

EEBI Secondary Homework Policy

(Draft v.3 - 14 May 2021)

Chapter I: Aims and Principles¹

Article 1

Homework is a big part of education and scholastic life and is of vital importance for the smooth running of the educational career of each student. Regular homework gives students the opportunity to supplement and reinforce at home the work done in school.

The policy is intended to promote the effectiveness of the homework in helping students acquire a range of skills and competences in line with the European School curriculum, while also fostering the mental health and general wellbeing of every member of the school community.

The policy aims:

- To guide teachers, students and parents on the type, amount and organisation of homework and tests as part of the broader education at EEB1;
- To set our rules to enable homework to serve as a key support of the European School curriculum and an effective tool for the enhancement of each student's education;
- To ensure that students are not overburdened or prevented from participating in extracurricular, social, family, or freetime activities, which remain key to their balanced development.

Chapter II: General Arrangements

Article 2

The Definition and Nature of Homework

Homework is defined as out-of-class tasks assigned to students, either individually or as a group, connected to class work. Assignments given to complete in class that require more time than allocated during the class are also considered as homework under the following rules.

Homework can involve practice, preparation, or extension work:

- *Practice* assignments reinforce newly acquired skills and knowledge. For example, students who have just learned a new method of solving a mathematical problem should be given sample problems to complete on their own. Another example would be the exercises on grammar learned in class or worksheets or workbook exercises on topics treated in class.

¹ The requirement levels are expressed using specific words:

- **MUST** the element is an absolute requirement or obligation (or "required" or "shall")
- **SHOULD** there may be valid reasons in particular circumstances for ignoring a particular element and be flexible, but all implications must be understood and carefully weighed before choosing a different path
- **MAY** the element is truly optional (or the adjectives "optional" or "recommended")
- **SHOULD NOT** there may be valid reasons in particular circumstances where a particular behaviour is acceptable or even useful, but all implications should be understood, and the case carefully weighed before implementing any behaviour described with this notation (or the phrase "not recommended")
- **MUST NOT** the element is an absolute prohibition (or "shall not")

- *Preparation* assignments help with activities undertaken in the classroom. Students may, for example, be required to read or do background research on a topic to be discussed later in class or may revise notes on material covered in class.
- *Extension* assignments are open-ended tasks that allow students to discover on their own and to go deeper into certain areas in which they have a particular interest. This can include presentations, essays, lab reports, extended reading (e.g. literature), research projects or other practical research activities undertaken individually or as a group.

All homework SHOULD be appropriate to the students' knowledge level and SHOULD be organized so as to develop and foster knowledge, skills and competences in a balanced way. Homework SHOULD have a clear link to the course programme, and the assessment criteria used SHOULD be clear. It SHOULD be reasonable in terms of effort and time required, and the deadlines SHOULD be made clear. In general, the amount of homework given in a course SHOULD be commensurate with the number of course periods (i.e. a Bio 2 course SHOULD require less homework than Bio 4 course).

Article 3

The Amount and Frequency of Homework

Although it is not obligatory to set homework in every lesson, homework can be a valuable part of schooling if appropriately regulated. The table below is indicative of the time that each student SHOULD allot to *practice* and *preparation* homework each day by year level. It MAY be used by both teachers and students to monitor the amount of homework given. It is, however, emphasized that the points laid out below the table are of a more binding nature.

The efficient and clear communication between students and teachers is of vital importance for students' academic success and well being. As it is not feasible for a teacher to be aware of the amount of homework a student already has, both sides SHOULD work towards the assignment of a fair amount of homework.

If the time required significantly exceeds these guidelines, a class or class student representative MAY approach the teacher(s). If the problem remains unresolved, the parent(s) or the student(s) SHOULD contact the subject teacher(s) to reach a solution. If this fails to resolve the issue, the parent(s) or student(s) SHOULD consult their class teacher (titulaire/Klassenlehrer) and/or educational adviser.²

Cycle	Total homework* per school day** (<i>indicative</i>)
S1-S2	30 min
S3-S4	45 min
S5	1h
S6-S7	1-2h***

*This indicative table covers daily *practice* and *preparation* homework; *extension* homework is not included in these time guidelines as it is open ended and more difficult to quantify. For this reason, *extension* work must be given sufficiently in advance for students to organise their weekly schedules.

**"School day" includes Monday through Friday.

***Depending on the students' individual study program based on options selected.

² The school also has a support program in order to help students with learning difficulties and to cope with the requirements of the curriculum. The Educational Support guidelines of the school are available on the school's web page: [Educational Support](#) (See: [General Guidelines for Educational Support - Secondary Cycle](#))

To assure that homework given is appropriate to students' level and that they have ample time to complete it, it is important to monitor the frequency that homework is assigned and the time allocated for each assignment. Teachers should also be sure to communicate the date of tests in advance to allow students adequate time for *preparation*. The following are guidelines for each level:

All levels (S1-S7):

- All homework MUST be assigned from "class-to-class". In other words, teachers MUST assign homework in class to be handed in class at a later date.
- All homework assignments SHOULD be given at least 1 week in advance when possible.
- For practice work undertaken in class but not finished, assignments MAY be due the next day.
- For all other practice and preparation homework, assignments MUST be given at least 2 school days prior to the due date.

Lower levels (S1-S3):

- For *extension* homework, assignments MUST be given at least 3 school days prior to the due date.
- Tests MUST be announced at least 3 school days in advance.

Intermediate (S4-S5):

- For *extension* homework, assignments MUST be given at least 1 week prior to the due date.
- A-mark tests MUST be announced at least 1 week in advance.

Upper levels (S6-S7):

- For *extension* homework, assignments SHOULD be given at least 2 weeks prior to the due date, and MUST be given at least 1 week prior.
- A-mark tests SHOULD be announced at least 2 weeks in advance, and MUST be announced at least 1 week in advance.

If possible, when a test or *extension* homework is assigned, teachers and students SHOULD come to a consensus on the due date. Homework SHOULD NOT be due on a day when an in-class test is held in the course concerned.

Article 4

Weekends³ and Holidays

Weekends and holidays are not school days and as such no homework SHOULD be required on these days. Teachers MAY assign homework over a weekend or holiday as long as there are a sufficient number of school days before the due date to complete the work.⁴ In this case, students MAY choose to use weekends/holidays according to their work habits, time-management and need for revision.

³ Fridays are considered school days and thus Friday evenings are not included in Article 4.

⁴ Please note that this does not mean that Homework may not be assigned at all over the holidays, it simply means that homework may not be assigned for the first day back from the holidays.

Article 5

Examination Periods (S4-S7)

At least two weeks before formal B-test examinations for S4 to S7 students, teachers SHOULD clearly communicate the content of what will appear on the B-tests⁵ as well as the assessment criteria which will be used in order to help guide the students' *preparation*.

The week before the S4-S6 December and June examination periods and before the S7 short and long pre-Baccalaureate examination periods SHOULD be designated as a "study week" for each level. Homework MUST NOT be assigned or due during the "study week" or examination period.

For S4 B-tests which do not take place during the December and June examination periods, B-tests given for different courses SHOULD be sufficiently spaced out. If possible, there SHOULD NOT be more than one test on a given day, but there MUST NOT be more than two tests on a given day and more than five tests in a given week. If more than two tests are scheduled on a particular day, a class or class student representative MAY approach one or all of the teacher(s). If the problem remains unresolved, the parent(s) or the student(s) SHOULD contact the subject teacher(s) to reach a solution. If this fails to resolve the issue, the parent(s) or student(s) SHOULD consult their class teacher and/or educational adviser.

The school's examination schedule and other key academic deadlines SHOULD be publicly available to teachers, students and parents.

Article 6

Communication of Homework

Teachers SHOULD endeavour to communicate homework assignments in a consistent manner and place so that they can be easily located by students. Each teacher MUST establish a policy for communicating homework in line with the school's Communication Policy and other applicable policies (e.g. Digital Learning Policy). The policy, whether using TEAMS⁶ or any alternative means of giving homework, SHOULD ideally be aligned for all teachers in the same level and SHOULD be maintained for the entirety of the school year.

Article 7

Supporting Materials

It is expected that a variety of supporting materials (print and/or digital) will be used for each course. Teachers SHOULD clearly communicate the supporting materials to be used for the course. Textbooks required SHOULD be included on the annual book list in June so they can be ordered well in advance; teachers MAY also use textbooks that are available in digital format. Teachers SHOULD make additional handouts or linked resources available online if possible.

Teachers MUST clearly communicate and when necessary provide the supporting materials required for each homework assignment. Teachers MAY provide additional supporting materials for supplementary *practice* or *extension* work.

In support of blended learning⁷, teachers MAY use the following types of online resources:

⁵ B-tests include long and short pre-Baccalaureate examinations.

⁶ The use of TEAMS is heavily encouraged, as it provides means to communicate assignments precisely, set and monitor deadlines and track progress in the course.

⁷ Blended learning is an approach to education that combines online educational materials and opportunities for interaction online with traditional place-based classroom methods.

- Scans of worksheets uploaded online (to avoid wastage).
- PDF versions of the textbooks uploaded online.
- Images and powerpoints on the content going into more depth.
- Collection of links to websites and content.
- Microsoft Stream videos (e.g. recorded lecture, voice-over of a digital correction of an assignment or test, giving the students time to stop and rewatch if necessary)
- Digital tools and software for practice work or to substitute experiments and help with understanding homework tasks (e.g. PhET).
- Hub for sharing useful information between students.

Article 8

Failure to Hand In Homework on Time

It is expected that homework will be submitted on time. Homework that is not submitted or is submitted late without any justified reason MAY have a negative effect on the student's mark (i.e. A-mark). Teachers MUST clarify any late homework policy at the beginning of the term.

If a student is not in a position to submit a homework assignment on time for justified reasons, they MUST consult the teacher in advance of the deadline to make alternative arrangements.

If a student repeatedly fails to turn in homework or turns it in late, the teacher SHOULD speak with them to offer needed assistance. If the student's performance does not improve, the teacher SHOULD speak with the parent(s) and educational advisor.

Article 9

Absences and Make Up Work

It is expected that all homework missed during absences will be completed and submitted as soon as possible after a student's return. Students MUST inform themselves of any in-class and homework assignments missed during absences upon their return, whether through direct contact with the teacher or through contact with fellow students. Students SHOULD obtain any worksheets, textbooks or supporting material as necessary in order to complete assignments. Teachers SHOULD ensure that all assignments are available to absent students according to a set policy (see Article 6) and SHOULD make supporting material available to absent students either online or on return.

For prolonged absences, teachers and students SHOULD mutually agree on a catch-up plan that allows the student to progress in the course.

Article 10

Plagiarism and Copying

It is expected that all work handed in is the original work of the student. Students MUST fully cite any external source used for an assignment (including a source from the internet). Direct quotations MUST be clearly identified and set apart in the text. Special translation tools (e.g. Google translate) SHOULD be avoided for linguistic assignments. A student MAY be penalised for failing to identify an external source. As appropriate, teachers SHOULD make sure that students learn how to quote and reference the sources they have used and educate them in the appropriate use of translation software.

Students MUST NOT copy assignments from other students of current or previous years. Students SHOULD NOT present others' work as their own, even in a group project. A student MAY be penalised for copying or misrepresenting assignments.

Article 11

School Facilities

Free periods at school should also be considered as valuable time in which homework assignments MAY be completed. The school provides designated facilities for this:

- For S1-S3 students:
 - free periods: in the *etude* (or the S1-S3 library or S1-S3 cafeteria upon request)
 - lunch- and short-breaks: S1-S3 library or S1-S3 cafeteria (or the FabLab when open)
- For S4-S7 students:
 - free periods, lunch- and short-breaks: in the S4-S7 library or S4-S7 cafeteria (or the FabLab when open)

Wifi for students is available in most buildings on campus. School accounts allowing access to Wifi MUST be obtained through the ICT Coordinator. (Note, school accounts are distinct from the MS Office 365 accounts.)

Workstations and printers SHOULD be available to students in the S1-S3 and S4-S7 libraries upon demand.

Chapter III: The Role of the Student, the Teacher and the Parent(s)/Guardian(s)

Article 12

The Role of the Student

It is the student's responsibility to...

- Track homework assignments given by your teachers. If an assignment is unclear, clarify with your teacher in advance of the deadline.
- Provide feedback to teachers regarding the homework workload so that the teacher can adjust the deadlines or assignments. You may also provide general feedback to your teacher on the quantity and type of homework assigned.
- Submit homework assignments on time. If this is not possible, speak to your teacher in advance of the deadline.
- Manage your time effectively to meet the deadlines imposed. It is your choice to use your weekends and vacations for homework.
- Fully cite the sources if you use external content or direct quotations (including from the internet). Don't plagiarise content from external sources.
- Ensure that all assignments handed in are your own work. Copying homework from other students is prohibited.
- Contribute equally to group projects in agreement with all group members.
- Inform yourself of assignments given when you are absent and turn them in as soon as possible after your return to school. You may ask others in the class or your teacher about the work that has been set. If you need worksheets or any information, ask your classmates or your teacher. For prolonged absences, agree with teachers on a catch-up plan.
- Contact the educational advisor with any important or long-standing concerns about homework, test schedules or any other issue covered in this policy.

Article 13

The Role of the Teacher

It is the teacher's responsibility to...

- List course textbooks on the annual book list in June each year; for language classes you may provide information for each course textbook (e.g. ISBN, title/edition) at the beginning of the school year.
- Inform students and parents about the frequency and amount of the homework in the course and any supporting material (print or digital) to be used, at the beginning of each semester.
- Establish a policy for communicating homework assignments in a consistent manner and place so that it can be easily located by students. You should maintain the policy, whether using TEAMS⁸ or any alternative means of communicating homework, for the entirety of the school year.
- Clarify any late homework policy with your students.
- Provide clear instructions, deadline, approximate time needed, submission method(s) and assessment criteria to be used for each homework assignment, ensuring that all students have understood and responding to any questions and concerns. You should also ensure that supporting material is available, online if possible.
- Ensure that all homework assignments and deadlines meet the requirements laid out in Chapter II, Article 3.
- Be open to feedback from students when it comes to the homework load and adjust assignments, deadlines, and the dates of tests accordingly.
- Return homework to students in a timely manner, including as appropriate a numerical/letter mark and personal qualitative feedback.
- Keep accurate records of homework set, submitted and marked.
- Provide continuous feedback to students on their progress and assistance to students when difficulties arise.
- Make assignments and supporting material available to students upon return from absence. For prolonged absences, you should agree with students on a catch-up plan.
- If homework is repeatedly not completed or submitted and the class mark might be affected, you should alert the student and, if the situation does not improve, the student's parent(s) and educational advisor.
- As appropriate, make sure that students learn how to quote and reference the sources they use and to use translation software in a way that supports their learning.

Homework MUST never be used as a punishment. In the same way, not setting homework for a certain period SHOULD NOT be used as a reward.

Article 14

The Role of the Parent(s) / Guardian(s)

Parents SHOULD take care to order the correct textbooks and editions (e.g. print or online) included in the annual book list or based on teachers' guidance. Parents SHOULD provide a suitable study area and the necessary equipment and resources for students to complete homework assigned. When necessary, parents MAY provide help and support for their children in completing assignments or in managing their time and schedule; this is particularly true for younger students. Nevertheless,

⁸ The use of TEAMS is heavily encouraged, as it provides means to communicate assignments precisely, set and monitor deadlines and track progress in the course.

parents SHOULD refrain from actually completing their children's assignments for them. Parents are there to support their children's learning. Parents SHOULD feel free to contact the relevant teacher or educational advisor with any concerns about homework, test schedules or any other issue covered in this policy.