

CCC Ming Yin College
Homework Policy (September 2018)

1. Purpose

The purpose of this document is to help teachers and parents to use homework positively and with discrimination to help students to learn better. Teachers should reflect on the guidance and feedback they have been giving to students on their homework. The school should also formulate a homework policy that takes into consideration the learning needs of students and the involvement of parents.

2. The Importance and Functions of Homework

Homework is an important component of the learning process. It does not just refer to textbook/workbook exercises or worksheets, it can also include revision of lesson materials, preparatory work for the next lesson, recitation, prescribed texts for reading, etc. Meaningful homework helps students to construct knowledge, develop deeper understandings and connections amongst the concepts to which they have been introduced, and provides an opportunity for them to apply the skills they have acquired. It also reflects their attitudes on learning. A well-coordinated homework policy in school and its successful implementation will help students to develop good study habits, and positive values and attitudes such as self-discipline, responsibility and an interest in learning, which will benefit them throughout their lives. The functions of homework include the following:

- ❖ It develops and reinforces students' learning outside formal class time.
- ❖ It helps students to understand their own progress and identify areas for improvement.
- ❖ It consolidates classroom learning and / or prepares students for new learning.
- ❖ It helps teachers to identify students' problems that need to be addressed and indicates what teaching should focus on.
- ❖ It provides information on the knowledge students have acquired and the skills, attitudes and values they have developed.
- ❖ It allows parents and schools to work together to find ways to help students to improve or encourage them to develop their potential further.

3. Principles for Setting Meaningful Homework

Homework serves the above functions only if it is well-designed. The points to note when setting meaningful homework are as follows:

- ❖ The homework given is relevant to the school curriculum and has a clear learning goal, aim or objective. A piece of homework should not contain too many ideas.
- ❖ Rote learning is to be de-emphasized. Help students to learn through using different resources, e.g. libraries, reference materials, the Internet, other community resources, and also to develop independence and creativity.
- ❖ Recitation or other forms of memorization should not be totally discouraged but should be selectively used for study, such as promoting appreciation of literary texts, memory for understanding.
- ❖ A variety of approaches and styles can be used for designing homework to motivate students. Offer interesting and challenging tasks for students to do, e.g. experiment, survey. Worksheets

should not be the only form of assignment. Oral reports on observation / discussion with parents and friends, model-making and other activities that interest students can be set.

- ❖ Make use of homework in helping students to plan and take control of their own learning, see their own progress, develop good studying habits, and work in groups to develop collaboration skills.
- ❖ It is learner-friendly. It is neither too hard nor too easy and it is framed in such a way that it encourages students to do their best.
- ❖ It helps to improve students' thinking and promotes deeper understanding of a specific theme or issue.
- ❖ It caters for individual differences.
- ❖ It links classroom learning to students' lives, e.g. by linking events / people of the distant past and / or places in remote parts of the world to learning contexts familiar to students.
- ❖ There may be short-term or long-term assignments. Short-term assignments help students to review and practise what has been covered in class. Long-term assignments such as projects require students to plan their pace of work, delve into subjects that interest them, and present the information and ideas that they have formulated.

4. Frequency and Amount of Homework

- ❖ It is the quality rather than the quantity that matters. An appropriate amount of homework should be assigned to keep students inspired and wanting to do homework. It should not overburden students causing fatigue, or be used as a punishment. ***Each subject department should state in its Subject Handbook clearly the frequency of homework, classwork, project, etc., assigned to students at different levels. Inspection of exercise books will be conducted in each school year for appraisal and developmental purposes.***
 - ▶ Homework should be designed (i) to achieve goals of the school curriculum, e.g. promoting reading habits and (ii) to match the needs of students at different levels. More advanced study skills should be incorporated gradually in homework at higher levels.
 - ▶ Teachers of each subject department / panel should coordinate their efforts to ensure that an appropriate amount of homework should be assigned to students at different levels. Subject panels should work out the variety and quantity of homework for each level at the beginning of the school year so that students can benefit from the systematic and continuous practice they provide.
 - ▶ Teachers teaching the same class should coordinate their efforts to ensure that a balanced and moderate amount of work is given so that students are not unduly overburdened with homework on certain days of the cycle.
 - ▶ There are other important demands on students' after-school time and remember this when setting the type and amount of homework for each class and each level. Special attention should be paid to the total number of projects assigned though Project Learning is promoted as one of the Four Key Tasks.

5. Guidance and Feedback on Homework

5.1 Guidance on Homework

- ❖ Teachers should ensure that students know the meaning and purpose of homework, which is to help them to improve their learning. They should let students understand their expectations of homework early in the year. Teachers should tell students their homework expectations (e.g. quality and punctuality in completion).

- ❖ Teachers should not immediately punish students who fail to submit homework without looking into the reasons for this. Teachers should help students to overcome barriers to the completion of their homework.
- ❖ Supportive programmes have been set up to help students with different needs, e.g. 'Peer Support Scheme', special tutorial classes for students with special educational needs, After-school Tutorial classes, etc.
- ❖ Teachers should be caring and committed to encourage students to complete homework.
- ❖ Teachers should inform parents about homework problems as soon as they arise to sort out a solution.
- ❖ Parents' or guardians' assistance should be sought when students persistently fail to do homework.
- ❖ Frequent communication between school and parents on homework is encouraged to help them to understand the purpose of homework and to solicit their cooperation. Parents can be informed of the extent to which they are expected to support their children in an assignment as required.

5.2 Feedback on Homework

- ❖ Constructive feedback should be given to students to help them to understand their strengths and / or weaknesses and to improve their learning.
- ❖ Feedback may be given in the form of grading and written comments by teachers or a peer. Feedback should include specific suggestions to students as to how they should go about addressing problem areas. To enhance learning effectiveness, feedback should be provided to students as soon as possible.
- ❖ Peer feedback will help students to learn co-operative social skills and teach them how they can assess their own and others' efforts.
- ❖ Recognition should be given to students with outstanding performance to stimulate their motivation.
- ❖ Encouraging remarks and praise should be given to those who have made attempts to improve.
- ❖ Principal, Vice-Principal and the subject panel heads will inspect the students' workbooks and exercise books in the first school term in order to assess and monitor the frequency and amount of homework, the standard of marking and ascertain the level of student progress.

6. The Role of Parents in Homework

As most of the homework is completed at home, parents play an important role in helping students to develop good study skills. The school would make use of opportunities such as Parent-Teacher Association meetings, Parents' Night, etc. to suggest how parents might assist their children in homework. The homework lists in the Student Handbook provide a means for parents to keep track of their children's homework. In addition, the school has arranged for each class in F.1 to upload the homework list every day on to the e-class Intranet. The following are some suggested roles for parents on homework:

- ❖ Parents can help in setting a regular time for homework and creating an environment at home that enables learning to take place, e.g. by removing the distractions (turning off the TV) and viewing selected programmes with children. Parents should not exert too much demand on their children but ensure that they have enough time for rest and leisure to maintain a healthy and balanced life.

- ❖ Parents are expected to familiarize themselves with the learning aims / objectives of the various assignments so that they can provide suitable support to their children, but they should not do the homework for their children.
- ❖ Parents should review teachers' comments on students' homework in order to understand the strengths and / or weaknesses of their children and help them to improve.
- ❖ Parents should communicate more frequently with teachers to understand the students' learning environment, their progress and attitudes, with a view to helping them to improve or develop their potential further.

7. Completion of Homework

7.1 Rationale

It is important to assist students to gain a clear understanding of their responsibilities and rights with regard to satisfactory completion of homework. It is therefore essential that the school should develop clear and consistent policy and procedures that will support students and clarify their understanding of their responsibility with regard to this matter. To ensure that students can learn effectively from doing homework, the school demands that all students must finish their homework and submit it on time. To implement our homework policy, the following actions will be taken:

7.2 Penalty measures

Students have to hand in their homework on time. Class monitor/monitress will record the names of those who fail to do so in a pink form and report to the subject teacher concerned. Moreover, under the instructions of the subject teachers, class monitor/monitress will record the names of these students in the classroom diary.

The teacher will prompt the students to finish their homework and submit it in the next school day. If necessary, teachers may ask students to attend the after-school tutorial class on the subsequent school-day to finish their homework. If these students still fail to submit the homework to the teachers on time, they will have to attend the after-school tutorial class on the subsequent school day. If teachers intend to do so, the students' parents should be notified first.

7.2.1 Copying Homework from Others

One demerit will be issued if a student is found copying another person's homework. The student who deliberately allows his/her classmate to copy homework will also be punished. The Academic Committee will invite teachers or school prefects to patrol around or carry out a sudden inspection. On the other hand, teachers can identify the copying while correction their students' assignment.

7.2.2 Students not submitting their Homework on Time

In the hope of encouraging our students to hand in their homework on time and pay more attention to their studies, the school has the right to punish those who fail to submit their homework on time.

1. In each school term, one demerit will be issued if he/she fails to hand in his/her homework on time every 6 times, and so on. The system starts all over again when a new term begins.
2. The class monitor/monitress has to keep a record of those who fail to hand in their homework on time. Statistics is taken every month by the class monitor/monitress and the results should be

returned to the General Office. The students concerned have to sign the record form. Finally, it will be confirmed by the Form Teacher concerned.

3. The principal or vice-principals will take follow-up action if any student is found not handing in his/her homework on time on a frequent basis.