Homework & Effective Revision Strategy

Budmouth Academy, Weymouth

Version Control	
2026-2027	Removal of Sparx online platforms at key stage 4 Addition of effective revision homework at key stage 4 Addition of effective revision focus weeks to complement the mock assessment cycle (see assessment policy)
2025-2026	New Strategy

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Contents

1. Rationale……...3
2. Evidence Based Research…….....3
3. Aims……...3
4. Academy Homework Structure……..4
    4.1 Key Stage 3 (Year 7-9)…….5
    4.2 Key Stage 4 (Year 10-11).....5
    4.3 Key Stage 5 (Year 12-13).....6
5. Monitoring and Support…….....7
6. Developing Effective Revision Habits……..……7
    6.1 Effective Revision Techniques…….8

1. Rationale

At Budmouth Academy, we recognise that meaningful homework is an integral part of a high-quality curriculum. Our homework programme supports students to review, retrieve and consolidate previously taught knowledge, strengthen long-term memory, and develop the independent study habits needed for future success. Through a progressive blend of online learning, Knowledge Maps, deliberate practice and revision, homework complements classroom teaching and supports a strong partnership between school and home.

2. Evidenced Based Research

This policy is underpinned by evidence-informed educational research and cognitive science, ensuring that homework is purposeful, manageable and has the greatest possible impact on student learning.

Research from the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) demonstrates that effective homework can lead to up to five months' additional progress for secondary students when it consists of short, focused tasks that reinforce classroom learning. The EEF also highlights the significant impact of metacognition and self-regulation, enabling students to plan, monitor and evaluate their own learning effectively.

The academy's homework model is built around established learning principles, including:

- Retrieval Practice - Regularly recalling previously learned information strengthens memory and improves long-term retention (Roediger & Karpicke, 2006).
- Spaced Practice - Revisiting learning over time improves retention and reduces forgetting more effectively than last-minute revision.
- Deliberate Practice - Focused practice on specific knowledge and skills develops fluency, confidence and mastery.
- Effective Revision Strategies - Practice testing and distributed practice are recognised as two of the most effective learning strategies for improving attainment (Dunlosky et al., 2013).

These principles underpin the academy's progressive homework programme, ensuring that homework reinforces curriculum learning, develops independent study habits and prepares students for future learning and external examinations.

3. Aims

The aims of homework is to:

- Consolidate and embed classroom learning through retrieval and spaced practice.
- Extend students' knowledge and deepen understanding beyond the classroom.
- Develop independent learners with effective organisation, resilience and study habits.
- Provide opportunities to apply previously taught knowledge and skills independently.
- Prepare students for the increasing academic demands of Key Stage 4, Sixth Form and external examinations.
- Provide a consistent, manageable and purposeful homework programme for students, staff and parents.
- Support long-term academic success through a progressive approach to homework across all key stages.

4. Academy Homework Structure

All homework will be centrally set to ensure consistency and coherence across the curriculum.

Year	Homework Type	Frequency	Expected Time Commitment
7-9	Online learning through SPARX (English, Maths and Science)	Weekly	60 minutes per week per core subject
10	Revision using flashcards, mind maps, brain dumps or self quizzing followed by retrieval quizzes. * Elements of coursework completion are also permitted ** SPARX available for students to supplement their independent learning (not set). *** Extension tasks can be set to challenge students.	Fortnightly	45 minutes per subject every two weeks
11	Examination-style questions and extended practice tasks. * Elements of coursework completion are also permitted. ** SPARX available for students to supplement their independent learning (not set).	Fortnightly	60-90 minutes every two weeks
12-13	Examples, but not limited to: ● Use of knowledge organisers and self-quizzing ● Effective revision techniques ● Deliberate practice ● Flipped learning lesson preparation ● JStore and other sources of academic journals ● Controlled assessment preparation ● Subject specific Reader, reflection and response ● Wider Independent Study (WIS) to accelerate learning and enhance cultural capital	Daily	55 minutes of homework/independent study for every 55 minute lesson delivery.

4.1 Key Stage 3 (Year 7-9)

At Key Stage 3, homework focuses on establishing positive study habits and reinforcing the foundational knowledge taught in lessons. Students will complete a minimum of 60 minutes of homework per week in each core subject using the academy's approved online learning platforms (Sparx and Seneca):

- English – 60 minutes per week
- Mathematics – 60 minutes per week
- Science – 60 minutes per week

This equates to 180 minutes of homework per week across the three core subjects.

Foundation subjects may set occasional curriculum-based homework where it enhances learning, but these tasks do not form part of the academy's minimum weekly homework expectation.

Teachers will direct students towards homework that reinforces current curriculum learning, develops subject-specific knowledge and skills, and promotes retrieval practice. Homework completion and engagement will be monitored through the online platforms and recorded on Arbor where appropriate.

Students can choose when to complete their homework, but we have suggested the following timetable to help with establishing routines and balancing their time:

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Reader	Science	Maths	Reader	Science
Maths	Reader	Science	Maths	
Sparx Reader - 60 minutes (3 x session of 20 minutes) Sparx Maths - 60 minutes (3 x sessions of 20 minutes) Sparx Science - 60 minutes (3 x sessions of 20 minutes)				

4.2 Key Stage 4 (Year 10-11)

4.2.1 Year 10

Year 10 homework is designed to develop effective revision routines and prepare students for the increased demands of Year 11 and external examinations.

At the beginning of the academic year, each subject will provide students with a Knowledge Map, revision booklet or equivalent resource containing the essential knowledge, vocabulary and concepts required for success.

Every two weeks, students will:

- Revise an identified section of the curriculum.
- Produce revision evidence using either:
    - 10–15 high-quality flashcards, or
    - Two A4 pages of mind maps.
- Bring their completed revision materials to the following lesson.
- Complete a 10–15 question retrieval quiz based on the content they have revised.

Teachers will use retrieval quiz outcomes to identify misconceptions, inform future teaching and support intervention where required. Homework completion will be monitored and recorded on Arbor where appropriate.

This structured approach develops students' revision skills, promotes regular retrieval practice and establishes the independent study habits required for success in Year 11.

4.2.2 Year 11

Year 11 homework focuses on examination preparation, enabling students to consolidate knowledge, refine examination technique and apply their learning under GCSE assessment conditions.

Students will complete examination-style questions or equivalent subject-specific assessment tasks every fortnight. Tasks will:

- Revisit key knowledge from Year 10.
- Reinforce current Year 11 curriculum content.
- Reflect the demands and structure of GCSE assessments.
- Develop examination technique and the application of knowledge.

Feedback may be provided through a combination of:

- Whole-class feedback.
- Self-assessment using mark schemes.
- Peer assessment.
- Teacher feedback where appropriate.

Teachers will use homework outcomes to identify misconceptions, inform future teaching and support intervention where required. Homework completion will be monitored and recorded on Arbor where appropriate.

This approach ensures students receive regular, purposeful examination practice while maintaining a manageable workload for both students and staff.

4.3 Key Stage 5 (Year 12-13)

Independent study is a fundamental expectation of Sixth Form learning and is essential for success in advanced level qualifications. Students are expected to complete 55 minutes of independent study for every taught lesson. For example, a subject taught for 9 lessons per fortnight should generate approximately 495 minutes (8 hours 15 minutes) of independent study over the same period.

Homework and independent study may include:

- Knowledge Map revision and self-quizzing.
- Retrieval practice and effective revision techniques.
- Deliberate practice and examination-style questions.
- Flipped learning and lesson preparation.
- Wider reading, including academic journals and subject-specific texts.
- Coursework or controlled assessment preparation.
- Reflection and response to teacher feedback.
- Wider Independent Study (WIS) to deepen subject knowledge and develop cultural capital.

All homework will be set through the academy's Sixth Form Google Classrooms, enabling students, teachers and Sixth Form staff to monitor engagement and completion.

Teachers will ensure that homework has clear success criteria and is aligned to curriculum objectives. Feedback may be delivered through teacher assessment, whole-class feedback, peer assessment or self-assessment, using mark schemes and success criteria where appropriate. Students will be expected to respond to feedback through dedicated improvement activities, helping them refine their understanding and make sustained progress.

This approach develops the independence, academic discipline and subject expertise required for success in Level 3 qualifications and progression to higher education, apprenticeships or employment.

5. Monitoring and Support

Homework completion will be monitored by class teachers and reviewed periodically by Heads of Department and Senior Leaders.

Students who are unable to access online platforms or complete homework at home will be provided with opportunities to use school facilities before school, during lunchtime or after school.

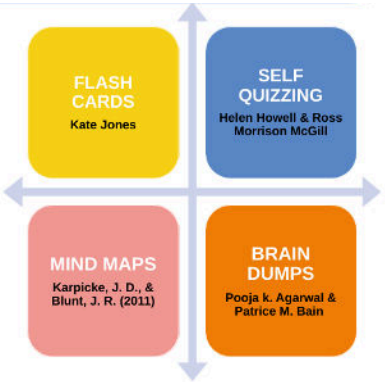
Where concerns regarding homework completion arise, departments will follow the academies agreed intervention procedures.

Departments will regularly review the quality and impact of homework to ensure it remains purposeful, manageable and aligned with curriculum priorities.

6. Developing Effective Revision Habits

	Year	Timing	Purpose	Content
Revision Skills Programme	All Year Groups	September	To equip students with the knowledge and skills required to complete effective independent revision throughout Key Stage 4.	Explicit teaching of evidence-informed revision strategies, including flashcard creation, mind mapping, self-quizzing.
How to Revise Programme	All Year Groups	Four weeks prior to end-of-year Mock assessments	To prepare students for successful examination preparation and revision.	Explicit teaching of evidence-informed revision strategies, including flashcard creation, mind mapping, self-quizzing.

6.1 Effective Revision Techniques



Doug Lemov states, 'practice does not always make perfect, but it does make permanent.' Students should have a bank of well-practised revision and study methods that they can confidently select from (Howell & McGill, 2022).

The Core 4: Flash Cards, Self-Quizzing, Mind-Maps and Brain Dumps have the greatest impact on retention.

Flashcards: A good flash card should contain all the KEY POINTS on a topic in a clear and concise way. It should be a condensed version of whatever you have in your notes and you should be able to take in the information on the card at a glance. By transferring information from your notes to the card you are re-learning what you have covered in class. This is because you have to put information in your own words and to do that you have to understand it! A card should just have the key points on. It shouldn't have loads and loads of detail. If you come back to a cue card and you don't understand it, use your more detailed class notes. In addition, you could write a word on one side and the definition on the other or question on one side and answer on the other.

Flashcards - Leitner Method: Use this method to organise the retrieval practice of your flash cards. It involves having three piles of cards 'Everyday', 'Every three days', 'Every week'.

1. Test yourself on the knowledge on your cue cards.
2. The ones you do not get right put them in a pile (the everyday pile). The ones you do get right put them in a different pile (every three days pile).
3. Review the ones you got wrong the next day. If you get them wrong again, keep them in that pile. If you get them right, put them in the 'Every three day pile'.
4. Three days later review the cards in the 'Three day pile'; if you get them wrong then move them back to the 'Everyday' pile. If you get them right, move them to a new 'Weekly' pile.
5. Repeat this process until the information is easier to retrieve

Self-Quizzing: 'Look, Cover, Write, Check' method.

1. Look: Look at the content, read, re-read and memorise it, say it out loud if necessary (look, cover, chant), until you are confident enough to use your practice book to write it down.
2. Cover: Close your knowledge organiser or cover up the section, it is important that you don't look so you are testing your memory.
3. Write: Now try to recall the knowledge by writing out the section from memory.
4. Check: Open your knowledge organiser and look at the answer – tick the ones you got right and correct the ones you got wrong in a green pen. Do the ones you got wrong again, until you get them right.

Mind maps & Retrieval clocks: Use just keywords, or wherever possible images. Start from the centre of the page and work out. Make the centre a clear and strong visual image that depicts the general theme of the map. Create sub-centres for sub-themes. Put keywords on lines. This reinforces the structure of notes. Print rather than write in script. It makes them more readable and memorable. Lower case is more visually distinctive (and better remembered) than upper case. Use colour to depict themes and to make things stand out. Anything that stands out on the page will stand out in your mind. Use arrows, icons or other visual aids to show links between different elements. Be creative. Creativity (powerskill) aids memory.

Brain Dump: Read a piece of text within a given time frame or self-quizzing content and recall as much information as possible from the text. A Braindump is the active revision alternative to writing notes. This is a very quick and effective technique. It is to test what you already remember, and which neural pathways are already strong. You then identify which information you didn't remember and start building the normal pathways.

6.1.1 Additional Effective Revision Techniques

Skeleton Essays: Is a really useful approach in practising essay writing without having to write an essay. Instead, you produce a sitemap of an essay. This will include:

- The main heading
- An outline structure
- Associated arguments
- References

This technique also helps to train your brain to remember details, select the most appropriate information and create the best structure without having to write the full essay. De-construct and then after periods of remembering the skeleton structure try and re-construct as a full essay.

Summarise & Teach Others*: 'Revise a process and not just subject content'.

1. Summarise notes into a mini presentation like a lesson.
2. Use the summary to then teach others the content.
3. Devise a series of questions/quizzes & answers to test yourself and others.
4. Make a note of the areas that didn't go so well to improve your summary and repeat the process.

*Past Papers, Mark Schemes and Examiners Reports:

- You can practice your timing and learn the patterns of each paper.
- You can identify your weaknesses and reinforce your successes.
- They simulate the stress of the real thing.
- You get to see how they're marked and what examiners look for.
- You'll know what came up in previous years.
- You can identify the:
    - command word(s) = what the question is asking you to do i.e. explain, analyse, describe etc…
    - trigger word(s) = link to the subject specification

Acronyms: To make an acronym, you take the first letter of each word in a list and then rearrange it to make a memorable word. Top tips for acronym creation:

1. List the information that you need to remember
2. Write down all of the initials of all of the key words
3. Rearrange the letters to form a new word that you will remember

Mnemonics: To create a Mnemonic write down your list of facts or information. Try to remember the order of the planets that circle our sun.
Write them down in order: Mercury Venus Earth Mars Jupiter Saturn Uranus Neptune Pluto

2. Then take the first letter from each of the planet names: M V E M J S U N P
3. create a memorable sentence or phrase that uses each of the letters above in turn as the first letter of each word in my new sentence…
My Very Early Morning Jam Sandwich Usually Nauseates People