

Dear Parent, Guardian/Carer,

We at Whitcliffe place a great importance on the completion and the quality of homework as the evidence research shows that, when structured in a methodical manner and tailored to the individual's needs, it can help to accelerate learning and improve outcomes for students.

“Homework has a positive impact on average (+ 5 months progress), particularly with pupils in secondary schools.”

Each week pupils are set Maths homework on the Sparx website. Sparx provides personalized homework to each child, with questions that are challenging yet achievable, and tailored to their learning needs. Much of each homework is based on recently learnt topics, but also includes some questions from previous topics to help reinforce their learning.

“Homework that is linked to classroom work tends to be more effective.”

Every question in Sparx has a support video attached that your child can watch to support their own learning independently. Students get immediate feedback for each question about whether their answer was correct, or if they need to watch the video and have another try. Each week, Sparx will identify up to 5 areas in which students found the questions more challenging. The class teacher will then give students additional input by modelling the methods for these areas in class. The following lessons, students will have an opportunity to try and improve their understanding by completing very similar set of questions for the same skills, using the teacher models for support.

“In particular, studies that included feedback on homework had higher impacts on learning.”

The Sparx website only deems a homework 'complete' if a student achieves 100%.

As a department there is no expectation that a student must get 100%, but there must be a **genuine effort**. Homework is set on Wednesday at 8am with a deadline of 8am the following Wednesday, so in real terms it, must be completed on Tuesday evening at the latest for your child to be able to give it the time and effort it requires to be an effective learning tool.

Expectations

We have discussed at length with students what a "genuine effort" consists of and agreed the following criteria:

- Attempt every question.
- If you get it wrong, watch the attached instructional video.
- Re-attempt the question
- If you still get it wrong, move on, and ask the teacher for support in your next lesson.

Rewards

Students are rewarded based upon their effort levels, not their completion percentage.

- If a student does a genuine effort, they get 2 points for that week.
- If it is attempted, but not quite to the expected standards, they receive 1 point that week. This will be followed by a discussion with their class teacher as to how to improve their efforts for the following week. Depending on how far from the “genuine effort criteria” the work is, this conversation may be sufficient. If this is a regular occurrence and/or there is no improvement in effort, this may result in the student being logged for a 30-minute after school detention, where they will be taken to a computer room and offered the appropriately required support. This may not result in the student serving the full 30 minutes depending on the level of support needed.
- If the work is attempted to a poor standard, or left unattempted, zero points are awarded. This will result in the student being logged for a 30-minute after school detention, where they will be taken to a computer room and offered the appropriately required support.

Scores are accumulated throughout the full year and as students hit milestone numbers, they receive certificates and other rewards that increase in value at each milestone, culminating in a prize draw at the end of the year for the students that have demonstrated consistent effort.

Sanctions

Incompletions are also tracked. Sanctions for unattempted homework (scores of zero) will escalate with each missed piece of work. Students will serve a 30-minute after school detention, where they will be taken to a computer room and offered the appropriately required support, in the first two instances of failed homework. If there is no improvement from the student level interventions, the class teacher will contact home to raise awareness and seek support from the parent/carer at home. If any subsequent homework is missed, a Leader from within the Maths team will make contact to arrange a day for the child to serve a 60-minute detention after school to catch up the missed work. Should the child choose not to attend, or continue to miss homework, as the Director of Learning for Maths I will invite you in for a meeting to see how we as a school, and you as a parent/carer, can best support your child to access the work and make the maximum progress possible.

Sanctions will re-set every term to give students a fresh opportunity to engage with their learning.

I would love as many students as possible to be eligible for the prize draw at the end of the academic year, so I ask that you please support your child by prompting them weekly and ensuring they have given the work a genuine effort, as ultimately, this is what will make a difference by the time they leave Whitcliffe.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at mike.ward@sharemat.co.uk.

Thank you.



Mr Ward