THAMESMEAD SCHOOL

HOME LEARNING POLICY

Person Responsible	Andrew Grafton
Governors Sub-committee responsible	Curriculum, Learning & Standards Committee
Review period	Every 2 years
Review	Summer 2025
Date of next review	Summer 2027

Contents

AIM

To promote student progress, deepen learning and develop effective independent study habits through the setting of purposeful and well-structured Home Learning tasks.

CORE BELIEFS

- At Thamesmead, we believe that Home Learning is an essential element of a high-quality curriculum. It reinforces, consolidates, and deepens learning completed in class.
- Home Learning is most effective in consolidating learning, providing opportunities for extended practice, further reading or contextual research, and can be an excellent tool for retrieval practice.
- We recognise that tasks focused on learning brand new curriculum content outside of lessons produce mixed results and can disadvantage some learners. Reading ahead can be helpful, but as a general rule we do not encourage flipped learning*.
- Acknowledgement marking ensures that students receive timely, relevant responses without the need for extensive written feedback. Our approach to feedback on Home Learning tasks is designed to support student engagement, encourage reflection, and make best use of teacher time to maximise the quality of learning in the classroom.
- We encourage open communication and support-seeking when students or families are finding it difficult to manage Home Learning, whether due to workload, understanding or personal circumstances

* Flipped learning is a model in which students are required to access and understand new material independently—usually through videos, readings, or online activities—prior to the lesson. Lesson time is then used to revisit or consolidate this content, rather than to introduce it. This approach assumes that all students have the capacity, resources, and motivation to engage with unfamiliar material in advance of teacher-led instruction

SHARED PRINCIPLES

Home Learning tasks should:

- Support student progress and secure long-term learning.
- Reinforce classroom learning through retrieval, practice or application.
- Be set with realistic deadlines that accommodate different student needs.
- Be suitable for students of all abilities and aligned with curriculum objectives.
- Be logged and tracked using Bromcom Assignments, ensuring visibility for students, staff and parents.
- Promote spaced practice and the consolidation of learning over time.

TYPES OF HOME LEARNING

The following are common examples of effective Home Learning tasks (not an exhaustive list):

- Retrieval practice tasks, such as low-stakes quizzes, knowledge organisers, or short-answer questions.
- Practice questions aligned with GCSE-style formats, including multiple choice or extended writing.
- Redrafting or improvement based on feedback.
- Consolidation activities, such as vocabulary recall, diagrams, flowcharts, or summary writing.
- Reading for context, wider research, or follow-up from lessons.
- Creative and applied tasks, including artwork, model making, performance practice, or diagram completion.
- Memorisation tasks, such as learning vocabulary, spellings, times tables, scientific formulas, historical dates, or key quotations.

TIMING GUIDELINES

Timing guidelines support students to complete the Home Learning work appropriately. The guidelines below are **maximum thresholds** that teachers should seek not to exceed and must consider carefully before setting tasks.

However, there are important considerations. Firstly, **at certain times**, for example during in the lead up to assessments and public exams, **students may need to exceed these timings** to ensure they prepare adequately to reach their potential. Secondly, teachers should not see this as a target to fill each week, but a guideline for the amount of work students will do outside of class over an extended period. Teachers should feel free to run a project or have longer tasks over several weeks so long as the total time spent does not exceed these guidelines. Equally over holidays teachers should feel able to set work to ensure students consolidate and prepare effectively.

Year	*Time per subject, per week*	*Average Total time per week per student*
7	*20-30 mins*	*6 hours*
8	*30-40 mins*	*8 hours*
9	*40-60 mins*	*10 hours*
10 (GCSE)	*60-90 mins*	*12 hours*
11 (GCSE)	*60-120 mins*	*18 hours*

For the core subjects—English, Maths, and Science—more than one home learning task may be set each week. This reflects both the frequency of these subjects on the timetable and the greater volume of content that requires more consolidation through home learning

N.B. All KS3 classes will be set up to one hour of literacy Home Learning, to include but not limited to: guided reading tasks, Lexia, spellings.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Students:

- Must have the Bromcom app installed or log in via the website regularly to check for assignments. Support with accessing Bromcom is available via tutors, Heads of Year, or the Learning Center Manager.
- Complete tasks by the stated deadline.
- Seek help in advance if the task is unclear or they are struggling to meet a deadline.

Parents/Carers:

- Encourage routines and check Bromcom weekly.
- Provide a quiet environment for the completion of Home Learning.
- Communicate concerns to tutors or class teachers as needed.

Teachers:

- Set meaningful Home Learning on Bromcom Assignments, aiming to give 7 days for completion. Where the next lesson is sooner, an earlier deadline may be set. Tasks will never be set for the next day as this is not considered best practice.

- Acknowledge the completion of Home Learning through marking, including stamps, ticks or brief written prompts.
- Use Bromcom to track completion and log any follow-up interventions or support.
- Make reasonable adjustments to enable SEND students to complete home learning tasks

Middle Leaders (MLT):

- Ensure consistency of expectations within subject areas.
- Monitor the quality and appropriateness of Home Learning tasks as well as completion rates.
- Analyse data from Bromcom to support intervention.

Senior Leadership Team (SLT):

- Promote a culture of effective Home Learning.
- Provide training and resources where necessary for setting, marking and monitoring Home Learning.
- Monitor patterns and trends in Home Learning completion and implement follow up actions if required.

COMPLETION & FOLLOW-UP

Where Home Learning is incomplete or not attempted, we will follow the school's Behaviour for Learning Policy, which outlines sanctions and support strategies for missed or persistently missed tasks.

We encourage students to take responsibility for seeking help in advance of deadlines. Class teachers should foster this culture by reminding students of expectations and signposting support where necessary.

SUPPORT & WELLBEING

We understand that students lead busy lives, and workload can at times become overwhelming. We encourage:

- Students to approach staff early if they are struggling.
- Teachers to avoid overnight deadlines.
- Flexibility and understanding, especially where SEND, medical or family issues apply.
- Staff can make reasonable adjustments to enable SEND students to complete home learning tasks

To support students with completing Home Learning, Thamesmead offers regular Home Learning Clubs across three dedicated spaces:

- KS4 Study Room (usually in Room 16B – students should check the Student Notices for confirmation)
- KS3 Study Room located in the Learning Resource Centre (LRC)
- SEND Study Room in room 6A, providing targeted support for students with additional needs

These supervised spaces are available before and after school and provide a quiet environment where students can complete assignments, access devices, and ask for help if needed.

RESEARCH AND EFFECTIVE PRACTICE

Home Learning is not just a school tradition — it is supported by a strong evidence base highlighting its potential to improve outcomes, particularly when tasks are well designed and linked to curriculum content. The key principles shaping Thamesmead's Home Learning approach include:

- **Reinforcement of Learning:** Homework is most effective when it consolidates material already taught, rather than introducing new content.
- **Cognitive Science Strategies:** Tasks involving retrieval, spacing, summarising, and deliberate practice are more impactful than open-ended or unguided tasks.
- **Equity and Access:** Home Learning must be accessible to all students and avoid relying on methods (e.g. flipped learning) that assume independent access to technology or high levels of self-direction.
- **Curriculum Alignment:** Effective homework supports long-term knowledge retention through methods aligned with a knowledge-rich curriculum.

These principles are drawn from a range of trusted sources, summarised in **Appendix A: Research Evidence**.

Given that retention of knowledge and skills taught in class is a central purpose of Home Learning, the following pages include practical advice for students on how to consolidate and recall effectively. Teachers should draw on these ideas when setting tasks, ensuring their design reflects the most effective strategies.

LEARN TO STUDY USING...

Spaced Practice

SPACE OUT YOUR STUDYING OVER TIME

LEARNINGSCIENTISTS.ORG

HOW TO DO IT

Start planning early for exams, and set aside a little bit of time every day. Five hours spread out over two weeks is better than the same five hours all at once.

Review information from each class, but not immediately after class.

After you review information from the most recent class, make sure to go back and study important older information to keep it fresh.

HOLD ON!

When you sit down to study, make sure you are using effective study strategies rather than just re-reading your class notes.

This may seem difficult and you may forget some information from day to day, but this is actually a good thing! This forces you to retrieve information from memory (see Retrieval Practice poster).

Create small spaces (a few days) and do a little bit over time, so that it adds up!

RESEARCH

Read more about spaced pratice as a study strategy

Benjamin, A. S., & Tullis, J. [2010]. What makes distributed practice effective? *Cognitive Psychology, 61*, 228-247.

LEARN TO STUDY USING...

Retrieval Practice

PRACTICE BRINGING INFORMATION TO MIND

LEARNINGSCIENTISTS.ORG

HOW TO DO IT

Put away your class materials, and write or sketch everything you know. Be as thorough as possible. Then, check your class materials for accuracy and important points you missed.

Take as many practice tests as you can get your hands on. If you don't have ready-made tests, try making your own and trading with a friend who has done the same.

You can also make flashcards. Just make sure you practice recalling the information on them, and go beyond definitions by thinking of links between ideas.

HOLD ON!

Retrieval practice works best when you go back to check your class materials for accuracy afterward.

Retrieval is hard! If you're struggling, identify the things you've missed from your class materials, and work your way up to recalling it on your own with the class materials closed.

Don't only recall words and definitions. Make sure to recall main ideas, how things are related or different from one another, and new examples.

RESEARCH

Read more about retrieval practice as a study strategy

Roediger, H. L., Putnam, A. L., & Smith, M. A. (2011). Ten benefits of testing and their applications to educational practice. In J. Mestre & B. Ross (Eds.), *Psychology of learning and motivation: Cognition in education*, (pp. 1-36). Oxford: Elsevier.

LEARN TO STUDY USING...

Elaboration

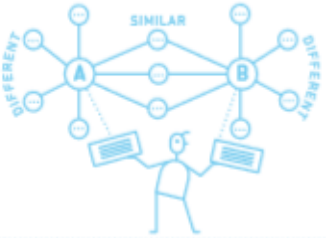
EXPLAIN AND DESCRIBE IDEAS WITH MANY DETAILS

LEARNINGSCIENTISTS.ORG

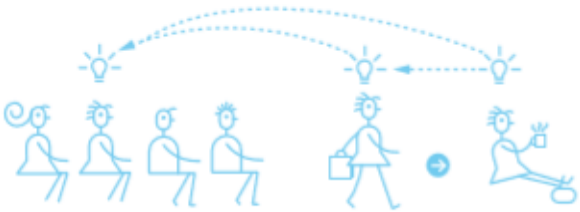
HOW TO DO IT

Ask yourself questions while you are studying about how things work and why, and then find the answers in your class materials and discuss them with your classmates.

As you elaborate, make connections between different ideas to explain how they work together. Take two ideas and think of ways they are similar and different.



Describe how the ideas you are studying apply to your own experiences or memories. As you go through your day, make connections to the ideas you are learning in class.



HOLD ON!

Make sure the way you are explaining and describing an idea is accurate. Don't overextend the elaborations, and always check your class materials or ask your teacher.

Work your way up so that you can describe and explain without looking at your class materials.

RESEARCH

Read more about elaboration

McDaniel, M. A., & Donnelly, C. M. (1996). Learning with analogy and elaborative interrogation. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 88*, 508-519.

LEARN TO STUDY USING...

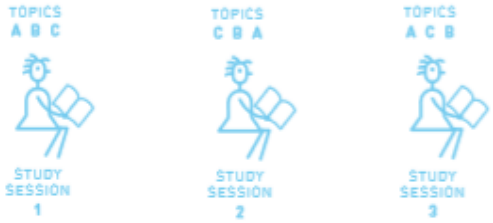
Interleaving

SWITCH BETWEEN IDEAS WHILE YOU STUDY

HOW TO DO IT

Switch between ideas during a study session. Don't study one idea for too long.

Go back over the ideas again in different orders to strengthen your understanding.



Make links between different ideas as you switch between them.

HOLD ON!

While it's good to switch between ideas, don't switch too often, or spend too little time on any one idea; you need to make sure you understand them.

Interleaving will feel harder than studying the same thing for a long time. But don't worry - this is actually helpful to your learning!

RESEARCH

Read more about interleaving

Rohrer, D. (2012). Interleaving helps students distinguish among similar concepts. *Educational Psychology Review, 24*, 355-367.

LEARN TO STUDY USING...

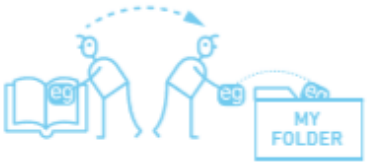
Concrete Examples

USE SPECIFIC EXAMPLES TO UNDERSTAND ABSTRACT IDEAS

LEARNINGSCIENTISTS.ORG

HOW TO DO IT

Collect examples your teacher has used, and look in your class materials for as many examples as you can find.



Make the link between the idea you are studying and each example, so that you understand how the example applies to the idea.

Share examples with friends, and explain them to each other for added benefits.

HOLD ON!

You may find examples on the internet that are not used appropriately. Make sure your examples are correct - check with your teacher.

Ultimately, creating your own relevant examples will be the most helpful for learning.

RESEARCH

Read more about concrete examples as a study strategy

Rawson, K. A., Thomas, R. C., & Jacoby, L. L. [2014]. The power of examples: Illustrative examples enhance conceptual learning of declarative concepts. *Educational Psychology Review*, 27, 483-504.

LEARN TO STUDY USING...

Dual Coding

COMBINE WORDS AND VISUALS

LEARNINGSCIENTISTS.ORG

HOW TO DO IT

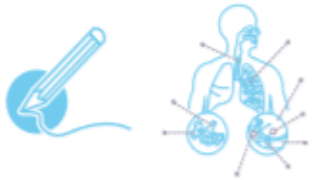
Look at your class materials and find visuals. Look over the visuals and compare to the words.

Look at visuals, and explain in your own words what they mean.

Take information that you are trying to learn, and draw visuals to go along with it.

HOLD ON!

Try to come up with different ways to represent the information visually, for example an infographic, a timeline, a cartoon strip, or a diagram of parts that work together.



Work your way up to drawing what you know from memory.

RESEARCH

Read more about dual coding as a study strategy

Mayer, R. E., & Anderson, R. B. (1992). The instructive animation: Helping students build connections between words and pictures in multimedia learning. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 4*, 444-452.

LINKS WITH OTHER POLICIES

This document links to the following policies:

- Behaviour for Learning Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disability policy
- Teaching and Learning Policy
- Assessment Policy

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Assessment of the Impact of a Policy on Equality & Diversity

Policy: Home Learning Policy

Impact assessed by: Andrew Grafton

Date: 1st June 2025

1. What is the potential for this policy impacting a person or group with a protected characteristic differently (favourably or unfavourably) from everyone else?

Yes. The policy could potentially impact students with certain protected characteristics—particularly those related to **disability (SEND)** and **socio-economic disadvantage**—**differently** if Home Learning expectations do not account for differing levels of access, literacy, or capacity for independent study.

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2. How would this be evidenced?

- Differences in **Home Learning completion rates** between students with SEND and those without.
- Disparities in **sanctions** applied for incomplete work, which may affect students who have barriers to accessing or understanding tasks.
- Pupil voice and pastoral records identifying **access issues** or **lack of quiet spaces or technology** at home—often reported more by disadvantaged learners.

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3. Is there evidence that the operation of the current policy might impact a person or group with a protected characteristic differently from everyone else?

Yes. Under the previous version of the policy, the inclusion of **flipped learning** risked disadvantaging students who:

- Have **SEND** affecting memory, attention or processing speed.
- Lack **adult support** or independent study skills.
- Do not have reliable **access to technology** or a quiet working space.
- There should be

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flexibility on deadlines for non Christian festivals for example Eid

4. If the answer to 3 is 'Yes', please provide details and evidence.

- National research cited in the policy (e.g. EEF, Kirschner et al., OECD) supports the conclusion that flipped learning may reinforce inequity.

5. How might the new policy change this?

- **Flipped learning has been removed**. The policy now explicitly states that new curriculum content must be taught in the classroom by subject specialists.
- The policy promotes **retrieval and consolidation tasks**, which are **evidence-based, inclusive, and support all learners**, including those with cognitive or language barriers.
- It emphasises that **support is available in-school** (e.g. SEND, KS3 and KS4 study rooms), ensuring equity of access to complete tasks.

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6. Are there any other changes to the policy which might impact a group with a protected characteristic differently from everyone else?

No.

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7. If the answer to 6 is 'Yes', please provide details and evidence.

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8. Policies are required to reduce or eliminate inequality and disadvantage and promote diversity. Does this assessment indicate that the Policy passes or fails this test?

Passes.
The revised policy promotes fairness and inclusivity through:

- Removal of approaches that create inequity (flipped learning).
- Emphasis on consolidation and retrieval, which support all learners.
- Provision of structured support for those who face barriers.
- Consistent expectations and feedback mechanisms that can be universally understood and accessed.

Appendix A: Research

Theme	Summary of Evidence	Suggested Research/Source
1. Impact on Exam Outcomes	Home Learning has a significant impact on secondary students' academic progress. The EEF notes that effective homework can add up to 5 months of additional progress. Effect sizes are strongest when homework is used to reinforce learning, not as a standalone task.	EEF Toolkit – Homework (Secondary)
2. Task Design: Retrieval, Practice, and Consolidation	Tasks that require students to recall, apply, or summarise previously taught material strengthen memory and deepen understanding. Retrieval practice, elaboration, and worked examples are more effective than unguided or exploratory tasks.	Dunlosky et al. (2013), Improving Students' Learning with Effective Learning Techniques; Rosenshine (2012), Principles of Instruction
3. Equity and Flipped Learning	Flipped learning assumes access to technology, quiet space, and independent learning skills — all of which disadvantage certain students. Research shows mixed results and raises concerns about equity. Direct instruction by a teacher remains more effective for first-time learning.	OECD (2015); EEF Guidance; Kirschner, Sweller & Clark (2006) – Why Minimal Guidance During Instruction Does Not Work
4. Knowledge Retention & Curriculum Alignment	Memory is strengthened through spacing, retrieval, interleaving and elaboration. Homework that supports these practices helps students retain and apply knowledge in a knowledge-rich curriculum.	Willingham (2009), Why Don't Students Like School?; Bjork & Bjork (2011), Desirable Difficulties; Cepeda et al. (2006), Spacing Effect in Learning

This research underpins our policy design and task expectations, ensuring that Home Learning at Thamesmead directly supports curriculum goals, learning equity, and long-term progress.

Given that retention of knowledge and skills taught in class is a central purpose of Home Learning the next pages include up-to-date advice for students on how to consolidate and recall effectively. Teachers should

assimilate these ideas and endeavour to ensure their Home Learning use these approaches, which have been proven to be the most beneficial.