



École européenne de Bruxelles IV (Laeken)  
*European School of Brussels IV (Laeken)*

NURSERY, PRIMARY AND SECONDARY CYCLES

# HOMework POLICY

**Creation:** 17-10-2019

**Last revision:** 08-12-2022

**Validation:** School Advisory Council (SAC)

**Diffusion:** Internal and external



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## **INTRODUCTION**

This homework policy draws on the school's views and expectations regarding the function, value, purpose, volume and other aspects of homework. It aims at greater harmonisation of homework across the different levels and sections in the school.

## **DEFINITION OF HOMEWORK**

Homework is assigned by the teachers to their pupils. It consists of learning activities to be carried out outside the classroom learning environment and outside of school hours. If needed, homework allows the pupils to complete a task that started in class.

## **PURPOSE OF HOMEWORK**

The main purpose of the homework is to practice and reinforce the competences in the school curriculum, which are dealt with during the lessons at school. Homework can also involve preparation. This helps pupils get ready for activities that will occur later in the classroom. Pupils may, for example, be required to read or find information on a topic to be discussed later in class. This is a pedagogical strategy known as flipped learning, which is well suited to the competence-based approach or enquiry-based learning to which the European Schools subscribe.

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## **VALUE OF HOMEWORK**

Homework is a valuable part of schooling. Homework also contributes to help pupils become more independent and autonomous, that is, more responsible for their own learning. With homework pupils learn to plan and manage their own work and self-evaluate their own progress.

Homework also establishes a fundamental link between the school and families. It provides parents with an opportunity to become more aware of their children's learning. Parents should encourage their children to acquire self-discipline, concentration and good study habits. They can even be involved if the assignment clearly marks that it should be done with the help of an adult. Otherwise, parents should promote that tasks are carried out independently.

## **HOMEWORK AND DIFFERENTIATION**

Teachers should also practice differentiation and personalised teaching when assigning homework in order to integrate the different learning styles and profiles.

# GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF HOMEWORK

- It should be appropriate to the pupil's skills and knowledge, level and age;
- It should be reasonable in terms of effort and time;
- It should contain interesting, varied and challenging tasks;
- It should be purposeful, meaningful and relevant to the school curriculum;
- It should be proportional to the number of periods taught per week;
- Instructions and materials on which homework is based should be clear;
- Deadlines should be clearly stated.

## COMMUNICATION

All homework assignments and tests should be posted in the School Management System (SMS) for s1 to s7. From s1 to s3, assignments should also be entered in the school diary. The Office365 platform (Teams: Assignments) can also be used to further elaborate homework, especially in the secondary school. In that case, the assignment in SMS should clearly refer to Teams/Office365.

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## HOLIDAYS

In the Primary School homework during the holidays should be avoided, with the exception of reading assignments. In the secondary school, holidays is a good time to review, catch up and read but teachers are reminded that summative assessments should not be organized upon return.

## EXAMINATION PERIODS

Two weeks before examination period starts, teachers should communicate via SMS the content of what will appear on the exam.

During the week before examination periods, and during the entire period of examinations, for s4 through s7, homework and tests must only be assigned in preparation for the upcoming examinations, or must be avoided.

## **TEACHERS AND HOMEWORK**

The nature, frequency and volume of homework set are left to the professional judgement of the teachers.

Teachers will encourage pupils to submit all homework in due time. They will keep accurate records of homework set and submitted. They will assess it timely providing feedback and support.

Homework must never be used as a punishment to discipline or to sanction a pupil. In the same way, not setting homework for a certain period should not be used as a reward.

Homework should not be given for uncompleted tasks in the classroom due to poor planning and lack of time.

Pupils need to be talked to ensure they avoid plagiarism, copying homework from others, or having other people do their homework for them.

Teachers, especially language teachers, should make sure that pupils learn how to quote and reference the sources they have used.

## **GUIDELINES FOR HOMEWORK VOLUME AND FREQUENCY**

We are aware that the working pace of pupils may vary according to many different factors. The following homework duration is only a rough indication of the time we think an average pupil should spend in his out-of-class tasks in order to progress steadily. Of course, this time must be used efficiently, being completely focused and without any distractions. If the time that a child spends on his homework is significantly greater, the pupils or the parents could contact the class teacher or the corresponding education advisor.

Level	Total homework per day
M1-M2	No homework. Occasionally fun activities to do with the family.
P1-P2	<p><b>Maximum 25 minutes.</b></p> <p>In principle, homework should be limited to a short reading tasks, handwriting exercises, drawing, revision, learning by heart or finding information with help from the family for a presentation...</p> <p>In p1-p2, there should be no homework in L2. However, it is advisable for teachers to inform parents regularly about what their children have learned in class through a short newsletter.</p>
P3-P4	<p>Homework should be up to <b>35 minutes in p3</b> and approximately <b>45 minutes (with maximum of 60 minutes) in p4 and p5</b> per day.</p> <p>In addition to the types of homework defined for p1 and p2, homework assignments in this higher cycle aim at revising and applying competences gained in class. Homework is therefore an extension of learning already done in class. Homework allows pupils develop their own "know-how", a sense of reflection, learn how to fix concepts and awaken their interest in discovery.</p>
S1-S2	45 to a maximum of 60 minutes
S3	60 minutes
S4	60 - 90 minutes
S5	90 - 120 minutes
S6-S7	Depending on the pupils' individual programmes

Note, please, that in the secondary school, pupils may have to employ some extra time during the weekends or during the exam periods.

# HOW CAN PARENTS GET INVOLVED?

Homework serves to strengthen the partnership between home and school. It provides parents and caregivers with insights as to what is being taught at school. Many of our pupils have already acquired solid study habits at home. They have the initiative to start work and can work independently and may need very little involvement from their parents. However, we would like to offer some tips for parents that can help especially younger children to tackle homework successfully.

- Reinforce the idea of the importance of homework. Set a positive atmosphere around it. Homework should not be a source of stress and conflict in the family;
- Check your child's homework in his school diary (agenda) and SMS;
- Encourage your child to take notes concerning homework assignments. They should use the school diary (agenda) for that purpose;
- Provide a suitable study area and the necessary tools to complete the homework assignments. Pupils should have a quiet room with comfortable furniture, well illuminated and with an adequate temperature, with resources they can use: reference books, dictionaries, computer... ;
- Make sure that after-school activities are compatible with having enough time for homework and other family activities;
- Agree with your child on a specific homework time. Plan a homework schedule. Allow free time for recreation when assignments have been completed;
- Be careful with the time your children spend watching television, video-gaming or using the computer or tablet for recreation or communication with friends and make sure that sources of distraction are controlled during the homework time;
- Younger children need more parental assistance with homework than older children. Go over homework assignments with your child. When questions about assignments arise and your child calls for help, ask him questions (elicit) or work through an example rather than simply providing the answer. Do several problems or questions together, then observe your child doing the next one or two and give feedback;
- Praise your child's efforts;
- Contact the relevant teacher with any concerns you may have about homework.

# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PUPILS

- Write down all details of homework and deadlines in your school diary (agenda);
- If you are absent to a lesson, make sure you ask a classmate or your teacher about the homework set. Check SMS;
- Make sure you understand exactly what to do and how to do it;
- Submit assigned work punctually;
- Plan your time so that you do not leave work for the last minute having to rush to complete it. Develop an effective individual study timetable;
- If you are using reference books or other sources to complete your assignments, remember to quote properly. Ask your teacher how to do this;
- Do not cut and paste from the Internet. Use your own words and list the sources you have used. Do not plagiarize;
- Seek assistance from teachers, parents or caregivers when difficulties arise;
- Use your lesson-free periods at school to do homework at the study rooms or the library. Ask the education advisors and/or the librarian for assistance;
- Ensure that homework is completed to a high standard and is neatly presented;
- If you are unable to complete your homework, you can:
  - Use TEAMS to share your difficulties with your classmates or teacher;
  - Identify similar techniques used in class and try to employ them yourself;
  - Take note of your problem-solving method in order to share your difficulties with your teacher.



## **EXTRA PRIVATE TUITION AND HOMEWORK**

Some parents decide to hire a private teacher or send their children to extra private lessons after school. It is very important that parents make sure that the private tuition they have hired is in tune with the contents taught at school and the methodology we employ. Otherwise, this could be counterproductive.

The school also has a Learning Support programme in order to help pupils with learning difficulties cope with the requirements of our curriculum. The learning support policy of the school is available on the school's website. You can also contact the Learning Support coordinator through the school's secretariat.

Parents should also make sure that the private tuition fosters independence and autonomy rather than dependence on someone to complete the assignments, or even worse, someone else doing the homework instead. Pupils should be given advice, examples, and guidance so that they can tackle homework successfully on their own. If someone else does the homework for them, they will not learn.