

The Beaconsfield School

How to make homework go smoothly!

GUIDANCE FOR PARENTS

What can you do to help your child with their homework?

There are two key strategies parents and carers can use to reduce homework hassles.

The first is to establish clear routines around homework, including when and where homework gets done and setting up daily schedules for homework.

The second is to build in rewards or incentives to use with children for whom “good grades” is not a sufficient reward for doing homework.

By establishing daily routines for completing homework, you will not only make it go more smoothly, but you will also be encouraging good habits your child can apply in later life.

1. Find a location in the house where homework will be done

- Some children do best at a desk in their bedroom because it is a quiet location, away from the hubbub of family noise.
- Other children become too distracted by the things they keep in their bedroom and do better at a place removed from those distractions, e.g. the dining room table.
- Some children need to work by themselves.
- Others need to have parents or carers nearby to help keep them focussed and to answer questions when problems arise.
- Ask your child where the best place is to work.
- Both you and your child need to discuss pros and cons of different places to arrive at a successful solution.

2. Set up a specific place to do homework

- Identify a location and set it up as a dedicated homework space.
- Make sure it is large enough.
- Equip the homework space with the kinds of supplies your child is most likely to need, such as pencils, pens, coloured markers, rulers, scissors, a dictionary and thesaurus, rough paper, glue stick, a calculator, and, depending on the age needs of your child, a computer or laptop.
- If the homework space is a place that will be used for other things (such as the dining table), have somewhere that your child can tidy everything away.
- Allowing children some leeway in decorating the homework space can help, but you should be careful that it does not become too cluttered.

3. Establish a specific homework time

- Your child should get in the habit of doing homework at the same time every day.
- Some children need a break right after school to get some exercise and have a snack.
- Others need to start homework while they are still in a school mode (i.e. straight after school).
- In general, it may be best to get homework done either before dinner or as early in the evening as possible. The later it gets, the more tired the child becomes and the more slowly the homework gets done.

4. Establish a daily homework schedule

- In general, the homework session should begin by sitting down with your child, reviewing the planner and discussing what needs to be done.
- Make sure your child understand the homework and has all the necessary materials.
- If your child needs help with any assignment, then this can be agreed.

Rewards

- Many children are motivated by the good mark they hope to earn as a result of doing good homework.
- For children who are not motivated by grades alone, here are a few examples of tried and tested reward ideas.
- The simplest incentive system is reminding the child of a fun activity to do when homework is done. It may be a favourite television show, a chance to spend some time with a video or computer game, or talking on the telephone.

Incentive Systems

- These involve more planning on the part of the parents but they can be very successful in addressing more significant homework challenges.
- More complex incentives systems might include a structure for earning points that could be used to “purchase” privileges or rewards or a system that provides greater reward for accomplishing more difficult homework tasks. These systems work best when parents and children develop them together.
- Giving children input gives them a sense of control and ownership, making the system more likely to succeed.
- We have found that children are generally realistic in setting goals and deciding on rewards and penalties when they are involved in the decision-making process.

Building in breaks

- These are good for the child who cannot quite make it to the end without a small reward. It is useful to identify when children will take their breaks. Some prefer to take breaks at specific time intervals, while others do better when the breaks occur when they finish. If you use this approach, you should discuss with your child how long the breaks will last and what will be done during the breaks (get a snack, call a friend, play a video game).

Building in choice

This can be an effective strategy for parents to use with children who resist homework. Choice can be incorporated into both the order in which the child agrees to complete homework and the schedule they will follow to get the work done.

Why do we set homework?

Homework and independent learning make a significant contribution to students’ progress at The Beaconsfield School.

- Homework can consolidate and reinforce knowledge, understanding and skills developed in the classroom.
- Homework helps extend school learning through additional reading which can give greater breadth and depth to subjects and may be especially valuable for gifted and talented students.
- Homework helps develop research skills, in particular making use of ICT.
- Homework supports the demands of particular courses, i.e. GCSE coursework.
- Homework helps young people prepare adequately for tests and examinations.

How homework is set at The Beaconsfield School

- Every student at The Beaconsfield School is set homework in a variety of subjects. The time a student will be expected to spend on homework will depend on their age. A rough guideline is:
- **Key Stage 3:** 20-40 minutes on each piece of homework (each subject will set homework at least once a week.)
- **Key Stage 4:** 40-50 minutes on each piece of homework (each subject will set homework at least once a week.)

- **Key Stage 5:** at least 3 hours a week for each subject and in addition, students should be engaging in background reading and study.

Learning transforms lives

What skills can homework teach young people?

Many teachers and parents believe that doing homework offers other benefits. It can:

- Enable students to develop independent learning skills, including the confidence and motivation which will support them in valuing learning as a lifelong process.
- Teach children how to take responsibility for tasks and how to work independently.
- To help children develop good habits that will serve them well as they proceed through school and life.
- Help children learn how to plan and organise tasks, manage time, make choices, and problem solve, all skills that contribute to effective functioning in the adult world of work and families.
- Enhance the involvement of parents and carers in their children's learning.

Extra places to go for help

- My Maths
- My Works
- Or visit www.bbc.co.uk/learning

FAQs

How will I know what homework tasks have been set?

Every student at The Beaconsfield School has a planner in which homework tasks will be recorded. A homework timetable will be published at the beginning of the year.

What support is there for students completing homework?

Students are encouraged to complete homework independently to develop their independent learning and study skills. If a student is struggling after attempting to complete homework, then advice and guidance from the subject teacher should be sought.

We do provide quiet calm spaces in which students can complete homework. A general homework club operates in the LRC from 3:20pm - 4:20pm. Please encourage your child to come to homework club. Also departments run their own homework clubs.

Who do I contact with a query about homework?

The first person to contact is the **subject teacher** who sets the homework. If there are other issues you would like to discuss about homework, you may wish to contact the **Subject Leader** or the **Deputy Headteacher**. If you contact The Beaconsfield School in the normal way, your call will be directed appropriately.

The Beaconsfield School
Wattleton Road, Beaconsfield, Bucks, HP9 1SJ
Tel: 01494 673450 Fax: 01494 676404
www.beaconsfield.bucks.sch.uk