension studies is important in:

- Reinforcing positive attitudes to work
- Encouraging self organisation and self discipline
- Reinforcing, broadening and extending the school curriculum
- Developing home/school partnership
- Preparing students for life opportunities and experiences

Our Objectives:

- To provide clear guidelines on the academy's approach to setting of extension studies
- To establish a coherent approach to extension studies across all departments, year groups and faculties.
- To provide a system of extension studies that is clear to students, staff and parents.
- To ensure that extension studies leads to all students making progress.
- To provide meaningful feedback to students to offer advice on how to improve and raise attainment and increase progress through extension studies

Expectations:

- Learning outside lessons is vital for building the skills to become an independent learner
- Homework is an integral part of the curriculum and should be used to consolidate, extend and enrich students' learning.
- Homework should be purposeful and meaningful, and support achievement towards the aims of the current episodes of lessons.
- Where students are engaged in controlled assessments and other extended projects in school, they should be provided with opportunities beyond the classroom to develop the required skills further
- Teachers are expected to set homework as appropriate linked to the materials being studied within the classroom. The proportion of homework students receive will increase as they move through the academy
- Year 9, 10 and Year 11 students should be expected to spend a minimum amount of time per subject per week working beyond the classroom, this may be through independent study or teacher assigned tasks
- Homework can take a variety of forms including answering questions, reading, extended writing, thinking, planning, independent study, revision and researching.
- Where large ongoing projects are set over several weeks the teacher will ensure that students meet interim deadlines at the appropriate time. Subject and teaching tracking procedures should mean that students do not leave the majority of the work until the final deadline; regular feedback on their work as it is completed will allow faster progress

Homework can be a difficult and controversial issue for any school. It can easily be divisive and unhelpful to the overall learning process, particularly where:

- It is viewed by students as a chore or, even, as a form of punishment
- It accords exclusively with parental but not student agendas

The more traditional approach to homework has actually been shown by research to foster social barriers and, more seriously, to create a negative attitude towards learning per se. Given this situation, it might be a

thought that homework should be reduced to a minimum and, for example, restricted to KS4. However, this reaction would be based upon a narrow definition of the nature and purpose of homework which would see it as a matter of 'duty' rather than as having any intrinsic interest or tangible benefit. It is much more fruitful to consider homework under the broader heading of 'consolidating learning'. Therefore, if our definition of extension studies focuses upon encouraging students to consolidate their learning in their own time, we can, hopefully, remove all negative connotations. Extension Studies are thus essentially the student's responsibility.

Within this context, our aim must be to create an environment in which learning is valued to such an extent that consolidation of class work is seen as a natural and important part of the learning process. In providing extension studies, teachers would thus be supporting students' learning beyond the classroom – as opposed to imposing upon their leisure time - and, hopefully, parents would be encouraged to become active partners in this process. Clearly, the nature of the extension activity will be crucial (examples are given clearly here in this policy) if students are to be convinced of the value of out of school learning - meaningless or irrelevant exercises given in a tokenistic way must be avoided at all costs. Where extension activities require marking by the teacher this should be seen as 'high value' and something to be appreciated by students and parents alike.

To sum up, therefore, extension studies:

- Must be relevant to the teacher's curricular objectives
- Takes place outside formal classroom teaching
- Is primarily the responsibility of the learner

The Purpose of Extension Studies

Extension Studies can serve a range of purposes e.g:

- Allowing practice and consolidation of work done in class
- Allowing preparation for future class work
- Offering access to resources not available in the school
- Developing skills in using libraries and other learning resources
- Providing opportunities for individualised work
- Allowing assessment of students' progress and mastery of work
- Providing evidence for the evaluation of teaching
- Training for students in planning and organising time
- Developing good habits and self-discipline
- Encouraging ownership and responsibility for learning
- Providing information for parents
- Providing opportunities for parental co-operation and support
- Creating channels for home-school dialogue
- Fulfilling the expectations of parents, students, teachers and the public

The role of parents in supporting the out of school learning of their children is crucial.

Types of Extension Studies

The nature and frequency of extension studies will vary according to both stage and subject. It is not appropriate, therefore, to adopt a 'one size fits all' approach. In each of the Stage Guides, subject departments make statements about the nature and purpose of homework within their area of the curriculum and a wide range of approaches has been adopted. For example, opportunities for home study in practical subjects, particularly in KS3, are relatively infrequent. In some cases, a project-based approach may be more appropriate, involving students in research, analysis and collation and presentation activities.

By contrast, in the KS4, the assumption is that extension studies is regular – possibly for every contact period.

The following guidelines are, therefore, generic in nature. Staff should:

- Provide varying types of extension studies set within a student's capabilities
- Provide extension studies tasks which parallel or feed into course work
- Ensure students are given adequate notice of extension studies tasks
- Support students who experience difficulty in completion of extension studies tasks to ensure a sense of achievement and to allow their self-esteem to grow. Departments are encouraged to seek assistance and advice from the SENCO/Assistant SENCO wherever appropriate
- Be sensitive to the social environment in which each student lives
- Make available any resources required to complete the extension studies task
- Establish a routine, known to both students and parents, regarding setting, collecting and giving feedback on extension studies
- Ensure feedback is positive with constructive criticism where necessary
- Maintain records of extension studies set and individual student achievement
- Evaluate extension studies tasks regularly

Amount/Frequency of Extension Studies

There is an understandable pre-occupation amongst parents with the amount of time spent per night on extension studies and whether it is equally divided between each subject. This frequently translates into a request for fixed time allocations, such as 25 minutes for subject X per week. While possibly unhelpful and contrary to the tenor of our policy, we cannot brush parental attitudes aside and an element of compromise is essential. Accordingly, a rough guide to what, on average, is expected is contained within the expectations outlined at the start of this policy.

Frequency of extension studies is very much an issue for departments to determine but it is useful if words or phrases such as weekly, fortnightly or twice per term are provided for guidance.

Guidelines

The structure of the Academy's timetable does not make it possible for us to produce a detailed homework schedule that identifies specific nights for specific subjects; although different groups of students have the same subjects, they are often on different days. This is a guide for what parents could expect over an average week.

Year 7

Your child should be doing an average of 30 minutes homework per night (2.5 hours a week). Where possible, teachers will give 48hrs notice to enable students to manage their own time.

In the following subjects, two short homework tasks or a more extensive homework could be set every week: English, maths, science, languages and humanities. In Creative Arts (art, drama, dance and music) and ICT homework will be set less frequently to support planning for future lessons.

Year 8

Your child should be doing an average of 45 minutes homework per night (3 hours 45minutes a week). Where possible, teachers will give 48hrs notice to enable students to manage their own time.

In the following subjects, two short homework tasks or a more extensive homework could be set every week: English, maths, science, languages and humanities. In Creative Arts (art, drama, dance and music) and ICT homework will be set less frequently to support planning for future lessons.

Year 9

Your child should be doing an average of an hour's homework per night (5 hours a week). Where possible, teachers will give 48hrs notice to enable students to manage their own time. We would expect students to do additional research and revision over and above the specific homework set, especially at weekends and in the run-up to assessments and exams.

In the following subjects, two short homework tasks or a more extensive homework could be set every week: English, maths, science and in additional options

If you feel that your child is getting too much, or too little homework, please contact your child's Phase Leader so that we can address this as quickly as possible.

Year 10 & 11

Your child should be doing an average of 1½ hour's homework per night (7.5 hours a week). Where possible, teachers will give 48hrs notice to enable students to manage their own time. We would expect students to do additional research and revision over and above the specific homework set, especially at weekends and in the run-up to assessments and exams.

In the following subjects, two short homework tasks or a more extensive homework could be set every week: English, maths, science and in additional options

If you feel that your child is getting too much, or too little homework, please contact your child's Phase Leader so that we can address this as quickly as possible.

Sanctions & PROCEDURES

The academy places great value on extension studies and it is important to emphasise to both parents and students that learning in any subject can be significantly enhanced by undertaking work out of school. The key to this process is a shared understanding of the benefits of the extension studies tasks themselves i.e. the activities to be undertaken must have an obvious relevance to the individual student's learning process. It is within this context that the non-completion of extension studies should be addressed. From a somewhat idealistic standpoint, it could be argued that failure to do extension studies is its own punishment and completion is its own reward. However, pragmatism is essential in this respect and, while avoiding a more negative, punitive approach, we must seek to create a positive extension studies climate where non-completion is recorded, communicated as appropriate and the subject of further action. The academy's monitoring & tracking system has a key role to play in this process i.e.

- All formal class extension studies issued should be recorded in a teacher's individual monitoring & tracking, whether summative or formative. Exceptions would be activities such as revision, completing unfinished work etc.

Students are expected to complete regular pieces of homework to ensure progress continues outside the classroom. Staff are expected to provide evidence of at least two pieces of assessed homework each half term and should be assessed in the following ways: -

- The homework is given a +, these means the piece of work completed is above the expectations of the staff member or target grade.
- The homework is given a =, these means the piece of work completed is in line with the expectations of the staff member or target grade.
- The homework is given a -, these means the piece of work completed is above the expectations of the staff member or target grade.

It would be at the discretion of the class teacher whether or not to assess a late homework.

The HWK/CWK system runs between the Assessment cycles. A student is given one opportunity within an Assessment cycle to have a deadline extended. If a student misses the second deadline a C4 detention is given. This information is logged on the system as HWK. Staff should log the information relating to the task so we can discuss this with students and parent/carers. If the student does not attend this needs to be logged with the inclusion team, the Deep Learning team will pick it up from there

In addition, there should be a reference to extension studies in termly reports
Student commitment to extension studies should be recognised in the same way that we recognise other successful aspects of their work. It would seem appropriate, therefore, to incorporate extension studies as an issue into each department's programme for promoting positive behaviour, e.g. letters of commendation, postcards, rewards, displays of work, achievement points or prizes

The homework planner should be used as creatively as possible (for example, parental signatures, brief comments by the teacher)

Differentiation of Homework

Extension studies should always be differentiated, in the same way that class work material should be, being appropriate to the ability and reading skills of the learner. Consideration should be given to making extension studies freestanding i.e. aimed at consolidating, but not dependent on, full understanding of work done in class. However, extension studies may also be issued to complete work being done in the classroom provided this approach is not used excessively as it has the potential to penalise the less able.

Extension Studies provision for the More Able Learner

The more able learner's needs will more effectively be met when the student is:

- Encouraged to undertake personal research
- Given opportunities to follow personal interest pathways
- Given access to resources in school and the wider community
- Given opportunity to work alongside similar ability students
- Given an element of control over nature of extension studies activity
- Given opportunity to present findings to peers
- Allocated extra time to enable in-depth study
- Supported through teacher direction/guidance toward next steps
- Rewarded/praised for independent study

Homework Club

To support students with their extension studies, staff from the Support for Learning Department run a Homework Club in the library after school. Students are encouraged to use it. Adult help is on hand (not to give answers of course) but to encourage and guide. Difficulties can be resolved and concerns passed on to subject teachers

The Homework planner

All students are provided with an attractive homework planner at the start of the year. This is the key vehicle for communicating extension studies activities to parents and should be used as fully as possible (other than simply to record what extension studies has to be done and the date by which it has to be done) for example:

1. To obtain a parental signature
2. To communicate (briefly) with parents, particularly where there are concerns over non-completion)

Class teachers should build an 'extension studies' moment into their teaching routines, probably towards the end of the lesson.

The provision of extension studies will be periodically checked by SLT, Learning Leaders and the inclusion team as part of the academy quality assurance processes.

The role of the student

- To listen to Extended Learning instructions in class.
- To copy down instructions for the task and deadline date into the Extended Learning diary.
- To ensure that Extended Learning is completed and handed in to meet the deadline.
- To attempt all work and give their best.
- To inform the class teacher of any difficulties.

The Role of Parents/Guardians

Parents/Guardians should appreciate that extension studies is an important activity and that they have a key role to play in ensuring that extension studies will be completed to the best of their child's ability.

Parents are encouraged to provide practical support for extension studies by:

- Establishing a routine whereby extension studies is given a recognized place in home life,
- Discussing extension studies with the young person regularly,
- Checking and signing the homework diary when required
- Providing an appropriate place where study can be undertaken

The role of the Class Teacher

The class teacher controls the direction of Extended Learning and the nature of tasks undertaken.

The teacher will:

- Set Extended Learning
- Provide the stimulus.
- Give full and comprehensive instructions.
- Set deadlines for completed work and ensure that they are met.
- Mark and return all Extended Learning promptly.
- Provide help and support.

The role of the Learning / Faculty Leader

The Learning / Faculty Leader will:

- To seek to enhance the quality of Extended Learning set and include it in schemes of learning
- To monitor and evaluate Extended Learning policy within their curriculum area.

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- The assessment, marking and feedback policy
- The teaching and learning policy
- The monitoring policy

Key Points:

- Homework/Extension studies should be set regularly, monitored and tracked by the classroom teacher.
- Amount of homework will vary depending on year group, however a guide is shown below:

Year Group	Minutes per night	Total per week (hours)	Further Information
7	30	2.5	In the following subjects, two short homework tasks or a more extensive homework could be set every week: English, maths, science, languages and humanities. In Creative Arts (art, drama, dance and music) and ICT homework will be set less frequently to support planning for future lessons.
8	45	3.45	In the following subjects, two short homework tasks or a more extensive homework could be set every week: English, maths, science, languages and humanities. In Creative Arts (art, drama, dance and music) and ICT homework will be set less frequently to support planning for future lessons.
9	60	5.0	In the following subjects, two short homework tasks or a more extensive homework could be set every week: English, maths, science and in additional options
10	90	7.5	We would expect students to do additional research and revision over and above the specific homework set, especially at weekends and in the run-up to assessments and exams. In the following subjects, two short homework tasks or a more extensive homework could be set every week: English, maths, science and in additional options
11	90	7.5	

- All formal class extension studies issued should be recorded in a teacher's individual monitoring & tracking, whether summative or formative. Exceptions would be activities such as revision, completing unfinished work etc.
- It would be at the discretion of the class teacher whether or not to assess a late homework.
- The HWK/CWK system runs between the Assessment cycles. A student is given one opportunity within an Assessment cycle to have a deadline extended. If a student misses the second deadline a detention is given. This information is logged on the system as HWK. Staff should log the information relating to the task so we can discuss this with students and parent/carers. If the student does not attend this needs to be logged with the inclusion team, the Deep Learning team will pick it up from there
- In addition, there should be a reference to extension studies in termly reports

Staff should:

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- Be sensitive to the social environment in which each student lives
- Make available any resources required to complete the extension studies task
- Establish a routine, known to both students and parents, regarding setting, collecting and giving feedback on extension studies
- Ensure feedback is positive with constructive criticism where necessary
- Maintain records of extension studies set and individual student achievement
- Evaluate extension studies tasks regularly