



St Luke's High School

BGE Home Learning Strategy

"To inspire the moral purpose of learning and teaching to; unleash potential, raise attainment, promote equity and transform the life chances of each and every learner..." SLHS VVA 2017

A central tenet of our school's Vision, Values and Aims is to "transform the life chances of each and every learner" through a strong focus on attainment and equity. Therefore, our approach to home learning must be purposeful, mindful of learner wellbeing, guided by research and careful to avoid inadvertently widening the attainment gap.

In session 2022/23, we consulted parents and focus groups of learners with regards to their experiences of home learning. A Home Learning School Improvement Group was established and the PT Pedagogy and Curriculum Design engaged with current research and literature with regards to effective practice in home learning.

SUMMARY OF LITERATURE

John Hattie asserts that homework has no positive effect in primary school, but it does benefit over-11s. The effect size for secondary students is 0.64. This is also corroborated by the Education Endowment Foundation who claim that, if done well, the impact on secondary students can be +5 months. Hattie argues,

"Five to 10 minutes has the same effect of one hour to two hours. The worst thing you can do with homework is give kids projects. The best thing you can do is to reinforce something you have already learnt (Hattie, 2014)."

'At secondary level [Hattie] suggests there is no evidence that prescribing homework develops time management skills and that the highest effects in secondary are associated with rote learning, practice or rehearsal of subject matter; more task-orientated homework has higher effects than deep learning and problem solving. Overall, the more complex, open-ended and unstructured tasks are, the lower the effect sizes. Short, frequent homework closely monitored by teachers has more impact than their converse forms and effects are higher for higher ability students than lower ability students, higher for older rather than younger students. Finally, the evidence is that teacher involvement in homework is key to its success' (Sherrington, 2012).

Indeed, the Education Endowment Foundation agree that,

'Homework that is linked to classroom work tends to be more effective. In particular, studies that included feedback on homework had higher impacts on learning.'

Therefore, home learning tasks should be used to support/reinforce the work of the class and designed to develop mastery.

A number of studies have concluded that we need to be careful that our approaches to home learning do not inadvertently widen the poverty-related attainment gap. Kralovec and Buell (2000) argue that home learning “disrupts families, overburdens children and limits learning”:

“Many [socio-economically disadvantaged] students return home after school to challenging environments where they have to cook dinner, care for younger siblings, or rush off to work. Homework just doesn't fit into the schedules of these youngsters, and they pay the consequences. To teachers who don't understand their special challenges, the failure to do homework comes across as a character flaw ... and perpetuates social inequity.”

Indeed Comber and Clarke, 2020, argue that,

“This extra layering of educational work means that students' academic performance is more and more contingent on what the home situation and family educational capital allows, creating an even greater disparity for families with less resources in terms of time and cultural capital.”

Indeed, Hattie notes that “Five to 10 minutes has the same effect of one hour to two hours. The worst thing you can do with homework is give kids projects. The best thing you can do is to reinforce something you have already learnt (Hattie, 2014).”

Therefore, our approach to home learning must be mindful of the impact on families, time limited and supported by learning in school rather than dependant on parental input.

That is not to say that parental engagement is not important. The research indicates that all parents can best support home learning by creating the conditions for their child to successfully engage in home learning,

‘What is important, then, is not just that parents are engaged in children's homework, but how they are engaged in that homework. Parental engagement in homework is most beneficial to students when it supports children's autonomy (for example, parents help children create a schedule for doing homework rather than imposing one), when it supports children's beliefs in their academic ability (for example, when parents praise effort and support children to overcome difficulties) and when parents support mastery views in children (when parents concentrate on learning, (what the child has learned) rather than on achievement (the marks gained by the child)... It will be necessary to overcome the “more is better” attitude towards homework – an attitude which may well be shared by families and teachers’ (Goodall, 2021: 683).

Vatterott, 2009, argues that,

“The power relationship between schools and parents must be realigned to embrace parents as equal partners in their child's education. The role of parents in homework must be voluntary, respectful, and individualized, and the value of family life must be honoured.”

In this post-pandemic/cost of living landscape, we must be mindful about the impact of home learning on parental finances, family wellbeing and time.

Therefore, all home learning should be well-resourced and only given if it will have a positive impact on progress and learning. Teachers should not feel compelled or pressured to set high frequency home learning tasks that may negatively impact on learners. It is better to exercise professional judgment and only give well-timed, carefully designed home learning activities (which are linked to class learning) and which will be subject to feedback.

Feedback from parents of children with additional support needs indicated that home learning can often be a source of conflict and upset. Some parents highlighted that their child struggles with understanding why school work should continue at home and that their children need clear boundaries between home and school. Some also commented that what might take one learner ten or fifteen minutes to complete might take much longer for their child therefore increasing feelings of school and learning being overwhelming.

Therefore, we will offer homework clubs for all learners with ASN to help them switch off when they are at home. We will also be mindful of differentiating home learning tasks just as we would classroom activities.

Finally, we know that Literacy and Numeracy are key skills which enable young people to access their full curriculum. There is a clear correlation between vocabulary and attainment. Indeed, the EEF recommends that secondary schools prioritise disciplinary literacy across the curriculum so that learners can develop the ability to “read like a scientist/historian/mathematician.” Likewise, the ability to talk and read like a scientist/historian/mathematician will support our approach to excellence and equity through increased confidence and an improved ability to communicate knowledge and understanding. In addition, a strong foundation in Numeracy, supports learning in a wide range of subjects and develops essential skills such as problem solving, interpretation of data and recognising patterns.

Therefore, home learning tasks should be Literacy and/or Numeracy rich.

Teachers may want to use The Day resource to support Disciplinary Literacy activities which can then be used to inform lesson starters, encourage pre-learning or support vocabulary development when introducing a new topic. All learners also have access to Rigour Maths to support their Numeracy development at home.

Key Aim

The overarching aim of this guidance is to ensure that home learning is purposeful, supports progress and has a positive impact on learning. It should not be detrimental to family wellbeing, teacher workload or have a negative impact on our efforts to close the poverty-related attainment gap. We will do this by ensuring principles:

- 1. Home learning tasks are used to support/reinforce the work of the class and designed to develop mastery.**
- 2. Home learning activities are mindful of the impact on families, time limited and supported by learning in school rather than dependant on parental input.**
- 3. Home learning is well-resourced and only given if it will have a positive impact on progress and learning.**
- 4. We offer homework clubs for all learners with ASN. We will also be mindful of differentiating home learning tasks just as we would classroom activities.**
- 5. Home learning tasks are Literacy and/or Numeracy rich.**

Home Learning Guidance

Following the launch of our Assessment Policy in May 2023, all learners from S1 – S6 will be given a minimum of four weeks’ notice in advance of any high stakes/high quality assessment. During these four weeks, the only home learning activities issued for that subject should be designed to assist learners as they prepare for the assessment at home. This might include chunking the learning which has to be assessed into manageable

sections for study/mastery (retrieval activities, rote learning activities, exam practice questions, study routines, etc). Departments may also choose to offer supported study sessions after school for the four weeks in the run up to the assessment.

All additional home learning in the BGE should follow the five key principles.

1. Home learning tasks are used to support/reinforce the work of the class and designed to develop mastery.

This might include memorising vocabulary, practising a new skill/technique learned in class, reading an article which will inform the next day's starter/class activities, etc

2. Home learning activities are mindful of the impact on families, time limited and supported by learning in school rather than dependant on parental input.

Learners should not be given home learning tasks which are open ended such as investigating a topic or completing a project. When setting home learning activities, teachers should give guidance on how long an activity should take. Home learning should be followed up in the next class. This will allow learners to see the purpose of their work and how it connects to prior or future class learning. In the BGE, we recognise that it is particularly important that learners have time to spend with their families and to engage in wider achievement activities which will also enhance their skills and wellbeing.

3. Home learning is well-resourced and only given if it will have a positive impact on progress and learning.

Learners should be provided with all of the resources they will need to complete their home learning. Home learning should consolidate class learning.

4. We offer additional homework clubs for all learners with ASN. We will also be mindful of differentiating home learning tasks just as we would classroom activities.

Learners with ASN will be offered the opportunity to join a homework club to enable them to complete their learning in a supportive environment which they associate with learning activities. Teachers should ensure that home learning activities are appropriately differentiated and designed to be both equitable and accessible.

5. Home learning tasks are Literacy and/or Numeracy rich.

All young people in S1 and S2 will have on-going Literacy home learning from the English Department. A St Luke's Cannon of Literature has been purchased to ensure that every pupil reads at least one book a term (eight in total over S1 and S2). The cannon has been chosen to give learners access to a wider range of literature thus supporting their vocabulary development and understanding of a wider range of themes and genres. The English department will monitor and support this reading activity. Audio books have been purchased for learners whose reading age/skills would prevent engagement so that they can still benefit from the positive impact on their vocabulary, understanding of the world and social capital.

All young people in S1 – S3 will have Numeracy home learning activities to complete each week using Rigour Maths to support their learning at home.

As a result, all young people in the BGE will have constant Literacy and Numeracy home learning to complete each week.

Teachers in all subject areas are encouraged to design home learning activities which support the development of disciplinary Literacy and/or Numeracy skills. For example, you may wish to expose learners to new vocabulary before introducing a new topic, set the context for a lesson by assigning relevant reading or have learners engage in pre-learning activities to ensure equity. Numeracy tasks might include practising a technique learned in class, retrieval questions to support retention or a flipped classroom approach to introducing a new topic in class.

This strategy should be understood and enacted alongside our Learning and Teaching, Assessment and Monitoring and Tracking policies. It will be reviewed in June 2024.

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