

Bishop Ullathorne Catholic School

Home Learning Policy & Guidance

All Key Stages (KS3, KS4 and KS5)

2026



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1. Aim

The aim of this policy is to state our approach to Home Learning, explain its place in the curriculum, and outline our expectations of students, teachers and parents across Key Stage 3, Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5.

‘Pupils in the highest achieving schools spend more time on learning activities at home than pupils in other schools’.

(National Foundation for Educational Research)

2. Purpose of Home Learning

At Bishop Ullathorne, we believe that Home Learning enhances student achievement and progress by reinforcing classwork and consolidating learning. It is vital for developing students’ study skills and independent learning ability. It is also an opportunity for parental involvement to support independent learning, with evidence showing that this is a key factor in improving outcomes for students.

Home Learning enables students to take ownership and responsibility for learning through independent work. By engaging in Home Learning, students will increase their motivation, creativity and initiative. Finally, we believe that Home Learning develops important study and research skills, enhancing learners’ time management, self-discipline and perseverance for lifelong learning.

Teachers should set Home Learning to:

- complement and reinforce knowledge and understanding
- allow students the opportunity to develop skills taught in class
- prepare students for rigour in their planning and personal organisation
- encourage independent learning in our young people
- reinforce positive attitudes to work
- encourage self-organisation and self-discipline
- develop home/school partnership
- prepare students for life opportunities and experiences
- raise attainment.

3. Principles Underlying Our Home Learning Policy

These whole-school principles apply across Key Stage 3, Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5:

- Students, parents/carers and the school all have responsibilities. Our shared approach must be consistent and positive.
- Home Learning must be issued to all year groups, in all subjects and to all students.
- Home Learning must be issued in appropriate quantities, and completion dates must be both clear and reasonable.
- Home Learning must be carefully planned and be an integral part of course work.
- Home Learning activities must be meaningful, stimulating and purposeful.
- Feedback on Home Learning must be constructive. Students must be given recognition for their effort and work well done.

- Feedback on Home Learning is a crucial aspect of learning and can take many forms. It is not always appropriate for all Home Learning tasks to be marked by the teacher, but all Home Learning will be acknowledged. Some Home Learning may be peer assessed to enhance student understanding and encourage discussion.
- Parents/carers will be informed of non-completion of Home Learning (see Section 9 and Appendix 2).

At Key Stage 3, these principles are put into practice through a specific focus on retrieval practice, set out in full in Section 5.

4. Types of Home Learning

Home Learning tasks are set to reflect on-going class work across the curriculum. A significant proportion of Home Learning set will be 'Mastery Home Learning'. Mastery Home Learning, based on the core knowledge of our curriculum, will include Recall and Retrieval Activities, which provide students with the opportunity to retrieve information and recall knowledge from Knowledge Organisers (see Appendix 1).

Mastery Home Learning will also include practice exercises which will provide students with the opportunity to apply new knowledge, or review, revise and reinforce newly acquired skills, including:

- Consolidation exercises (e.g. Hegarty Maths, Seneca, Linguascope)
- Practising for mastery (e.g. spelling words)
- Practising words or phrases learned in a language other than English
- Practising new skills (e.g. Physical Education, musical instruments)
- Essay writing.

Additional Home Learning activities may include the following:

Preparatory Home Learning

Provide opportunities for students to gain background information on a unit of study so that they are better prepared for future lessons, including:

- Background reading
- Reading (e.g. English text for class discussion)
- Researching topics for a class unit of work

Extension Assignments

Encourage students to pursue knowledge individually and imaginatively, including:

- Writing (e.g. a book review)
- Making or designing something, e.g. a piece of art work
- Researching (e.g. history, local news)
- Information and retrieval skills (e.g. using a home computer to find material on the internet)

Home Learning should not exclusively rely on the use of computer resources. Any student who does not have access to technology at home should not be disadvantaged. The school library, which is open before school and after school, is well equipped with books and computers linked to the internet, and our students should be encouraged to utilise this resource.

5. Key Stage 3 Homework Policy

5.1 Rationale (Curriculum Intent)

At Key Stage 3, homework at Bishop Ullathorne School forms part of a coherently planned and sequenced curriculum, underpinned by the principle of retrieval practice.

Retrieval practice involves students recalling previously taught knowledge from memory. Evidence-informed approaches demonstrate that regular and systematic retrieval strengthens long-term retention, improves fluency of recall, and enables pupils to embed knowledge securely over time.

The intent of homework is to support students to know more and remember more of the planned curriculum. Homework is not used to introduce new content or generate unnecessary written tasks. Instead, it enables students to revisit, consolidate, and secure essential knowledge that has been explicitly taught.

5.2 Aims (Curriculum Intent)

The Key Stage 3 homework policy ensures that:

- Students develop secure, well-sequenced knowledge over time
- Key curriculum content is retained and can be recalled with increasing fluency
- Students are supported to embed knowledge in long-term memory
- Independent study habits are explicitly developed
- Students are effectively prepared for the rigour and expectations of Key Stage 4

5.3 Principles (Implementation)

Homework at Key Stage 3 is designed in line with strong curriculum implementation:

Focused on core knowledge

Homework directs students' attention to the most important knowledge they need to remember, ensuring alignment with curriculum priorities.

Sequenced and integrated

Retrieval activities are carefully planned within subject curricula to revisit prior learning at appropriate intervals, supporting spaced practice and avoiding gaps in knowledge.

Proportionate and purposeful

Tasks are manageable and purposeful, supporting learning efficiently without unnecessary workload. Homework complements, rather than duplicates, classroom teaching.

Consistent in approach, flexible in delivery

While the format may vary between subjects, there is a shared, consistent focus on retrieval practice across the curriculum.

5.4 Forms of Homework

Departments select appropriate methods to support retrieval, which may include:

- Sparx Maths activities
- Educake assignments

- Seneca Learning tasks
- Vocabulary learning and retrieval
- Low-stakes knowledge quizzes
- Retrieval grids
- Flashcards and self-quizzing
- Reading followed by focused retrieval questions
- Knowledge organiser-based activities

Across all subjects, homework is designed to promote accuracy, fluency, and automaticity in recalling previously taught content.

5.5 Subject Responsibilities

Subject Leaders ensure that:

- The curriculum clearly identifies the key knowledge students need to learn and remember
- Retrieval opportunities are systematically planned and aligned with curriculum sequencing
- Homework tasks reflect the intended curriculum and reinforce prior learning
- Appropriate platforms and strategies are selected to maximise engagement and effectiveness

This ensures that homework is fully aligned with the school's curriculum intent and teaching approach.

5.6 Homework Allocation

To ensure homework is proportionate and supports learning without creating unnecessary workload, guideline time allocations have been established for each subject at Key Stage 3. These reflect the differing curriculum demands and ensure a balanced approach across the curriculum. The full table is set out at Appendix 3.

5.7 Recording Homework

Homework is recorded on ClassCharts to ensure transparency, consistency, and accessibility for students and parents, supporting clear communication.

5.8 Monitoring and Support

Teachers routinely check completion, engagement, and outcomes of retrieval homework to inform their understanding of students' knowledge and retention.

Where students struggle to engage or demonstrate gaps in knowledge, timely and appropriate support is put in place in line with whole-school systems.

Leaders monitor homework practices across subjects to ensure consistency, fidelity to the curriculum, and alignment with this policy.

5.9 Impact

The impact of this approach is evident in:

- Students' ability to recall and apply knowledge with increasing accuracy over time
- Improved performance in low-stakes and summative assessment
- Reduced gaps in knowledge as students move through the curriculum

- Students demonstrating confidence and independence in their learning
- Strong preparedness for the demands of Key Stage 4

Homework contributes directly to students building secure knowledge that is retained over time, supporting overall curriculum quality.

5.10 Key Stage 3 Policy Statement

At Key Stage 3, homework at Bishop Ullathorne School is an integral part of a well-planned and sequenced curriculum. Rooted in retrieval practice, it ensures students revisit and secure essential knowledge so that they know more and remember more. While approaches may vary across subjects, all homework reflects a consistent and coherent curriculum-led model.

Subject examples showing how this works in practice for each department are set out at Appendix 4, an Ofsted-facing summary is at Appendix 5, and guidance on how staff can evidence that retrieval homework is having an effect is at Appendix 6.

6. Key Stage 4 Homework Guidelines

6.1 Frequency

At Key Stage 4, all subjects will set a weekly Home Learning task appropriate to the stage of study.

6.2 Quantity

The estimated completion time stated in ClassCharts for each subject piece of Home Learning should be no more than 1 hour.

This will approximately result in an average amount of Home Learning across all subjects per student of no more than 2–3 hours a day at Key Stage 4.

7. Key Stage 5 Independent Study

At Key Stage 5, subject teachers will help students understand how best to work outside lessons, including how to study beyond their set Home Learning tasks. We would strongly recommend a minimum of 15 hours of independent study each week in addition to study periods.

8. Whole-School Home Learning Procedures

8.1 Timings and Workload

Any Home Learning that is of an ongoing or extended nature must be clearly identified as such when set, with timings given following those outlined in Sections 5, 6 and 7.

It is important that teachers adhere to these timings because “the positive effects of doing Home Learning generally start to diminish when pupils spend more time than this” – EEF report on secondary homework (April 2020).

8.2 Revision Periods

During periods of testing, teachers should not set additional homework on top of revision Home Learning. This applies to the week prior to departmental tests in classrooms and the two weeks prior to whole-year testing, such as mock or end-of-year examinations.

8.3 Marking and Feedback

It is important that all Home Learning is checked, helping to maintain students’ motivation. Teachers are responsible for monitoring Home Learning submissions. In addition, the expectation is that all Home Learning should be checked and/or given feedback and actions by either the students, their peers or the teacher — a balance of all three is recommended.

8.4 Holiday Home Learning

For all Key Stage 3 students, there will be no Home Learning set over half terms and end-of-term holidays, to support their wellbeing. Home learning may be set for key stage 4 and 5 students

8.5 Recording Home Learning

ClassCharts is an online homework calendar teachers use to set and communicate Home Learning tasks, ensuring that students and parents always have the information they need. It is available via the ClassCharts website or the application for mobile and tablet devices. Home Learning can be accessed by teachers, students and parents by logging into ClassCharts with a code given by the school.

At Key Stage 3, homework is recorded on ClassCharts (see Section 5.7) to support transparency and accessibility for students and parents.

8.6 General

Not all Home Learning is done at home. For some students who find it difficult to work at home, or who require specific resources (books, software, equipment, printing), it is desirable to carry out the task at school. Opportunities should be provided within our departments and during homework clubs.

8.7 Stretch and Challenge

Higher-ability students should be encouraged to independently explore around the subject wherever possible. However, this time does not need to be recorded as formal Home Learning, but could be, for example, working through material provided by their class teacher.

9. Non-Completion of Home Learning

Please refer to our Behaviour Policy and the procedure set out in Appendix 2.

10. Roles, Responsibilities and Monitoring

Home Learning requires a consistent approach across the school. It must be easy for all stakeholders to have an overview of Home Learning. Below are the different groups that have responsibilities to help support students in the successful completion of Home Learning, and to ensure that everyone meets the Home Learning guidelines.

10.1 Role of Subject Teachers

- Provide Home Learning linked to class activities
- Make the purpose of Home Learning clear to students
- Set all Home Learning on ClassCharts
- Ensure Home Learning resources are available to all students
- Give adequate guidance and instructions to complete the task within an appropriate and defined timescale (one week wherever possible and appropriate)
- Ensure regular reminders are recorded for extended tasks
- Ensure all Home Learning pieces are marked and/or given feedback and actions by either the student, their peers or the teacher — a balance of all three is recommended
- Keep a record of student submissions and monitor the quality of work
- Inform the Head of Department, Form Tutor and Head of Year, as appropriate, if problems arise
- At Key Stage 3: design tasks that focus on retrieval of previously taught knowledge rather than new content, in line with Section 5

10.2 Role of Subject Leaders (Key Stage 3 Retrieval Homework)

- Ensure the curriculum clearly identifies the key knowledge students need to learn and remember
- Systematically plan retrieval opportunities aligned with curriculum sequencing
- Ensure homework tasks reflect the intended curriculum and reinforce prior learning
- Select appropriate platforms and strategies to maximise engagement and effectiveness

10.3 Role of Students

- Listen to Home Learning instructions in class
- Check ClassCharts daily for Home Learning tasks and information (even if absent)
- Be able to organise workload
- Proof read to assess the quality of the work they have done
- Attempt all tasks to the best of their ability and to the deadline
- Inform the class teacher of any issues in advance of the deadline
- Make use of in-school facilities and support as required

10.4 Role of the Pastoral Leader and Form Tutor

- Promote the value of Home Learning through student mentoring
- Check students know where and how to access Home Learning
- Note and respond to any comments by parents

10.5 Role of the Head of Department

- Communicate clearly with department staff the plans for Home Learning in the department, including frequency and type
- Regularly monitor and evaluate Home Learning to ensure not too much or too little is being set, along with quality
- Praise students that consistently do Home Learning
- Put in place relevant interventions to support students who are consistently missing deadlines
- Support staff in the setting and assessment of appropriate tasks
- Ensure Home Learning is consistently set and of the standard and expectations required, challenging teachers where necessary
- Identify students who are persistently missing deadlines
- Monitor the quality of Home Learning set by department colleagues
- Encourage collaboration and sharing of Home Learning created by the department

10.6 Role of Parents

- Reinforce the value of Home Learning through positive feedback, giving students the confidence to persevere, work hard and fulfil their potential
- Check ClassCharts regularly and support with completion of Home Learning
- Provide a table, chair and quiet place to learn, or direct them to in-school facilities if not available at home
- Help plan their child's time effectively to balance school and leisure activities
- Support their child in working within the guidance times set out in this policy for Home Learning
- Show an active interest in the presentation and content of all work
- Contact the subject teacher if necessary to resolve any issues
- Monitor their child's Home Learning submission through ClassCharts

10.7 Role of the Senior Leadership Team

- Provide staff, students and parents with the necessary Home Learning documentation
- Support Heads of Department in all aspects of Home Learning setting
- Ensure all staff are consulted and understand the policy
- Monitor and evaluate all aspects of the school Home Learning policy
- Monitor the quality of Home Learning set by colleagues across the school
- Monitor the completion of submission status for Home Learning in line management meetings
- Share Home Learning statistics across the school
- Support student intervention through line management, where necessary

Home Learning analytics will be monitored on a half-termly basis by Heads of Department and the Assistant Headteacher responsible for Home Learning. Where issues regarding the setting of Home Learning are

revealed as part of the monitoring process, SLT line managers will discuss them with the relevant staff and Head of Department; provide support where necessary to remedy the situation; and instigate further monitoring, if needed.

Appendix 1: Knowledge Organisers for Key Stage 3

To ensure there are clear and consistent links between our curriculum offer in school and student engagement at home, students will be expected to utilise Knowledge Organisers in lessons and as part of our Home Learning policy.

The purpose of a Knowledge Organiser is to provide students with accessible guidance about knowledge that they can study on their own, in order to build a secure schema with strong recall of the knowledge elements. They are intended as a summary, not a comprehensive, exhaustive list of all that could be known. However, they only serve a purpose if they are used effectively and linked to retrieval techniques.

Design of Knowledge Organiser to Be Quizzable

Information in a Knowledge Organiser should focus on what the student needs to learn in a format that supports self-quizzing. Extended prose should be avoided and information should be clearly visible. Useful features include:

- Tables with columns of related information, allowing one or more columns to be covered
- Bullet points and lists of key ideas
- Sequences shown in flow diagrams
- Labelled diagrams and unlabelled versions of diagrams
- Mind maps, or timelines. It is important that a quizzing process supports building connections rather than isolating facts and ideas such that they lose meaning.

Focus on Specific Elements

Students will be asked, by their subject teachers, to focus on a specific section of the Knowledge Organiser, which should be numbered; each child will then read that section, cover it up and attempt to write out the information from memory. They will then check that they have done this correctly, against the knowledge. This process may be repeated a couple of times for Home Learning, and we will refer to this method as 'cover, write, check'.

Different recall and retrieval activities will be provided by subject teachers in class.

During Lessons We Will

- Use a variety of learning strategies to provide repetition and reinforcement of essential knowledge. These should appeal to the full range of learning styles (visual, auditory and kinaesthetic, for instance)
- Create opportunities to systematically drill or test key knowledge and vocabulary
- Note down words or ideas that students particularly struggle with, so that these can be revisited
- Build in opportunities to re-visit and test essential knowledge from previous lessons or units of work
- Embed the use of memory techniques such as: the link method, picture notes, analogies, mnemonics, memorable journey, flash cards, spot the fiction, mind mapping and teach a friend
- Encourage students to apply the facts which have been memorised by answering challenging higher-order questions

Appendix 2: Non-Completion of Home Learning Procedure

Teacher Support

If a student fails to meet a Home Learning deadline, their teacher will give one further deadline. This will then be recorded by the class teacher.

If a student has failed to meet a deadline on a number of occasions, support is also needed for this student. The teacher will:

- Speak with the student to find out if there is a reason for the regular failure to complete Home Learning
- Make contact with home to make them aware that there is an issue with the completion of Home Learning. This is to be logged on the school's record system
- Make the student's tutor and Key Stage Leader aware of the concern

Failure to meet the second deadline will result in a detention with the class teacher. This will be recorded.

Failure to Complete Home Learning

- Failure to attend the teacher detention will result in a department after-school detention. This will be recorded.
- Failure to attend the department detention will result in a Friday after-school detention with SLT. This will be recorded.

Persistent Failure to Complete Home Learning – Key Stage Leader Support

If a student has failed to meet deadlines in a number of subjects, support is needed for this student. The Key Stage Leader will:

- Speak with the student to find out if there is a reason for the regular failure to complete Home Learning in a number of subjects
- Make contact with home to make them aware that there is an issue with the completion of Home Learning, and inform parents of the Home Learning club after school that their child will need to attend for two weeks in order to gain good Home Learning habits
- Make the student's tutor and Key Stage Leader aware of the concern

Appendix 3: Key Stage 3 Homework Allocation

These allocations are designed to ensure that homework supports the planned curriculum, enabling students to revisit key knowledge regularly while maintaining a manageable and balanced workload across subjects.

Subject	Time Allocation
Maths	1 hour per week
English	30 minutes per week plus 15 minutes reading per evening
Science	30 minutes per week
RE	30 minutes per week
Languages	Year 7: 30 minutes per week Year 8: 45 minutes per week Year 9: 45 minutes per week
History	20–30 minutes per week
Geography	20–30 minutes per week
Art	Approximately 8 hours per term
Design & Technology	15–20 minutes per fortnight
Music	30 minutes per week

Appendix 4: Key Stage 3 Subject Examples

The following examples illustrate how retrieval-based homework supports curriculum intent across subjects, demonstrating alignment between curriculum planning, teaching, and homework.

Mathematics

Homework on Sparx Maths revisits previously taught topics through carefully sequenced questions. Tasks ensure students practise core methods and concepts regularly, supporting fluency and procedural accuracy. Teachers use completion and accuracy data to identify misconceptions and inform subsequent teaching.

English

Homework focuses on reading. It is focused on students developing strong opinions through non-fiction reading, and also developing understanding of the author's craft through analysis and practice of methods.

Science

Retrieval homework via Educake or similar platforms revisits substantive and disciplinary knowledge. Questions are spaced over time to reinforce prior learning, ensuring students retain key scientific concepts and terminology and can apply them in new contexts.

Languages

Homework prioritises vocabulary acquisition and retrieval, with regular self-quizzing and online practice. This supports students in building secure knowledge of core vocabulary and grammatical structures, enabling greater fluency over time.

History and Geography

Homework focuses on retrieval of key knowledge, such as dates, events, case studies, and core concepts. Tasks are designed to strengthen students' ability to recall and connect knowledge within the wider curriculum sequence.

Art and Design & Technology

Homework supports the development of both knowledge and practical understanding, including recalling key techniques, artists, and processes. Extended homework tasks are set where appropriate to allow students to refine and develop their work over time. In Design & Technology, students are expected to bring in ingredients for their weekly cooking task.

Music and Drama

Homework may include retrieval of key terminology, techniques, or performance knowledge. Tasks support students in developing both theoretical understanding and practical application within the curriculum.

RE

Homework supports retrieval of key concepts, vocabulary, and ideas. Tasks encourage reflection and recall, helping students embed knowledge that supports both academic understanding and personal development.

Appendix 5: Key Stage 3 Homework – Ofsted Summary

Curriculum Intent

Homework at Key Stage 3 is deliberately designed to support students to know more and remember more of the planned curriculum. It is rooted in retrieval practice and ensures that students revisit and secure essential knowledge over time. Homework is curriculum-led and aligned with subject sequencing.

Implementation

- Homework is consistently retrieval-based across subjects
- Tasks focus on recalling previously taught knowledge rather than introducing new content
- Retrieval is planned and sequenced to support long-term memory (spaced practice)
- Departments identify core knowledge and design tasks accordingly
- A range of platforms (e.g. Sparx, Educake, Seneca) are used to support consistency and engagement
- Homework is proportionate, manageable, and recorded on ClassCharts

Impact

- Students demonstrate improved recall and retention of key knowledge
- Knowledge gaps are reduced over time
- Students show increased fluency and confidence in applying knowledge
- Homework supports strong performance in both formative and summative assessment
- Students develop independent study habits and are well prepared for Key Stage 4

Quality Assurance

- Teachers monitor completion and outcomes regularly
- Subject leaders ensure alignment with curriculum intent
- Senior leaders monitor consistency and fidelity across departments
- Intervention is in place where engagement or understanding is weak

Appendix 6: How Do We Know Students Are Doing Retrieval Homework?

Key Principle

We focus on impact, not compliance. Not: “Did they do it?” But: “What can they now remember?”

What Evidence Looks Like

We know retrieval is happening when students:

- Recall key knowledge accurately in lessons
- Perform well on low-stakes retrieval quizzes
- Show improved fluency over time
- Demonstrate fewer gaps in knowledge

How We Check (In Practice)

- Starter retrieval quizzes
- Cold-calling and questioning
- Review of homework platform data (Sparx, Educake, Seneca)
- Application of knowledge in class tasks and assessments

Important Reassurance

- We are not policing home study
- Homework = opportunity to practise retrieval
- Classroom checks = evidence of impact

The Big Idea (Ofsted-Aligned)

Homework supports students to know more and remember more over time.

What You Can Say to Students

- “This helps your brain remember”
- “You’ll see this again — try to recall it now”
- “If you can remember it next lesson, it’s working”

Takeaway

Consistent retrieval homework + in-class checking = strong long-term memory.