



**SIMON BALLE ALL-THROUGH SCHOOL**

## **HOME LEARNING POLICY**

**First Issue: July 2021**

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**Next Review: July 2027**

**Committee Responsible: Achievement and Standards**

Our vision of 'creating tomorrow's citizens today' is to transform lives, and ensure that our young people are provided with a first class education which develops their character and trains them with the skills and knowledge to become model active citizens who understand how they can contribute to society positively and make the world a better place. We believe that education is a key driver to ensure that all human beings flourish so that they can become happy, successful people. We also believe that the promotion of excellence in learning gives students a real chance to grow as individuals and to make positive contributions to communities. At Simon Balle All-through School we recognise that high quality of learning inside and outside of the classroom for all students is one of the most influential factors in student success and achievement. **Therefore, we believe home learning (homework) is invaluable.**

Home learning requires a consistent approach and a progressive development from year to year. In this way, we will provide students with the opportunity to develop an excellent approach to home learning through each phase, developing their knowledge as well as their learning skills and habits. Promoting responsibility, independent learning traits, self-regulation and a love of learning, will lead to 'Creating tomorrow's citizens today'. For the learner, and for the learning itself, home learning is incredibly powerful. For staff, students and parents it is the way in which connection takes place to ensure a home-school partnership in which all students can thrive.

Though the actual home learning experience will vary hugely across phases (Early Years to Key Stage Five) and indeed across subjects, our agreed teaching and learning principles are below, and these are to be as well incorporated into home learning as they are all learning in school, highlighting the importance of life and learning beyond the classroom.

- Subject Expertise and Sequencing:
- High Expectations and Inclusive Education:
- Stage-Appropriate Challenge and Adaptive Teaching:
- Metacognitive Methods and Self-Regulated Learning:
- Feedback and Scaffolding:

### Subject Expertise and Sequencing:

The SBAS teacher possesses subject expertise to deliver accurate instruction. They should design curricula in a logical sequence, ensuring topics build upon prior learning and interweave related concepts. This promotes deeper understanding and facilitates future learning.

### High Expectations and Inclusive Education:

The SBAS teacher sets high expectations for all students, fostering a culture of excellence and achievement. They create an inclusive and diverse learning environment that values and respects the unique contributions of each individual, promoting equitable access and success for all.

### Stage-Appropriate Challenge and Adaptive Teaching:

The SBAS teacher provides stage-appropriate challenges that engage and stretch students' abilities. They employ adaptive teaching strategies, such as modelling, to support students in navigating challenges and manage cognitive load effectively.

### Metacognitive Methods and Self-Regulated Learning:

The SBAS teacher integrates metacognitive methods into teaching and learning practice that helps equip students with strategies to monitor their own thinking, set goals, plan their learning, and reflect on their progress. This fosters self-regulated learning, enhancing fluency and facilitating the retention and retrieval of knowledge.

### Feedback and Scaffolding:

The SBAS teacher provides timely feedback to guide students' progress and address misconceptions. They use scaffolding techniques to support learners as they develop skills and knowledge. The scaffold instruction should optimise engagement, foster autonomy, and empower students to take ownership of their learning journey.

## What does the external research say?

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From reading across many sources, what seems to be most important is how rooted our home learning is within our curriculum and our approach to teaching and learning. External research studies can easily contradict one another (for example, the benefits or otherwise of home learning on student achievement), but, as shown in our principles above, purposeful home learning, integrated within the curriculum and planned for in a progressive sequence of learning, can be very powerful indeed. Cepeda et al (2019), shown below, demonstrate, for example, how home learning can be planned to support 'learning': knowledge being retained in the longer term, retrieved and applied.

### Homework and Spaced Practice

The spacing effect refers to the practice of placing a temporal gap between study sessions before restudying or retesting; this increases the likelihood of information being remembered in the future (Cepeda et al)

While this can be difficult to embed into lesson time and curriculum due to time demands (especially at KS4/5), homework provides an opportunity to space student practice

	Wb 20/01	Wb 27/02	Wb 03/02	Wb 10/02	Wb 24/02	Wb 02/03
Class	Topic 1		Topic 2		Topic 3	
Home work			Homework on topic 1	Homework on topic 1	Homework on Topic 2	Homework on Topic 2

## What does the internal research say?

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This policy has been created through extensive active research at Simon Balle All-through School. A significant number of parents, with students across all phases, completed feedback for us. Staff feedback has been sought through surveys, looking at every subject and across every phase, and discussions to ensure that the implementation of this policy can be consistent. Mirroring our work with the phases of the curriculum development, the rationale for home learning is now complete and the intended implementation details are contained here. The next phase in implementation will include a strong focus on student voice (across all phases) and monitoring and evaluation.

From parental feedback to us, 'little and often' seems to be a very important mantra. If in Reception, daily reading at home is instilled, it will both be enjoyed, and more easily and gradually increased in relation to time spent each day. Home learning being completed regularly will help to instil learning habits which will develop and grow little by little. If our secondary students are in the routine of checking for home learning every day, they can be organised about prioritising tasks and spending shorter, more focussed periods of time learning, rather than leaving home learning until it has built up unmanageably. Our sixth form students tell us that as simple as this guidance is, it makes a significant difference in independent research and study for GCSE, A level and beyond.

Teachers have fed-back to us that it is important to avoid home learning activities which do not connect clearly to the learning in the classroom (stand-alone pieces are unlikely to be successful) - planning for home learning and its purpose therefore being as important as planning for class learning.

*A majority of our home learning from Year 3 to Year 12 will be based on Google Classroom or online systems and submitted electronically.*

However, we are fully aware that at some stages of learning (for example, Key Stage 5), and in some particular subjects (for example, practical work in the creative arts subjects), this may not be possible at all times. Learners may often be asked to practise extended writing pieces in their books or on exam papers, to support them in meeting the demands and expectations of public examinations. Other platforms for learning may also be used to embed knowledge. Regardless of the format, however, Google Classroom will be used to set it for organisation and clarity. Home Learning will be either centralised for all across a particular cohort or set specifically for an individual subject/class. Some subjects may decide to set less Home Learning in quantity but to improve quality, it may be in the form of a project based scheme set over several weeks. All of which is acceptable as long as it meets our SBAS Home Learning Principles set out later in this policy.

***The benefits of home learning are the consolidation of learning and knowledge, through deliberate practice and the creation and fostering of excellent learning habits and routines at home.***

Our evaluation (with views from Heads of Department, Primary phase leaders and teachers across the all-through school) shows that home learning has the most impact when factors from the list below are implemented consistently. Therefore, teachers will ensure at a minimum, **our Home Learning Principles are upheld:**

Staff have complete agency over the form in which they set Home Learning. It must, however, meet our SBAS Home Work Principles.

### **S – Sequenced**

Home Learning is planned in line with subject expertise and curriculum sequencing. Tasks build logically on prior learning to reinforce understanding and promote long-term retention.

### **B – Balanced**

Home Learning includes a variety of formats (retrieval, reflection, research, revision), to engage all learners. This can be online, centralised or project based.

### **A – Accessible**

Home Learning is tailored to meet diverse needs, allowing for stage-appropriate challenges and scaffolding. Tasks support independence while remaining inclusive and achievable.

### **S – Supported by Feedback**

Home Learning is a tool for learning, not just completion. Staff provide timely, constructive feedback that encourages reflection. This can be online, whole class led and at the end or start of lessons.

The infographic is titled 'S.B.A.S HOME LEARNING PRINCIPLES' and features a school crest at the top. It lists four principles, each with a large letter (S, B, A, S) and a description:

- S Sequenced**: ... Home Learning is planned in line with subject expertise and curriculum sequencing. Tasks build logically on prior learning to reinforce understanding and promote long-term retention.
- B Balanced**: ... Home Learning includes a variety of formats (e.g. retrieval, reflection, research, revision), to engage all learners. This can be online, centralised or project based.
- A Accessible**: ... Home Learning is tailored to meet diverse needs, allowing for stage-appropriate challenge and scaffolding. Tasks support independence while remaining inclusive and achievable.
- S Supported with Feedback**: ... Home Learning is a tool for learning, not just completion. Staff provide timely, constructive feedback that encourages reflection. This can be online, whole class led or at the start/end of lessons.

At the bottom, it states: 'Teaching Learning Middle & Senior leaders are committed to checking the equity and consistency of Home Learning' and 'Creating tomorrow's citizens today'.

*In addition, teachers will:*

- **Ensure that opportunities are available to allow students/children to practise in order to consolidate knowledge and/or skills from the classroom.** Examples range from methods for mathematical calculations to reading to recall.
  - **Offer opportunities for students that support the retrieval of knowledge** - perhaps, for example, revisiting content covered previously, which is needed to form the foundation for the next unit of learning. This could be through revisiting knowledge organisers or simply practising times tables or spellings. Teachers will be aware of the importance of interleaving knowledge because this supports knowledge being retained in the long-term memory.
  - **Provide activities which are varied to inspire and engage our learners.** For example, within one subject, home learning one week may be software-based quick recall (for example, a vocabulary focus in MFL) and in a subsequent week may be more open, requiring reasoning and/or application of skills.
  - **Ensure all home learning is purposeful, and in which the purpose has been explained to the students.** These could include quizzes to ensure that knowledge has been retained, practise at exam questions, research (as long as this research has a clear focus) or activities that are paralleled in the classroom, either building on prior learning or preparing for future learning.
  - **Ensure all tasks are clear in terms of what the expected outcome is, yet not so overly-prescriptive that students do not have the opportunity for creativity.** This is a continuum for teachers to judge, and again to offer varied home learning opportunities over time.
  - **Where appropriate, set home learning activities that are differentiated, inclusive and varied.** This will ensure all learners of all abilities can achieve in their home learning. However, in some cases, home learning that is the same for all with a variance of approach, is a better method to allow student progress
  - **Give feedback on home learning.** (See individual heading 'Feedback & Marking').
  - **Praise and reward students for excellent efforts** when it comes to the completion of home learning activities. House points can be given that relate to our school values - for example, 'responsibility'.
    - For students who fail to complete home learning adequately or who fail to hand it in on time - they will be set a time to complete in school instead. This will always be with the intention of students gaining an increased understanding of the importance of home learning, and support strategies must be offered.
    - A similar system (non-sanctionable) is available to support students with their home learning by promoting attendance in particular home learning clubs/sessions
  - **Set a guide for duration using the language of 'at least x but not more than y'** - this, we hope, supports young people to put in their best efforts, but crucially supports their wellbeing too. It provides parents with approximate guidance to encourage appropriate time spent.
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Our learning from our extensive parent voice has enabled us to offer the following guidance, which teachers must be aware of in their setting of tasks, and parents would be wise to consider in relation to their support. Therefore, we expect that *parents/carers will*:

- **Establish routines for home learning from Early Years all the way to Key Stage Five.** This may include a focus on the right time of day (allowing young people to work efficiently), the best place in the home (aiming to avoid distractions) and even the small details of how learning is laid out (many young people found it helpful in lockdown, for example, to pay attention to resources and support they needed around them).
  - **Provide the appropriate balance of support and independence.** Whilst we appreciate this can provide a challenge, it is the long-term goal that as an inclusive school, all our learners complete home learning independently. Reaching this position, though, requires a pathway as children grow and mature in learning. Our youngest students will undoubtedly need parental encouragement, and also will require parents to guide them in relation to expectations. Teachers will always aim to set home learning with options for further challenge and further support to allow parents to guide developing independence regardless of their son/daughter's age or ability.
  - **Support the school to ensure your son/daughter meets our expectations.** As an all-through school, we are well placed to support children with a seamless progression in home learning - both in quantity, and in expectations for managing responsibilities to prioritise when home learning is due, and submitting home learning on time. It is very important that parents allow their son/daughter to develop this responsibility for themselves, particularly in the middle years of our school -Years 5, 6, 7 and 8 - and other times of transition across the all-through school.
  - **Discuss home learning tasks and teacher feedback with your son/daughter to encourage conversations about learning.** The triangulation and collaboration of all stakeholders is crucial to help and support learners in fulfilling and reaching their potential through high expectations and the development of subject mastery. We aspire for conversations about learning, at school and at home, to be rich and engaging, where students are inspired by their learning.
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## Role of the learner

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Curiosity has been hailed as the major impetus behind cognitive development, education, and scientific discovery (Loewenstein, 1994). It is the drive that brings learners to knowledge. Students must seek to deepen their understanding and curiosity by fully embracing work that is set outside of the classroom. Therefore, *all learners will*:

- **Use Google Classroom (or even paper records within the younger primary years - for example, home learning books and reading records) to check the home learning which has been set each day and to ensure they understand what they are required to do.** To create tomorrow's citizens, we expect our older learners to be able to self manage and organise accordingly to keep up to date with home learning tasks and instructions.
- **Allow adequate time to complete their home learning to a standard that reflects their understanding and best efforts.** Learners are advised to stick to the timing guidance from their teacher and if they exceed this regularly, to make their teacher aware.
- **Where possible, find a suitable environment to complete their home learning.** If silence is preferred, a spare room or their bedroom could be good options. If they enjoy some background noise, consider choosing a spot in the kitchen. If there are several location options, try each one to see which works best. It is important to avoid any distractions: for example, use of mobile phones.
- **Take initiative for their own learning, seek support from the teacher setting the home learning for any questions or support required, and at times, explore and develop their understanding beyond the tasks set.** Learners who develop a passion for a subject can use home learning as an opportunity to promote their love of learning.
- **Hand in homework via Google Classroom, online systems or a physical submission on time.** This is a minimal expectation. However, through dialogue with the teacher, reasonable adjustments can be made if a learner requires more time and support.

## Marking and Feedback

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It is essential that students know that their home learning is valued by both parents and teachers in school. Feedback and marking will take place in various ways, including:

- If home learning is set, completed and submitted on Google Classroom, feedback will be given through the classroom, either typed or through voice recordings. However, in some cases, whole class verbal feedback may be chosen by the teacher that elicits key points for learning for students to enable them to develop further
- If home learning is software-based (for example, Sparx Maths), then the programme is often responsive to the performance of the student; teachers can see exactly what students have engaged with and what they have found difficult - this can then be fed into future teaching.
- Home learning will sometimes be used at the very beginning of the next lesson - this forming the foundation in the next unit of learning. Home learning will sometimes be self or peer marked to support reflection.



- In the primary phase, parental and teacher comments in reading records are incredibly helpful for ensuring a connection and shared approach to the strengths of the child's reading, and the specific next steps.
- Where home learning has been extended writing (book-based or digital), then teacher feedback will be particularly important in relation to the specifics of what was achieved and targets for what next. This may result in marks or scores for exam questions.
- Home Learning will be fed back to all learners. Examples of this include: on a 1:1 basis, as part of whole class feedback or Online central marking systems. It can be at the start or end of lessons to review or reflect on learning

## Wellbeing and support

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We are ambitious for all our students. Our approach to home learning reflects this, grounded in the belief that high expectations - when supported by effective teaching and strong routines - are not at odds with wellbeing, but fundamental to it.

We do not believe that lowering expectations or removing challenge supports students in the long term. In fact, doing so can create deeper difficulties later - academically, emotionally, and in terms of self-belief. Instead, we focus on an adaptive, responsive approach that helps all students build the habits, resilience, and knowledge they need to meet those expectations over time.

Rather than adjusting expectations downwards, we provide scaffolding, clear structures, and guidance to help every student access the learning. Our priority is to *support up*, not *opt out*. This helps prevent the development of gaps that can affect both attainment and wellbeing later in education.

We take mental health and wellbeing seriously and see them as part of our whole-school approach to success. If a student is struggling, we want to understand why, and how we can support them to re-engage with their learning journey. Parents and carers are encouraged to contact their child's subject or form tutor if they have concerns, so we can work together to provide the right support without compromising the high standards we know all students can meet with our expert help - academically, pastorally and holistically.

## Guidelines and expectations

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It is very important that we as a staff work in a connected way to support students with the expectations of home learning. The grid below provides an overview for students, parents and staff, showing the progression of home learning in each subject area from Reception to Year 13, as well as showing the home learning experience for a student in each of these year groups across subjects. The grid details the frequency of home learning (with the gradual increase in quantity aimed to support progression and transition), its aimed duration (recognising this will vary from student to student) and the platforms through which home learning is likely to be submitted. It is important that details here are used effectively by teaching staff so that all students receive a consistency and equity within home learning; that said, it is equally important that students and parents understand that there will be a degree of flexibility in order to ensure that home learning is always purposeful, and that teachers are responsive to what they see in the classroom - for example, identifying areas for particular classes, where further consolidation or practice, may be required. This is also evident in the

approach at KS4 and KS5 as the increase in hours will be phased across the year and will taper/accelerate around the exams calendar.

### **Spelling**

For best results, aim to practise spellings with your child 3-4 times a week for 10 minutes each time. This is because spaced practice helps build confidence and strengthens memory by giving the brain time to absorb and recall the words.

### **Reading**


At the heart of every confident learner is a reader, and reading underpins success across all areas of learning. Yet reading is more than an academic tool — it is a life skill that supports emotional wellbeing, broadens horizons, and develops wider world understanding and empathy.

To that end, we expect regular reading at home not just to boost academic achievement, but to nurture curiosity, confidence, and calm. Ideally, rather than being seen as home learning per se, this becomes part of a daily bedtime routine; a moment to connect, to unwind, and to end the day with comfort and calm. Just as we feed the body, we feed the mind - daily, deliberately, and with joy.

	General	Reading	Spellings
<b>EYFS</b>	30-45 minutes a week - weekly Tapestry task	15 minutes per night	Phonics and tricky words sent home aligned with the curriculum
<b>Year 1</b>	30-45 minutes a week	15 minutes per night	Set weekly. <b>Total:</b> 40 minutes maximum across the week
<b>Year 2</b>	30-45 minutes a week	15 minutes per night	Set weekly. <b>Total:</b> 40 minutes maximum across the week
<b>Year 3</b>	45-60 minutes a week	20 minutes per night	Set weekly. <b>Total:</b> 40 minutes maximum across the week
<b>Year 4</b>	45-60 minutes a week	20 minutes per night	Set weekly. <b>Total:</b> 40 minutes maximum across the week
<b>Year 5</b>	30-45 minutes, twice a week	20 minutes per night	Set weekly. <b>Total:</b> 40 minutes maximum across the week
<b>Year 6</b>	45 minute, three times a week	20 minutes per night	Set weekly. <b>Total:</b> 40 minutes maximum across the week
<b>Year 7</b>	Core: 30 minutes a week Ebacc: 45 minutes a fortnight or 20 minutes a week Other: 90 minutes a half term maximum	30 minutes per night	

Year 8	Core: 30 minutes a week Ebacc: 45 minutes a fortnight or 20 minutes a week Other: 90 minutes a half term maximum	30 minutes per night	
Year 9	Core: 45 minutes a week Ebacc: 45 minutes a week Other: 45 minutes a fortnight maximum	30 minutes per night	
Year 10 & Year 11	Core: 45-90 minutes three times a fortnight (Eng), 60 -90 minutes (maths and science) Options: 45 - 75 minutes a week		
Year 12 & Year 13	At least 3 and no more than 5 hours of study for each subject.		

### SBAS Home Learning Principles



# S.B.A.S

## HOME LEARNING PRINCIPLES

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