

The Milton Keynes Academy

Home Learning Policy

1. Introduction

As students progress through the Academy, they will increasingly be expected to learn effectively on their own. Home Learning can be an invaluable mid way stage between direct learning at Key Stage 3 and independent private work in the Sixth Form. Research has shown that there is a wide variation in hours spent on Home Learning such that some children are completing the equivalent of three extra weeks' work each year which will have an effect on rates of student progress and also that there is strong evidence to show that secondary students are more likely to get higher grades if they regularly spend time doing Home Learning.

2. Our Approach

In the Academy, Home Learning will be set as termly projects with a number of learning hours attached to elements of the work set. Our learning hours are at the upper end of the DCSF guidelines to ensure our students have the best opportunity to progress. Our projects are designed to encourage parental involvement in their child's learning, but in a realistic way which can be achieved in a busy household, because we are aware that students will be engage and achieve more if they are able to undertake work which can be discussed and worked upon with parents. The projects will be well planned with clear links to learning in the classroom. The projects will offer something that students can take control of, actively engage in and be proud of. There will be a weekly opportunity to review and discuss the Home Learning Project. Home Learning Projects will be high profile and high status in the Academy.

The type of work set will, at Key Stage 3, aim to:

- build student progress in Literacy and Numeracy skills
- build a reading habit
- engage students' interest so they enjoy and value their learning by setting varied, challenging, active and interesting work
- encourage students to develop the confidence, self discipline and motivation needed to work on their own and to learn by doing
- involve parents in supporting their child's learning

At Key Stage 4 and 5 Home Learning will aim to:

- develop independent learning skills
- support coursework aspects of their chosen qualifications
- practice and reinforce functional skills
- prepare them for major experiences in the 14-19 programme

3. Roles and Responsibilities

- The Termly Home Learning Projects, co-ordinated by Heads of Learning Village, will be an integral part of the curriculum and planned alongside all other programmes of learning and matched to individual needs.
- Staff within each Village will monitor and record completion of Home Learning; assess and track its impact on a student's progress towards milestones or National Expectation; develop self and peer assessment activities around each project and value the work through display and feedback to students and parents.
- Students will commit to spending the learning hours as set on the projects and to working with tutors to monitor progress of the Home Learning Projects on a weekly basis.
- Parents will commit to encouraging and monitoring Home Learning by talking to their children about the tasks set; offering ideas about presentation; ensuring some days are Home Learning free so students can pursue hobbies and interest either at the Academy or in the community; by hearing their children read aloud and informing the Head of Village if a problem or issue arises.
- The Academy will publish Termly Home Learning Projects on its website as well as providing each child with a folder to organize their project and will offer a free afternoon tea at 4.30 each day for children working on their Home Learning using the Academy facilities.

4. The Home Learning Projects

Years 7 and 8

Each project will represent in total 45 hours work to be completed over 6 weeks. Each project will be co-ordinated by the Head of Village in conjunction with their Village and Specialist Staff. They will be planned to take account of individual needs. The projects are comprised of:

- 6 hours literacy skills
- 6 hours numeracy skills
- 9 hours reading (approx 20 minutes x 5 days per week)
- 24 hours on Project

Termly Projects:

1. Personal Enterprise
2. Supported Self Study
3. Me and My World
4. Scientific Discovery
5. Expressive/ creative project
6. Design and Make Project

In addition, parents will be given a suggestion of experiences they may wish to share with their children to enhance their learning which are appropriate to the time of year under the headings of :

- Places to Visit
- Life skills
- Childhood experiences

90 Hours

In Years 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13 students are expected to complete 90 hours private study every 6 weeks the content of which will be dictated by their learning pathway which will be co-ordinated by the Head of Learning Village and specialist staff.

5. Academy and Parent Supporting Each Other

Parents can help with Home Learning projects by:

- Reading the Project Outline with their child and discussing it – this can be done in the home language if required
- Making suggestions about presentation
- Organising some of the suggested activities
- Offering feedback on the projects in meetings, at Progress Evenings or via the Annual Questionnaire
- Encouraging a range of trusted persons to be involved with the project ie grandparent, sister, neighbour etc

The Academy will value and support parental involvement in the projects by:

- by being realistic about the demands we set upon families
- thanking parents for their involvement and valuing the work done through display and other recognition
- Ensuring that no specialist knowledge is required of parents, just time and interest
- The Academy will make available its resources and facilities from 7.15am – 6.30pm to provide space and support if students wish to complete their Home Learning there.

6. If Difficulties Arise

Parents are asked to contact the tutor or Head of Village if their child is spending too long or too little on the Home Learning or if there are difficulties with understanding or completing the work. This can be done via a note in the folder to be brought to school on Monday or via email or the

Academy website. Staff will contact parents if they feel there are problems with understanding, completion or returning Home Learning projects.

7. Assessment

Students will undertake self and peer assessment of their Home Learning Projects with their tutor. Tutors will assess the projects and feed the information to the Head of Learning Village. The Head of Learning Village will assess the impact the work completed has had on the students' progress towards targets.

8. Monitoring the Effectiveness of this Policy

The quality and effectiveness of Home Learning will be monitored termly as part of the Academy Quality Assurance Procedures. The implementation of the policy by staff at all levels will be monitored by their line manager. Students and parents will be involved in reviewing this policy through Annual Consultation and in the case of students also through Student Voice activities. Complaints about Home Learning will be recorded and reported to Governors as a Key Performance Indicator.

9. Policy Ownership, Monitoring and Review

The responsibility for ensuring that the Academy adheres to this policy and that this policy is periodically reviewed rests with: Principal of the Milton Keynes Academy