



Dear Parent/Carer,

Changes to arrangements regarding homework and extra-curricular activities

We have, following the recent Parents' Forum meeting and other consultation with parents, reviewed the arrangements for homework and extra-curricular activities at the Folkestone Academy. We were interested to hear your views and, although there will never be a policy which pleases everyone, have worked hard to address your concerns and wishes, while striving to enable your children to achieve their full potential, both in academic subjects and extra-curricular activities.

There is compelling evidence that children who do additional homework to supplement and build on their school lessons achieve higher standards in their examinations and therefore are more likely to fulfil their true potential, both at school and outside. Homework enables children to consolidate what they learn at school, so that they have a firm basis on which to build and extend their knowledge and skills. It also provides essential time to reflect, ensure that they fully understand the subject, and to revise for examinations. My staff and I believe that each pupil should be doing 5 hours of homework a week, spread over weekdays and the weekend. This modest investment of time (averaging approximately 40 minutes a day) will reap huge benefits for our children.

The Academy also offers extra-curricular activities and clubs for the children on two afternoons each week from 3.30-5pm, covering sport, drama, music, debating and other activities. These are very important life skills for our pupils, extending and enriching their lives and enabling them to develop into well-rounded, successful young adults. Folkestone Academy is becoming more and more successful in these areas, successfully competing with other schools.

As you are aware, the Academy day finishes at 5pm on all weekdays except Wednesday when it finishes at 2.30pm. Currently, on two days each week, pupils spend the time from 3.30-5pm, doing extra-curricular activities. The rest of the time in school is spent in class.

However, some parents have raised a concern about the time which will need to be invested in homework at home. To address this, we will from November this year, be offering pupils the choice of either continuing to participate in extra-curricular activities on the two afternoons a week from 3.30-5pm or, alternatively, to spend this time at school doing homework in a supervised homework club. Children who choose to attend homework club, will still have to do approximately 2 hours of homework each week at home.

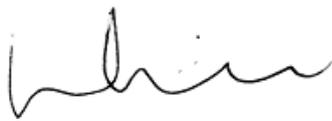
We very much hope that, where possible, children will still opt to participate in extra-curricular activities at school and do their homework at home. For the reasons mentioned above, we feel that it is in most children's interests to do this and we all, of course, have their interests at heart and their development as our primary goal.

Another option, which could be implemented from next September, would be to offer an additional homework club on Wednesday afternoons, from 2.30pm to 5pm.

The Parents' Forum also expressed a strong feeling that capping effort scores at grade 2 was unfair and may appear to punish those who tried hard in class. We have responded by extending effort scores from 0 to 4, to be awarded for all aspects of school activities, in and out of lessons.

I would be grateful if you could complete the attached slip to indicate whether your child will be attending homework club or participating in extension activities. We would ask you to return these slips by Wednesday 7th October so that the timetable can be designed to meet everyone's requirements.

Yours sincerely



Warren Smith
Headteacher

PS Concerns were expressed at the Parent Forum about Community Academic Review Days. The first of these will go ahead, as planned, on Tuesday 24th November. We will welcome your comments on that day.

Homework choices

Please return this slip to the Academy by Wednesday 7th October.

Name:

Year group:

Please select one of the following options:

I wish my child to continue in extension activities and to do their homework at home in their own time

I wish my child to be allocated to homework club

<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>

Signed:

(Parent/Carer)

Where we do not receive a stated preference, we will assume that you wish your child to continue in extension activities and to do their homework at home in their own time.