

EUROPEAN SCHOOL MUNICH

HOMEWORK GUIDELINES

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Part 1

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I) Preamble

This document outlines the importance of homework and establishes an agreed framework to which teachers, parents and pupils at ESM have contributed. It establishes clear guidelines for teachers, and provides information and advice for parents and pupils on how to approach homework successfully. Furthermore, the school will develop a Whole Day Concept in the near future in which the policy will play an important role.

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I) The importance of homework

Although it is not obligatory to set homework every lesson, homework is a valuable part of schooling. Regular homework gives the pupils the opportunity to supplement and reinforce at home the work done in school. Pupils should revise the contents and practice the skills covered in class in order to progress steadily.

Homework also supports the development of independent learning skills and helps pupils to become more autonomous, or more responsible for their own learning. Homework also provides parents with an opportunity to take part in their children's education, encouraging and helping them at home to develop concentration, self-discipline and good study habits.

II) Definition of homework

Homework is defined as out-of-class tasks assigned to pupils, either as a group or individually, connected to class work.

III) Nature of homework

Homework can involve practice, preparation, and/or extension assignments. Practice reinforces newly acquired skills. For example, pupils who have just learned a new method of solving a mathematical problem should be given sample problems to complete on their own.

Preparation helps with activities undertaken in the classroom. Pupils may, for example, be required to read or do background research on a topic to be discussed later in class. Extension assignments are frequently open-ended tasks that allow pupils to discover on their own and to go deeper into certain areas in which they have a particular interest.

IV) General characteristics of homework

- It should be organized so as to develop and foster knowledge, skills and competences in a balanced way
- It should be reasonable in terms of effort and time required.

- It should be appropriate to the individual pupil's skill, knowledge level and age.
- It should contain interesting, varied and challenging tasks.
- It should be relevant to the school curriculum.
- It should make clear the rubrics and materials on which the homework is based.
- It should make clear the deadlines

V) The Amount and Frequency of Homework

General Outline: The working pace of pupils may vary according to a variety of factors.

The following homework commitment is an approximate indication of the time an average pupil should spend on her/his out-of-class tasks in order to progress. The allocations assume an efficient use of time where there are no distractions. If the time required increases significantly, the parents or the pupil should contact the school, and in the first instance the respective subject teacher in order to seek advice.

HOW MUCH HOMEWORK?

When giving homework, the teacher should apply the following:

For classes S1-S4: Time Allocation: Approximately 10 minutes per lesson in the subject

For classes S5-S7: Approximately 15 minutes per lesson in the subject

In principle the total amount of homework per week should not exceed 10 minutes (S1-S4) and 15 minutes (S5-S7) multiplied by the number of lessons in the subject.

e.g. S1 SCH: 3 periods x 10 = 30 minutes per week

To limit the workload for the pupils, homework per subject from one day to the next should not exceed 20 minutes. Occasionally exceptions are possible but must be within pedagogically and chronologically justifiable frames.

Within the allowance per week piece of (home)work can be spread out over several weeks.

For a subject of four or more periods, or advanced courses in upper classes, the maximum time allocation can be increased by up to 15 minutes in S1 – S4 and 20 minutes in S5 – S7 per lesson in the subject, but should not exceed 60 (S1-S4) or 80 minutes (S5-S7) per school week.

e.g. S1 L1: 6 periods x 10 = 60 minutes

e.g. S6 GEO 4: 4 periods x 10 = 40 minutes OR up to 4 periods x 20 = 80 minutes

Attention: Additional (home)work will be required if the syllabus implies wider reading and research.

Holidays/Weekends: School holidays and weekends do not count as school days. Therefore homework can only be given as described above.

Exceptions to the above: However, in consultation with the school administration a deviation from the general guidelines can be acceptable. For example, where a teacher or pupil has been absent for some time and there is a need to catch up on work missed.

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Please note, that apart from this, pupils may have to devote some time during the weekends or some extra time in preparation for, and during, exam periods. There is, of course, still the possibility to do more homework on a voluntary basis such as preparing for tests, presentations etc.

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The role of the pupil, the parent(s)/guardian(s), the teacher

I) The Pupil's Role

- Write down all details of homework and deadlines in your school diary.
- It is your responsibility if you are absent to inform yourself of homework tasks. You must ask others in the class or your teacher whether homework has been set.
- If you need worksheets or any information, ask your classmates or your teacher.
- Make sure you understand exactly what to do and how to do it.
- Submit homework on time
- Plan your time. Do not leave work to the last minute so that you have to rush to complete it. Develop an effective individual study timetable.
- Remember to quote properly from all your sources. Provide a bibliography for your source material. If you are not sure, 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.
- Cheating such as plagiarizing will invalidate work. In such cases further sanctions might be decided upon. **Always value academic honesty.**
- Seek assistance from teachers, parents or guardians, or fellow students when difficulties arise.
- Use your free periods at school to do homework in the designated study rooms or the Multimedia Center in the Library. If a supervisor is present ask for assistance if needed.
- Ensure that homework is completed to a high standard and is neatly presented.

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II) The Role of the Parent(s)/Guardian(s)

General Comments: Homework guidelines serve to strengthen the partnership between home and school. It provides parents and/or guardians with insights as to what is being taught at school. Many of our pupils have already acquired solid study habits at home. They have developed initiative and can work independently and may need very little involvement from their parents.

The following is a guide for all parents as to how to foster a positive and rewarding homework approach for all pupils:

- Reinforce the idea of the importance of homework.
- Create a positive atmosphere. Homework should not be a source of stress and conflict in the family.
- Encourage your child to take notes during the lesson in respect of homework assignments. This will help them at home. Mind maps are excellent examples of this approach. Pupils can use the school diary to make brief notes, or a separate notebook. Please check your child's diary regularly and encourage them always to write down their homework.
- Provide a suitable study area and the necessary equipment to complete the homework assignments. Pupils should have a quiet room with comfortable furniture. The lighting and temperature should both be adequate. Resources are similarly important such as reference books, dictionaries, calculators and so on.
- Limit after-school activities to allow time for both homework and family activities.
- Agree with your child on a specific homework time. Be careful with the time your child spends on watching the television video games, social media platforms etc.
- Remind your children to use the computer for homework only when necessary.
- Plan a homework schedule with your child. Allow for free time when assignments are completed.

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- Praise your child's efforts. If questions arise about the assignments, and your child asks for help, ask him or her questions or work through an example rather than simply providing the answer.
- Younger children typically need more parental assistance with homework than older children.
- Go over homework assignments with your child. Do several problems or questions together: Then, allow your child to work independently. The aim is to promote self-confidence.
- Contact the relevant teacher with any concerns you may have about homework.

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III) The teacher's role

- The teacher decides what homework is compulsory for pupils and also suggests optional homework.
- Within the framework above (page 4), the teacher exercises her / his discretion in regard to how much and when homework is set.
- Teachers will encourage pupils to submit all homework on 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. In the same way, not setting homework for a certain period should not be used as a reward.
- Homework that is submitted late without any justified reason will have a negative effect on the pupil's 'A' mark. If a pupil cheats such as by plagiarizing in her/his homework the homework will be marked with a '0'. Other disciplinary sanctions may also apply in this case. As appropriate, teachers should make sure that pupils learn how to quote and reference the sources they have used.
- Teachers inform pupils and parents about the frequency and amount of the homework in the subject taught at the beginning of each semester. This will, of course, be of a general nature and within the framework of allocations.
- The teacher ensures that students write down the homework in their diary, or otherwise take formal note of the work set. It is important that the task and, if possible the approximate time needed to do this is communicated to the pupils. This will provide a general idea of what is required and what is reasonable for the pupil. Pupils may provide to the teacher feedback in respect of homework workload so that amendments can be made.

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Homework Support

I) School-based support and private tuition

- The school also has a Support program in order to help pupils with learning difficulties and to cope with the requirements of the curriculum. The support policy of the school is available on the school's webpage. You can also contact your child's support teacher in respect of homework issues. The teacher will have defined goals for your child and she/he can work in this context on issues that arise.
- 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 private tuition harmonizes with the contents taught at school and the methodology we employ. Otherwise, this could be counterproductive.
- Parents should also make sure that the private tuition fosters independence and autonomy rather than dependence on someone in order to complete, or even worse, do the assignments. Pupils should be given advice, examples, and guidance so that they can do their homework successfully.

II) The Whole School Day at ESM

Once this happens ESM will provide the following:

- Opportunities to work in suitable areas supervised by professionals who can provide assistance and guidance
- Opportunities for pupils to study and do additional work such as homework and projects at school
- Opportunities to use multi-media resources
- Opportunities to use free periods to undertake supervised study

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