



## Woodbrook Vale School Policy Document

# Teaching and Learning Policy

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**Review Date:**

**Autumn Term 2026**

Headteacher's Signature: ..... Date: 19th November, 2025  
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## Statement of Intent

High quality teaching and learning is at the heart of every lesson at Woodbrook Vale School. We strive to develop the whole child and enable our students to become lifelong learners. We achieve this by giving every student a variety of different learning experiences, enabling them to reach their full potential and better understand the world they live in. We believe that through careful personalisation and adaptive teaching, as well as effective and active learning, the students will achieve success.

All staff have responsibility, collectively and individually, to contribute to the delivery of our challenging and appropriate curriculum. Teachers have a responsibility to strive to facilitate engaging and active learning experiences, where the learning needs of all individuals are met.

Our aim is to create learning opportunities that foster motivation, allowing students to thrive. Students have a responsibility to participate actively in their own learning and to use strategies available to develop their knowledge and skills for life. Students should use wider reading and research, as well as trips and visits, where possible, to help support their independent learning away from the classroom.

This policy aims to outline the characteristics of effective teaching and learning that are expected to be applied in lessons consistently at Woodbrook Vale School:

- Teaching will be high in aspiration and challenge across all abilities.
- Teachers will actively encourage students to show resilience and take opportunities to promote a growth mindset.
- Lessons will be thoroughly planned to ensure tasks are appropriate, inclusive, relevant and challenging at every level.
- In most lessons, teachers will set, and share with students, at least one learning objective for individual lessons. Additional success criteria may be included where appropriate.
- Teachers will have a comprehensive knowledge of the subject they teach and the exam specification. They will fully understand subject-specific concepts and terminology, and teach these explicitly.
- Teachers will be aware of the individual needs of students within their class and have information available to them about their students when planning lessons e.g. GO4Schools – Prior Attainment / SEND / Disadvantaged/Reading Ages.
- Teachers will ensure that effective adaptation (e.g. through 'Quality First Teaching') is provided for students, appropriately challenging all individuals and all groups of students. Where relevant, teachers will plan to work with additional colleagues (e.g. LSA/HLTA/Cover Supervisors) in supporting the learning of students.
- Teachers will be expected to produce and use knowledge organisers within their lessons and for homework tasks.
- Teachers will use opportunities for low stakes testing to ensure knowledge is retained.
- Where appropriate, teachers will adapt questioning and demonstrate understanding of the different ways students think about subject content.
- Within a series of lessons, learners will be presented with opportunities to work in a variety of ways, including individual, group and paired work. Technology will be used when appropriate, and when teaching and learning is enhanced by its use.
- Students' work will be assessed in line with the schools' feedback policy, including a dialogue of Next Steps and Next Steps Action applied through Directed Improvement

and Reflection Time (DIRT). 'Next Steps' comments will be directly linked to learning and progress and will be easily understood by all students. Students will be given opportunities to improve their work. They will be given time to apply their knowledge and understanding in new ways that develop higher order thinking skills.

- Teachers will actively encourage students to take responsibility for their own learning and work independently when appropriate.
- Appropriately challenging homework activities will be set in line with guidance (see Appendix 1).
- Students will be given opportunities in lessons to strengthen their skills in reading, writing and mathematics, where appropriate, across all subjects.
- Teachers will adhere to the Behaviour Policy to help create a positive learning environment in which every student feels safe and can flourish.

The individual lesson expectations:

- Communication with LSAs is done prior to the lesson or at the start of the lesson where possible.
- Lessons are resourced before the lesson
- The teacher greets the students at the door (where possible).
- The register must be taken within the first 5 minutes of the lesson
- Students are working on a 'Do Now' activity, immediately after entering the classroom.
- Lessons will be part of a centrally developed sequence of learning, in line with the subject specific curriculum map.
- When the teacher is addressing the whole group, students will be silent so they are able to hear what is being said.
- No student is without a task at any point during the lesson, including differentiated extension tasks.
- Low levels of disruption are dealt with quickly and in line with school policy.
- Teachers move around the class offering 'active verbal feedback' as a part of the lesson.
- Staff create a culture of students feeling confident to read aloud in lessons, encouraging students to participate.
- Teachers take into account individual student needs when delivering lessons.

**Strategies that underpin effective teaching and learning at Woodbrook Vale School may include:**

Retrieval and Retention	Provide a start to a lesson that reviews prior learning and consolidates knowledge. This may be low stakes testing or other spaced retrieval activities.
Purpose and Sequencing	Contextualise the lesson, explaining the purpose and how it fits into the bigger picture and wider scheme of learning. Ensure all students are explicitly aware of the aims of the lesson. All students should be aiming for the same outcome but the support may be different.
High Expectations and Communication	Ensure we 'teach to the top' with highly ambitious expectations and scaffolding provided. Ensure instructions are concise, communication is clear and the language we use is always positive and encouraging. When communicating we are using key principles of Cognitive Load Theory.
Knowledge and Deliberate Practice	Ensure we are explicit about the core knowledge we are teaching our students and how this will be built upon lesson by lesson. Ensure this is communicated to students during the lessons and links throughout the course are explored. Using Knowledge Organisers will support this. Ensure we are offering and allowing students opportunities to practise subject-specific skills.
Use of Additional Adults	LSAs add value to the work of the teacher; they do not replace them – the expectation is that the needs of all students are addressed, primarily, through high quality classroom teaching. Additional adults in the classroom should help develop students' independent learning skills and support them in managing their own learning. Give the least amount of help first. Allow sufficient wait time, so students can respond to the question or attempt the stage of a task independently. LSAs should intervene appropriately when students demonstrate that they are unable to proceed. Effective communication between teacher and additional adult is key.
Modelling and Questioning	Ensure new material is 'chunked' and we are explicitly modelling and showing students what 'success' looks like. The skilful use of 'Cold Call Questioning' promotes greater engagement, aids critical thinking, addresses misconceptions and ensures that every student is challenged.
Literacy and Reading	Ensure there is a focus on improving and developing Tier 2 Vocabulary and literacy. Use appropriately challenging texts and a variety of different reading strategies (skimming, scanning, close). Encourage reading aloud in class as a part of day-to-day lessons.
Metacognition and Self-Regulation	Ensure we are explicit in communicating and teaching effective learning strategies that students can adopt themselves at home. Ensure we are active in explaining 'thinking' to students. Ensure that, when ready, scaffolding is gradually removed to allow greater independence. Ensure lessons are inclusive and accessible for all.
Feedback and Review	Ensure feedback is clear, manageable, specific and targeted. Ensure formative assessment is acted upon and that we are constantly aiming to gain as much feedback as possible from students during the lesson.

**Homework**

At Woodbrook Vale School, the fundamental reason for homework is to give an opportunity for the independent application of skills taught in the classroom. Only when asked to work on something without support, will a student be sure they have achieved proficiency. However, it is recognised that SEND students may need support or an appropriately adapted homework task. This in turn will facilitate their growing confidence. Homework scaffolds students towards becoming fully independent and motivated in their learning.

It is expected that students will read independently and develop a range of strategies for retaining knowledge, showing an understanding of the way in which information is moved from their working memory to their long-term memory, in order to free up the processing power of their brain. Homework is a fundamental part of this process and students will be taught that there is always something useful that can be done in an 'empty moment' to move their learning forward. Homework will be set regularly in order to support the emergence of good habits for independent learning; however, students do not have to rely solely on homework set by the teacher and should be proactive in seeking out opportunities for independent study.

Homework is valuable because it:

- develops students' self-confidence;
- helps them to identify which of the skills they can apply independently and which need further development;
- provides opportunities for retrieval practice (e.g. from knowledge organiser);
- consolidates and reinforces knowledge and understanding developed in school;
- develops planning and problem-solving skills;
- provides opportunities to develop independent research skills;
- necessitates the development of memorisation techniques as information from a topic is moved into long term memory;
- involves parents, carers and others in their child's schoolwork.

The amount of homework set may vary week by week depending on circumstances. Some students are capable of doing more, others might do less – principles of differentiation should apply so that there is an appropriate level of challenge for each student.

The quality of the homework being set and the homework being produced is of more importance than the quantity of homework produced. Homework should be purposeful and part of the sequence of learning.

All homework set must be recorded on Google Classroom. Please be mindful of students who do not have internet access; ensure they are not disadvantaged in being unable to complete the work. There will be a homework club available for students to attend.

The setting of homework will be monitored by the Head of Faculty and the SLT link to ensure the quality and consistency of the homework being set. Completion of homework will be monitored to ensure that lack of engagement does not lead to widening gaps amongst our most disadvantaged students.

The purpose of homework should be made explicit to learners, e.g. to increase a specific area of knowledge, or fluency in a particular area.

Homework should never be used as a punishment or penalty for poor performance.

Homework tasks vary depending on the subject and the key stage. Tasks may involve learning/revising for a test via specific activities, such as memorising key aspects on a Knowledge Organiser, reading independently (checked via 'Accelerated Reader' quizzing), doing some research around a topic to deepen understanding solving a problem or completing a past paper under self-imposed test conditions. Homework should always extend, and enhance, students' learning. A large proportion of homework assignments are carefully planned and sequenced as part of the schemes of learning. They serve to inform the teacher about how secure student learning is and whether gaps are emerging in knowledge or skills. Homework should be appropriate for the students for which it is set and will sometimes be adjusted to address gaps.

As well as completing specific 'set' homework, successful students spend time and effort at home becoming independent and curious learners. For our knowledge-rich curriculum, much time, effort and strategy is required to embed that knowledge and make it freely available for processing. Furthermore, all students ought to read a range of fiction and non-fiction based texts at home. Some should regularly read aloud to develop both confidence and expression; all should learn spellings, particularly of academic vocabulary including Spanish and French; all need practice with mental mathematics and memorising formulae.

If homework is not set for any reason then the student should be encouraged to work independently at home using Knowledge Organisers, revision guides, class notes, or software such as Kerboodle, Everlearner, Seneca, BBC Bitesize or Educake.

### **Frequency and duration**

**KS4** students get a minimum of one piece of homework per GCSE course per week. There is no homework timetable for this as we expect the students to work with their teacher and tutor in managing their time effectively to ensure all homework is completed. This will be monitored through GO4Schools.

**KS3** Students should get a minimum of one piece of homework per subject per two weeks for English, Maths, Science, Humanities and MFL. Art and Design, Music, PE, Drama, PD and Computing will give homework when appropriate. The guided duration a student should spend on a piece of homework is:

**Year 7** – 15-30min + reading fiction

**Year 8** – 20-30min + reading fiction

**Year 9** – 30-45min + reading and/or revision

**Year 10** – 30-45min + revision

**Year 11** – 45-60min + revision

Guidelines on the expected duration of the homework should be indicated on G4S or Google Classroom when the homework is set.

Homework will usually be set with a deadline of one week. Shorter pieces of homework may be given less time to complete; however, teachers should not expect work to be done by the next day. This allows students the opportunity to manage their time effectively with extracurricular activities and, with support of parents/carers and form tutors, students will complete all homework set. Teachers expect that all students will complete their homework on time and to a high standard. Where students fail to complete homework regularly, or homework is not of an acceptable standard, arrangements will be made for them to remain in school to complete outstanding work.

## **Monitoring**

The monitoring of individual students is the responsibility of the teachers concerned. Persistent problems will be referred to the Head of Faculty. It is very important that homework arrangements, including sanctions for not completing it, are consistently applied throughout the school so that all students see the arrangements as fair. Heads of Faculty should monitor the setting and the completion of homework. The efficacy of homework being set will be included in SLT line management meetings and Faculty Reviews.

Parents' (and guardians') involvement in their child's education should be encouraged in order to support students with meeting homework expectations and managing their time effectively. Parents and guardians can support the school in encouraging independence and students taking responsibility for their own learning. Parents should do what they can to provide a peaceful environment in which students can do their homework, illustrating that homework is valued and will support their progress in school.

## **Homework Support**

Students who wish to complete homework after school can attend homework club. Staff will be available to support students with homework. The support is only for completing homework and additional school work. The session will run from 3pm-4pm.

## **SEND/High Needs Students**

Some students with specific SEND will require adjustments to be made. Staff are encouraged to discuss individual student strategies with the SEND department and be flexible to the needs of students. Room 6 is available at lunchtimes for SEND students to receive homework support. Flexibility over homework can be considered as a reasonable adjustment for students with an Educational, Health and Care Plan.

## **Failure to complete Homework**

Professional discretion should be used by teachers regarding students who fail to complete homework or complete homework to an unsatisfactory quality.

Students who fail to complete homework to an acceptable standard and hand it in on time will be given an opportunity to complete it at lunchtime

If they fail to attend this additional session, they will be expected to stay behind for a minimum of one hour as a stage 4 detention, and they will still be expected to complete the outstanding homework.