

# LARGS ACADEMY



## Learning at Home

### Broad General Education S1, S2 & S3

Homework is an essential part of school life and can bring many benefits to pupils' learning. When schools and families work together children do better. It is important that tasks set for learning outside of the classroom help pupils and their families to generate an interest in learning and develop habits which will lead to lifelong learning.

**Why is homework important?**



Helps the pupil to ...	Helps the teacher to ...	Helps parents to ...
Practise and build on whatever they have learned at school	Check a pupil's understanding of classwork	Find out what their child is doing at school
Prepare for exams by revising what they have learned in class	Plan for future teaching and learning	Get involved in their child's learning
Take more responsibility for their learning	Keep track of a pupil's progress	Support and encourage their child in the learning process
Gain experience of independent learning	Communicate with parents about what their child is learning at school	Communicate with teachers and make comments about homework given
Challenge and develop talents and develop the confidence to overcome problems	Set tasks to consolidate the learning completed in class	
Learn how to organise and manage their time effectively		
Experience a sense of satisfaction and achievement		

*Our greatest weakness lies in giving up. The most certain way to succeed is always to try just one more time.*

**Thomas A. Edison**



**Who is involved?**

The pupil's role is to ....	The teacher's role is to ...	The parent's role is to ...
Keep an accurate note of all homework they are given	Set homework that is appropriate and at the right level	Know what the school and teachers expect of their child
Plan ahead	Clearly explain the purpose of homework to pupils	Talk to their child about what they are learning and show an interest in their homework
Make time to do homework	Set realistic deadlines	Let the school know if their child has too little or too much homework
Look for help when experiencing difficulty	Check homework and give prompt and meaningful feedback	Get in touch with their child's guidance teacher with any concerns
Hand homework in on time	Give recognition for effort and work well done	

## Homework diary



The pupil's role is to ...	The teacher's role is to ...	The parent's role is to ...
Bring their homework diary to school every day	Ensure that pupils note down all homework in their diaries	Check their child's homework diary to find out which tasks their child has to complete
Note down every homework task they are given against the date when it is due	Give pupils test / exam dates in advance to note in their diaries	Use homework diary to help their child to prioritise homework tasks
Note down the dates of class tests / exams	Inform guidance teacher if a pupil does not bring their homework diary to class on a regular basis	Communicate with teachers by writing comments in the homework diary
Check their diary every evening to plan homework effectively	Communicate with parents by writing comments in homework diaries	
Buy a replacement if they lose their diary		



## Getting help with homework

The pupil's role is to ...	The teacher's role is to ...	The parent's role is to ...
Ask class teacher for help before homework deadline where possible	Be available to provide additional support with homework tasks	Ensure that their child has an appropriate environment in which to complete homework
Ask for help from parents / brothers/sisters if appropriate	Liaise with Support for Learning where appropriate	Wherever possible, be available to provide help for their child when they are completing homework
Attend lunchtime homework club in school library	Advise pupils of suitable sources of information, e.g. library or websites	Encourage their child to attend supported study
Attend supported study classes where available in S4-S6		

A homework working group carried out a full review of the existing homework policy and procedures in 2008. This involved the consultation of pupils, staff and parents by means of questionnaires which were then collated by the Pupil Council. The results showed that a large proportion of pupils in all year groups appreciate the importance of homework as an integral part of the teaching and learning process. In 2012 the policy and homework guides were up-dated in line with Curriculum for Excellence. We completed this third revision in 2015 to ensure we remain consistent in our approach to homework and to remind pupils, parents and staff of the importance and value of homework as an essential part of the learning process.

As well as clarifying staff roles, the homework policy includes the introduction of initiatives and strategies to support pupils in their learning. These include:

- Homework Diaries for all pupils
- Homework lessons available electronically through Glow and on the Largs Academy website.
- Lessons in study skills, exam preparation and time management, including how to create a study planner are covered during PSE (The SQA website provides good advice for exam preparation and study too. See links on school website)
- Motivational workshops on goal mapping, preparing for the Senior Phase and SQA Exams
- Homework Mentors and Peer Assisted Learning (PALs)
- Homework Club
- Study periods for senior pupils in the School Library
- Supported Study Classes and Easter Revision School
- Masterclasses for senior pupils in preparation for SQA Exams
- Demerits and Homework Monitoring Timetables
- Homework Concern Letters - to inform parents when homework becomes an issue

## Pupil and Parent Views

This session (August and September 2015) groups of pupils were asked their views on learning at home. The table below summarises their views. The Parent Council were involved in the review and they were given an opportunity to comment on the new BGE and Senior Phase booklets. Parents were very keen on increasing the use of technology to support home learning and support the school in its efforts to promote the value of learning at home.



## Pupil Views on Learning at Home

How often is homework issued?	Pupils said they were issued with homework more or less every single day S3 pupils receive maths homework every day, except Friday.
Do you make use of your homework diary?	Pupils say they are used regularly and are very useful.
How could we improve the homework diary and is it used by all pupils?	Most pupils are happy with the diaries as they are. Some would like a better layout with more room to write on the space for each day. This may encourage more pupils to make use of the diaries.
How long do you spend doing your homework?	S1-S3 report between 30 minutes to one hour each night is spent on homework tasks.
Where do you do your homework?	Some complete homework in the school library at Homework Club, but most do their work at home.
Do you attend homework club after school? If yes, how often and is it a good place to work?	Those who attend Homework Club most regularly say it's a good place to work because it's friendly and there are S6 pupils available to help most nights.
Do teachers have high expectations in terms of the amount and type of homework set at each stage?	Pupils were confident about the amount of support they received from their teachers when they were struggling with homework, but they did feel they were being challenged or 'pushed' to work hard and do well.
How is homework assessed and feedback given?	Comments in jotters were well received, especially where teachers were pleased with their work. This made pupils feel good. If a piece of homework wasn't done well teachers expected pupils to spend more time working at home and advised them to listen more carefully in class.
Do your parents ask you about homework? Do they ask to see your work or do they ever help you with work at home? Are parents ever asked to sign your homework?	Parents will help with homework if a pupil has a problem, but most pupils do their homework on their own most of the time. In some subjects pupils are asked to get parents to sign their work, but most said this was not usual.
Do you do any homework on-line? Would you like more opportunities for homework to be done on-line? (Use of Glow and iCloud?) Could we set up a folder on the iCloud to provide materials for pupils who are not able to attend?	Very little is done on line at present, although science does use EDMODO. Pupils would like us to promote EDMODO more and welcomed greater use of the iCloud in future. They said that very few pupils would not be able to access a computer at home and computers in school library are available for them every day after school too.
Do Guidance teachers talk about homework and the importance of developing good homework habits?	Pupils would like more time to talk about home learning and would like advice about how to study.
Should we organise homework workshops for parents?	Most pupils thought their parents were too busy to attend a workshop.



## ART AND DESIGN

### Types of homework task

- Individual pieces of Art work
- Learning concept terminology
- Research into individualised topics
- Visual awareness exercises

### Frequency / completion time of homework tasks

- This is at the discretion of the teacher

### Important deadlines

- Deadlines are set by class teacher and will vary according to particular project covered

### How parents can help?

- Parents are asked to encourage creative work at home and to ask questions and discuss what is being covered in class

## DESIGN & TECHNOLOGY

### Types of homework task - Design and Manufacture

- In S1, S2 and S3 Design and Manufacture, homework will focus on the design process, knowledge of the tools and the processes associated with the materials used in design tasks – wood, metal and plastic. It can be a written or drawing task.

### Types of homework task - Graphic Communication

- In S1 and S2 Graphical Communication homework will focus on logos, scaling, 3D drawing, rendering, presentation techniques and advertising. In S3 homework is based on computing, CAD drawing, orthographic drawing, pictorial drawing, building drawing, rendering and presentation techniques. It can be a written or drawing task.

### Frequency

- Most homework tasks are issued weekly in S1 and S2. Most homework tasks should take approximately 20-30 minutes to complete and they can be both written and drawing tasks.
- In S3 All pupils are issued with two pieces of homework each week. Each exercise will take about 30 minutes to complete and pupils normally have until the next class to complete it.

### Important deadlines

- There are end of topic tests throughout each session.

### How parents can help?

- Homework is an important part of the coursework and it is important that it is completed and returned on time. Parents are asked to sign all work carried out.

## ENGLISH

### Types of homework task

- Literature Circles: in small groups, pupils read a novel over four weeks. They meet once a week to discuss their reading, complete short tasks associated with it and set their next reading target. Once completing their novel, each group prepares a presentation for the rest of the class about it.
- A variety of other homework, such as redrafting, completing or preparing class work, research for Talk Assessments.
- Reading for a research project undertaken in the Library.
- Research tasks, self-evaluation and planning for Drama lessons. (S1 only)

### Frequency

- Weekly reading and preparation for group discussion.

- To be completed as required by the class teacher.
- To be completed as required by the librarian.
- To be completed as required by the class teacher. (S1 only)

#### **Important deadlines**

- Deadlines will be issued by the class teacher and recorded in homework diaries.
- S1 Drama performances are filmed for assessment at the end of each study block.
- S3 exams will take place in March, with regular progress reviews ongoing throughout the session.

#### **How parents can help?**

- Encourage your son or daughter to develop a routine for completing homework.
- Check that your child understands the task and discuss ideas, but encourage him or her to complete it alone.
- Try to discuss his or her private reading and set an example by reading for pleasure yourself.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

#### **Types of homework task**

- Single A4 display of researched information on a relevant topic
- Spider diagram summary of supplied information on a topic
- Extended project on a chosen topic
- Reading and note-taking on a specific topic, using multi-media and internet
- Memory work (eg USA state capitals) to build up overall ability to retain information
- Questions based on supplied textual information
- Designing graphs based on supplied data
- Imaginative extended writing task on a topic such as earthquakes
- Revision for assessments
- Use of mnemonics and acronyms to aid memory work for assessments
- 'Quick Tests' based on relatively limited information, such as an A4 glossary of terminology specific to a topic

#### **Frequency**

- In S1 and S2: Normally on a weekly basis but extended assignments such as projects will have a longer timescale, such as three weeks to complete
- In S3: At least once a week for writing tasks such as answering questions and OS map assignments. Extended tasks such as the display of graphic information gained from field studies will be given longer timescales

#### **Important deadlines**

- Pupils are always made aware of key deadlines for tasks such as projects
- Classrooms have 'Homework Boards' mounted on a wall in order that pupils can regularly check for dates and deadlines
- Pupils are asked to enter homework into their diaries

#### **How parents can help?**

- Ask pupils for deadlines to help ensure pupils prioritise homework
- Help with internet research and ideas
- Work with pupils on the use of mnemonics and acronyms
- Help with the construction of small 'flashcards' in preparation for assessments
- Encourage pupils to produce homework of quality and depth by spending sufficient time on tasks
- Sign homework assignments

## HISTORY

### Types of homework task

- Research
- Timelines
- Projects
- Imaginative writing
- Skills practice

### Frequency

- 1 major piece of homework per topic and 2 smaller pieces per topic

### How parents can help?

- Revision for exams
- Checking homework diary
- Signing pieces of work to show they have seen it

## HOME ECONOMICS

### Types of homework task

- Completion of classwork which was being done in class
- Preparation for topic assessment – revision notes provided
- Organise equipment and ingredients for practical lessons
- Use skills learned in class to develop confidence and competence
- Written tasks to check for understanding of key elements in each topic

### Frequency

- Preparation for practical lessons usually every week
- 1-2 Written homework tasks per term (approximately 15 minutes to complete)

### Important deadlines

- 1-2 Topic Assessments per term with approximately 1 week notice period from issuing revision notes to assessment date

### How parents can help

- Parents can support pupils when revising for assessments
- Assist with providing equipment for practical lessons
- Encourage pupils to bring cooking home
- Check written tasks are completed on time
- Encourage pupils to cook at home

## INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

### Types of homework task

Homework issued on the topics of Administration, Business and Computing and can include:  
Identifying errors (proof reading)

- Recognising IT terminology (word search)
- Understanding Spreadsheets (writing formulae) and interpreting data (graphs, table)
- Researching Software (comparisons and impact on society)
- Written Reports
- S3 - computational thinking homework for programming

### Frequency

- Frequency will vary depending on subject and will include the following:
- Business IT - at the end of units (monthly)
- Computing IT - at the end of each topic

- A minimum of one formal homework each term in S1, two each term in S2, and in S3 there will be written reports based on research (15 over the full session)

#### **Important deadlines**

- Pupils will be informed of deadlines in advance and encouraged to use homework diaries to record details

#### **How parents can help?**

- Check the use of the homework diary and discuss homework tasks with their child
- Encourage pupils to make an effort and submit work on time

## **MATHEMATICS**

#### **Types of homework task**

- consolidation of lesson outcomes
- review of past learning
- practical homework (S1)

#### **Frequency**

- Daily: as a rule of thumb, homework will be given every time a pupil comes to maths. There may be no homework given over the weekend, but this may change if an assessment is imminent. Homework is self-assessed or peer marked

#### **Important deadlines**

- Pupils are issued with dates in advance of all assessments and the department has an assessment calendar for each yeargroup

#### **How parents can help?**

- Initials or signature beside homework in jotters to show parents have been involved and are aware that homework has been completed (or homework diaries initialled/signed)
- Prompt return of analysis grids, tear-off slips on letters, response to information texts
- Physically checking the schoolbag/diary/jotter for homework

## **MODERN LANGUAGES**

#### **Types of homework task**

- Homework tasks include learning the spelling of topic based vocabulary in the Modern Language, short excerpts of translation from the Modern Language into English (and sometimes vice-versa) and reading comprehension.

#### **Frequency**

- Pupils will receive homework every time they come to Modern Languages which is three times per week in S1, S2 and S3.

#### **Important deadlines**

All pupils will have exams in listening, writing, reading and talking:

- S1- November & March
- S2- October & March
- S3- October & February

#### **How parents can help?**

- Parents can help by providing pupils with an A4 pad in which they can practice the spelling of written words and phrases.
- Parents can also help us by making sure their child is spending between 15 and 30 minutes on homework. If homework is taking longer than this, please contact the school to discuss this further.

## MODERN STUDIES

### Types of homework task

- Research projects
- Surveys
- Skills practice
- Keeping up-to-date with the news at home and abroad

### Frequency

- 1 major piece of homework per topic and 2 smaller pieces per topic

### How parents can help?

- Revision for exams
- Checking homework diary
- Signing pieces of work to show they have seen it
- Discussing important pieces of news and current affairs

## MUSIC

### Types of homework task

- Regular instrument practice
- Powerpoint presentations
- Concept lists to learn
- Revision sheets to learn for each class test

### Frequency

- Instrument practice – Between 10 and 20mins each night. This is essential for all S3 pupils in particular. If pupils do not have an instrument at home they can practice in the music department at lunchtime or after school
- Powerpoint presentations – once or twice per session
- Revision for tests – there are three main assessments each session

### Important deadlines

- S1 tests in November, February, May
- S2 One test in February
- S3 Regular listening tests (every 4-6 weeks) and practical work is assessed weekly

### How can parents help?

- ensure pupils adhere to practice schedule

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

### Types of homework task

- There is no formal PE homework in core PE, but pupils are required to come prepared to participate each week
- Pupils are encouraged to participate in physical activities outside normal school hours
- At the end of each 5 week block of activities pupils are informed about opportunities to join extra-curricular clubs or clubs within the local community

### Frequency

- Pupils are encouraged to participate in physical activity to maintain a fits and healthy balanced lifestyle and to achieve their ambitions in sport

### How can parents help?

- Parents can provide support and encouragement for pupils to become involved in sport or physical activity on a regular basis and through demonstrating the benefits of sport and exercise and being a role model to encourage healthy habits at an early age

## RMPS

### Types of homework task

- Pupils complete research based tasks on topics covered in class in order to expand their knowledge and understanding of the subject. This is either submitted to the teacher for marking or presented to the class.

### Frequency

- Formal homework is given once per term
- In addition - S1 will be issued with homework once a fortnight; S2 homework exercises are issued twice each term; and in S3 one homework exercise is issued for each unit of work completed

### Important deadlines

- S1 main assessment in October
- S2 main assessment in October
- S3 no formal assessment period

### How can parents help?

- Ensure pupils have access to ICT where appropriate (If this is not possible, please contact the school and we can arrange for access to ICT at Homework Club)

## SCIENCE

### Types of homework task

- Researching topics
- Completion of SQA type questions where appropriate
- Revising notes (and Learning Outcome lists)
- Learning scientific vocabulary
- Completing classwork at home and writing up experimental work (completing graphs, etc)
- Formal homework exercises which are assessed and recorded
- Creating 'thought' diagrams to demonstrate ideas and creativity in learning
- Written answers to questions from their homework booklets ( available as a hard copy and electronic version on 'Edmodo' web site)
- Discussing 'open ended' questions with parents from the 'Cartoon Concepts' software and writing a report on their findings

### Frequency

- At least 30 minutes should be spent on science homework each week
- In S3 Physics a parental signature is requested by the class teacher to support homework completion

### Important deadlines

- With the exception of S3 exams, assessment dates vary depending on subject rotation dates (rotations are needed to maximise the practical experience pupils have)

### How parents can help?

- Enquire about homework and sign homework exercises
- Complete feedback evaluations with formative comment
- Discuss 'open ended' questions from 'Cartoon Concepts' with pupil and help research on the internet
- Encourage pupils to use 'Edmodo' web site for revision and consolidation of course work

# h o m e w o r k

helps you to understand better

opens your mind

multiplies your chances of success

encourages you to work on your own

will make lessons easier

organises your thoughts

revises what you have done in class

keeps you motivated

This was produced by the Largs Academy Pupil Council to help motivate pupils to do homework.

