



HOLY TRINITY INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

HOMEWORK/PRIVATE STUDY POLICY

The School believes that homework/private study is an essential part of all pupils' learning. Private study will be set regularly and pupils will be encouraged to establish good homework habits from the beginning of their careers at Holy Trinity International School.

Private study is necessary because:-

- It allows practice and consolidation of knowledge, understanding and skills acquired in class.
- It allows assessment of pupils' progress and mastery of work.
- It encourages pupils to develop good study habits and to plan and organise their study time.
- It provides opportunities for individualised work.
- It encourages ownership and responsibility of learning.

AIMS

1. To promote the idea that effective private study involves a partnership between pupils, teachers and parents.
2. To produce a commonly understood and agreed policy that reinforces this concept.
3. To improve the management, and completion, of private study by all concerned.
4. To improve the quality of private study set.
5. To ensure that the value and purpose of private study is recognised by all concerned.

OBJECTIVES

1. To support the implementation of an improved private study regime.
2. To clarify to all concerned what private study is for.
3. To clarify to all concerned how they can work together to make private study more effective.

PRIVATE STUDY

The use of the term 'Private Study' reflects more accurately than the term 'homework' the need for greater flexibility regarding work done outside the classroom. Although most work set will be completed at home, independently, effective private study may require the use of school facilities, such as the library or ICT equipment, or research undertaken in public libraries or elsewhere. There may also be occasions where students have to

plan or complete private study work in pairs or groups, so that home is not the best place for this to be done. It is important, therefore, that library and ICT facilities are available whenever possible, that pupils are encouraged to use these facilities and that the School supports the “homework club”.

THE AMOUNT OF TIME SPENT ON PRIVATE STUDY

The amount of time pupils will be expected to spend on private study will gradually increase as pupils pass through the School. In reality the amount of time individual pupils will spend on private study will vary considerably. However, as a guide to parents, the following is recommended:

Prep School

Reception)	
Year 1)	Reading Practice per night
Year 2)	
Year 3/4)	20 – 40 minutes per night
Year 5/6)	30 – 60 minutes per night

Staff must adhere to this and bear in mind that children of this age are very tired at the end of the school day.

Senior School

Year 7	20 minutes per subject	(2/3 subjects per night)
Year 8	25 minutes per subject	(3 subjects per night)
Year 9	30 minutes per subject	(3 subjects per night)
Year 10	45 minutes per subject	(3 subjects per night)
Year 11	45 minutes per subject	(3 subjects per night)

- In the Sixth Form, time to complete work for study periods **plus** four to five hours work per subject per week.

MANAGING PRIVATE STUDY TIME

If private study time is to be managed effectively, then there should be:

- A timetable which includes agreed deadline dates as well as fixed setting dates, to prevent “logjams”.
- Time for teachers to collect, mark and feedback before the next work is set.
- A simple scheme which is therefore easy for parents and staff to monitor effectively.
- An appropriately designed planner for pupils to use.

FLEXIBILITY

It is important to recognise the concerns of some subject departments about the most suitable study patterns in their area. Some subject departments may wish to split their private study allocation into shorter tasks, with immediate deadlines. Conversely, on another occasion a teacher may wish to combine two or more private study allocations stretching therefore over two or more weeks. If so, the teacher concerned would be expected to provide clear

guidelines as to how the task could be broken down into manageable weekly component/incremental parts, which could be recorded as such in the planner.

Pupils will be issued with a coursework timetable at the beginning of Years 10 and 11, which will enable them to anticipate the demands that are likely to be made upon their time at different stages of the course. Although attempts will be made to spread the load, inevitably there will be times when this workload is uneven, and demanding.

Private study work in non-examination subjects in Key Stages 3 and 4 (e.g. PSRE) will be at the discretion of the teachers.

In the Sixth Form, the number of different subject combinations, and the varying demands of different courses, makes external private study timetabling impossible. By then, students should have mastered the time management skills required to meet the often irregular private study demands placed upon them, although it is expected that within departments teachers will work together to ensure that workload is spread.

At all levels, students will be encouraged to undertake voluntary extension work. This might include tasks of greater depth and detail, or of different levels of difficulty. It might include extra reading or research. This might occupy extra time if undertaken.

THE STUDENT PLANNER (CONTACT BOOK)

At the start of the year all students will be issued with a planner, which includes spaces for the private study timetable, and a weekly diary section in which the work is to be recorded when set.

The private study timetable will be devised by the Head of Key Stage as appropriate.

The planner must be available at all times, and should be available for use or inspection on the pupil's desk at morning registration and during lessons. Sanctions will be taken against pupils failing to bring the planner to lessons. Pupils who mislay the planner must purchase a replacement at full cost.

Parents and Form Tutors should check and sign the diary regularly.

The planner has other uses. In particular it is a reference book containing information useful to pupils. The planner may also be used by teachers to communicate to home, and pupils are also expected to keep a record of all general home-school communications which are to be delivered by "satchel post".

INDEPENDENT STUDY

As pupils move through the School, the expectation is that they will become increasingly independent in recording, planning and completing homework. The more effective the support in the early years, the more likely they are to develop effective study habits, as they move towards Further/Higher Education.

In supervising the completion of private study work, teachers and parents must of course strike a balance between the need to support pupils and the need to encourage individual responsibility for learning.

This delicate balance is particularly relevant to the completion of GCSE or A level coursework outside the classroom, where the integrity of the system depends upon an appropriate interpretation of examination board regulations regarding work being the student's own.

MONITORING PRIVATE STUDY

It is important that the private study system works effectively in the best interests of the students concerned. To ensure this, formal and informal monitoring by all concerned is essential.

1. Students should monitor the work that they are given, and draw teachers' attention to any shortfall or overload. Students who feel they are receiving inappropriate work (i.e. too long/short, too easy/difficult) or deadlines which are unachievable should in the first instance discuss this with the teacher concerned, at the earliest opportunity. If concern persists they should draw the situation to the attention of their Form Tutor, who should take up the matter on their behalf and report back to them.
2. Parents should monitor the amount and the appropriateness of private study work set, and the appropriate use of the planner. They should sign the planner on a weekly basis to indicate this. Parents who have concerns regarding homework in a particular subject should communicate in the first instance with the teacher and/or Head of Department concerned. Where concerns persist, or where concerns relate to a number of subjects or overall private study matters, then parents should communicate with the Form Tutor.
3. Subject Teachers must monitor the completion of private study consistently. Where there are concerns about the private study work being provided by individuals they should in the first instance provide support to the pupil concerned, aiming to ascertain and resolve the cause of any difficulty. Where problems persist, options include; communication with parents; support from the Head of Department; or, as a last resort, sanctions, including detentions.
4. Form Tutors, possibly assisted by form prefects, must set aside time during form periods to monitor the effective use of planners by pupils, providing support and guidance to them on an individual or group basis as appropriate. Where a pupil is not using the planner effectively, a strategy for improving this must be agreed and followed through, and parents may be contacted. Any persistent concerns about private study should be drawn to the attention of the Head of Key Stage and/or Year Co-ordinator.
5. The Head of Key Stage (or Year Co-ordinator) will create the private study. She/He must ensure that time is created for planner inspection by Form Tutors, seeking to ensure that private study work is being consistently set, to timetable, and that is appropriate in its demands. Where there are

persistent concerns, they will be drawn in the first instance to the relevant Head of Department.

6. The Head of Department must establish a departmental policy on the setting, marking and monitoring of private study, establishing good practice, and putting in place internal monitoring procedures to ensure and maintain it.

MARKING PRIVATE STUDY

Private study should be marked regularly in line with the School and Departments' assessment policy.

Heads of Department are responsible for monitoring that private study is marked on a regular basis and appropriate records kept.

THE ROLE OF PARENTS

Parents are encouraged to discuss private study with their children and to help them plan its completion on time. They are also asked to sign the student planner weekly, and a space is provided for any comments that they wish to make.

Wherever possible, parents are encouraged to provide a suitable location, away from distraction, for their child to complete private study. It is best, on most occasions that private study is completed at a desk or table.

Parents might be able to support what is being learnt by:

- Testing their child's knowledge in preparation for a test.
- Checking presentation for neatness.
- Directing the child to a suitable reference book or other information.

If the child is worried or anxious about their private study, parents should reassure them and contact school through the Form Tutor.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR PRIVATE STUDY WORK

The School perceives private study as a responsibility shared between teachers, students and parents working in partnership to ensure the effective completion of private study work.

Subject departments will indicate in advance of the new school year a preference for thirty minute or one hour private study allocations. For Key Stage 4 they will also indicate the times of year when coursework will be set.

The Head of Key Stage will publish a private study timetable at the start of the academic year to which subject teachers must adhere. Within the first two weeks of the school year, subject teachers will confirm this timetable with their classes, and provide pupils with a clear indication of when deadlines for each task will occur. Deadlines will, whenever possible, be at least two days after work is set, to give pupils some flexibility in completing tasks.

Thereafter: It is the subject teachers' responsibility to set, monitor and mark private study tasks, allowing time for the work set to be recorded carefully, and for clarification to be sought where necessary. Effective private study will, when set:-

1. Conform to the private study timetable published at the start of the year
2. Clearly relate to the current or following lesson.
3. Clearly explain what is expected in terms of quality and quantity.
4. Be varied in its requirements; to include writing, reading and speaking tasks.
5. Have varied objectives; learning, revising, testing, researching assignment completion, planning etc.
6. Involve a clearly stated, manageable framework for completion, including a clearly stated deadline.
7. Be reasonable in its demands, in terms of level of difficulty and time required.
8. Offer the possibility of extension work.
9. Be monitored and where appropriate, marked effectively, with appropriate feedback offered.

It is the student's responsibility to record work set, complete it to the best of his/her ability, and meet deadlines. Effective practice will involve:

1. Having the planner available on the pupil's desk from the start of lessons.
2. Recording the work set, accurately and in detail, in the planner
3. Planning the completion of work in advance of deadlines, by setting an appropriate amount of time aside.
4. Asking for further assistance if the private study requirements are not understood
5. Negotiating with teachers in advance of deadlines where difficulties may arise or have arisen
6. Utilising parental support, an appropriate work place, and resources in and out of school when necessary.
7. Ensuring that work is available to hand in on deadline days.

It is the parents' responsibility to provide appropriate support, including time and space in which private study can be completed effectively. This can be achieved by:

1. Taking an active interest.
2. Providing a working environment at home and identifying a designated time for studies.
3. Helping pupils to plan and manage time on a day to day basis, via the planner.
4. Helping pupils to balance private study against other commitments outside school.
5. Providing access to other learning resources, e.g. libraries, computers.
6. Liaison with School in the event of problems and difficulties over private study work.
7. Ensuring pupils actually bring completed work to school on schedule.

This policy should be reviewed annually.

July 2010 - P Wright