

The Hall



Prep Handbook
2016-17

Homework/Prep

We thought it would be helpful for you to read the school's expectations as your son goes through the school. Ideally, there should be a shift in emphasis and responsibility away from **you** and towards **him** as he matures. Hopefully you will notice that we are more interested in the quality of the work produced than the amount of time spent on it.

Why do we set prep?

The habit of studying in private can play a valuable part in your child's education and, over a school career, contribute significantly to his academic achievement. It can exploit material and sources of information that are not available in the classroom; it allows students to complete work started in class or reinforce work finished in class; it helps the boys prepare for future lessons; it enables parents to see what is taught at school.

However, the main reason that we set prep at The Hall is to encourage your child to work **independently**. As such it should also inform your son's teacher that lessons have been absorbed to the extent that your son can work by himself. Prep is an important part of the dialogue between teacher and pupil and the information revealed from a prep enables the teacher to guide your

son towards future improvement.

How can you help your child with his prep?

We ask you to support the school in seeing that your son completes his prep conscientiously and under suitable conditions. The aim is for him to become an independent learner; while you are not expected to do the prep for him you can help significantly in a number of ways by:

- Providing a quiet room with few distractions (especially other brothers and sisters) and a suitable table and chair.
- Encouraging him to start at a defined time and not to waste time.
- Encouraging him in his work.
- Insisting firmly it is done.
- Encouraging him to check his work and stressing the need for it to be well presented. Avoid marking it yourself!
- Listening to him read what has been written.
- Directing him to suitable reference books or materials.
- If difficulties are encountered, help with explanations. **Never actually do the work.** When a parent completes a prep for a child it delays the child from becoming independent in his work habits, gives a false impression of his progress and prevents the teacher from helping with any difficulties. It is also extremely obvious!
- Only ask your child to complete rough copies

and then perfect copies of the work if this is what the member of staff setting the work actually wants. Some do not.

- Junior School boys might find it beneficial to time themselves doing their homework using a timer.

From Book Bag to Prep Diary

Junior School

Boys in Reception, Years 1, 2 and 3 have a book bag in which homework and messages are transported daily to and from home. It is important that parents check this book bag each evening for information or messages and that the reading record book is signed and kept up to date. A reading record book is used in Reception and Years 1, 2 and 3 for a record of pages read, and for exchange of information and messages between parents and teacher.

Middle and Senior Schools

All preps should be recorded neatly in the prep diary. Parents are asked to sign the diary every day in the Middle School and **every week in the Senior School**. You are signing it to show that the preps have been completed properly. Any concerns about prep can be recorded in the diary. The boy's prep schedule will be stuck in the diary. If your son misses a lesson when a prep is set, the form prep diary, which is left in the form room overnight, has a record of all of the preps given. The form prep diary is checked every week in the Middle school by the Head of the Middle School and in the Senior school the diaries are monitored by the Deputy Head, Learning and Teaching. As well as for the recording of preps the diaries serve as a

place where notes can be sent between Staff and parents and vice versa; important policies are set out, including the Language for Learning; sections for boys to set out their targets and any other important pieces of information are also provided.

What do I do if my son is spending an inordinate amount of time on a prep?

Prep is an important part of your son's education, and should be given due importance in your home, but it is not the aim of the staff for prep to become a huge burden. Sometimes parents may feel that enough is enough and will want to stop a child from working on a prep when the set time is exhausted. In the Junior School a note explaining what was achieved in the time set is of more use to staff the next day than an overtired and distraught child. In the Middle and Senior schools when this occurs you must initial the prep in the prep diary (not in the exercise book please) and by so doing you are indicating that your son has worked hard and spent a reasonable amount of time on the assignment.

When prep is completed

As your child goes through the school, the onus should shift from you deciding when a prep ought to be com-

pleted to him making this decision. The amount of time in which a prep has to be completed also changes. This is in line with trying to make your son actively involved with his work and making decisions about organising his work and activities. Certainly, as he enters Year 5, parental intervention should be minimal and your son should be increasingly autonomous.

In the Junior School

Boys in Year 2 and Year 3 are given a week to complete their written prep and learn their spellings and times tables, when appropriate.

In the Middle School

Most Preps are completed on the night that they are set and given in the next day. Exceptions to this are in Year 4, when a week is given for spellings, and for History and Geography in Year 5. If an evening activity makes it impossible to hand prep in on the next day, an extension can be sought from the subject teacher, but this should only happen very rarely.

In the Senior School

The boys' prep schedule on the whole allows them to have at least two evenings when a prep can be completed. Please be aware that in the Senior School boys can encounter difficulties by falling into one of two camps: those who want to do all of the preps on the day they are set, no matter how many there are, and those who leave everything to the deadline, even if this means giving themselves a mountain of work. The rule of thumb is that no more

than two preps should be completed on one night. When this is not the case the standard of the work is not usually acceptable.

How much prep is set?

Children work at different speeds and prep will take longer for some children than for others. Many children will spend extra time on the home-based tasks because they enjoy them and are particularly conscientious. As your son moves through the school more will be expected of him. The amount set has been reviewed this year and for the next academic year it is:

Junior School

Prep should not be allowed to last more than 20-30 minutes at any one sitting.

Reception:

- Phonic games as and when.
- Reading every day when the children are ready.

Year 1:

- Reading every day and spelling words to learn over a period of a week. Spellings start in the middle of the Autumn term.

Year 2:

- Spelling words for 5 minutes a day over a week.
- A piece of English of about 20 minutes, with one week to complete, relating to their spelling words.
- One piece of Maths over a week: times tables ongoing.
- Reading every day.

Year 3:

- Spelling words for 5 minutes a day over a week.
- One piece of English/Topic work over a week.
- One piece of Maths over a week, times tables on-going.
- Reading every day.
- A half-termly project is set in the Summer Term, replacing the written English prep.

Middle School

Average length of 30 minutes per subject (plus 20 minutes reading).

When a boy enters Year 4, prep is set for the first half of the autumn term by the class teacher. This will consist of nightly reading, spelling lists and times tables to be learnt for regular tests. For the second half of term and the rest of the year the above continues as well as:

Year 4:

- English
- Maths
- Science
- French
- History and Geography alternating half-termly, usually including research-based project

Year 5:

- English: A written prep will be set weekly. This is likely to be a comprehension, essay or book review. In addition boys will be asked occasionally to learn lists of words commonly misspelt by the form. Boys should spend 30 minutes on their work
- Maths
- Science
- French
- Latin: Starts at half term of Autumn term.
- History: Starts at half term of Autumn term.
- Geography: Starts at half term of Autumn term.

Senior School

Year 6: Average length of 30 minutes per subject (plus 20 minutes reading).

- English: A written prep will be set weekly. This is likely to be a comprehension, essay or book review. In addition boys will be asked occasionally to learn lists of words commonly misspelt by the form.
- Maths: 30 minutes

- Science: 30 minutes
- French: Written: 30 minutes alternate weeks and Learning: 15 minutes
- Latin: Written: 30 minutes and Learning: 20 minutes
- History: 30 minutes
- Geography: 40 minutes . If enquiry work is set it takes more time but it is spread over 2 weeks. Occasional research not requiring writing.
- Religious Studies: 120-180 minutes in total each term. Five assignments.

Year 7: Average increases to about 40 minutes increasing to an hour per subject for Year 8 (plus 20 minutes reading).

- English: A written prep will be set weekly. This is likely to be a comprehension, essay or book review. In addition boys will be asked occasionally to learn lists of words commonly misspelt by the form.
- Maths: 40 minutes
- Science: 40 minutes
- French: Written: 35 minutes and Learning: 15 minutes
- Latin: Written: 40m and Learning: 20 minutes
- History: One week research: 30 minutes . Next Week essay: 40 minutes
- Geography: 50 minutes . If enquiry work is set it takes more time but spread over 2 weeks.
- Religious Studies: 30 minutes and 10 minutes study

Year 8 CE: A maximum of an hour per subject (plus 20 minutes reading)

- English: A written prep will be set weekly. This is likely to be a comprehension, essay or book review. In addition boys will be asked occasionally to learn lists of words commonly misspelt by the form. 60 minutes
- Maths: 60 minutes , usually in the form of a past paper.
- Science: 60 minutes
- French: Written: 45 minutes and Learning: 15 minutes
- Latin: Written: 50 minutes and Learning: 25 minutes
- History: One week research: 30 minutes . Next Week essay: 40 minutes
- Geography: 60 minutes . Coursework may take longer, in September and October.
- Religious Studies: 40 minutes, 10 minutes study (occasional)

Year 8 Scholarship:

- English: A written prep will be set weekly. This is likely to be a comprehension, essay or book review. In addition boys will be asked occasionally to learn lists of words commonly misspelt by the form. 60 minutes
- Maths: 1 prep of 60 minutes, usually in the form of a past paper.

- Science: 60 minutes
- French: Written: 45 minutes and Learning: 15 minutes
- Latin: Written: 60 minutes and Learning: 25 minutes mins
- History: One week research: 60 minutes . Next Week essay: 30 minutes
- Geography: 60 minutes . Coursework may take longer , in September and October.
- Religious Studies: 40 minutes, 10 minutes revision (occasional).

Will prep always be set?

A teacher may decide that there is little value in setting a prep because it would merely be setting it for the sake of it. The member of staff is perfectly entitled not to set work in these circumstances, though it will be recorded in your son's diary that no prep was set. It would be highly unusual for this to happen two weeks in a row, though the staff do try to be aware of boys being involved in school activities that happen in the evening, such as a concert or a play that would mean there would be no time for a prep to be completed.

Unacceptable work

Work deemed unacceptable by the teacher will be completed again. This may have to be done in the boy's own time or under supervision at school. You will be informed when this occurs.

What if it all goes wrong?

Learning how to complete prep independently and with a minimum of fuss is part of your child's education. If it all starts to go wrong then your first port of call is your child's class/form teacher. In the Senior School, 'Supervised Prep' run by Dr Blakeman can be beneficial for those who are struggling for one reason or another.

Holiday Work

The school believes that the holidays are for rest and recuperation. Very little holiday work is set with the following exceptions:

Junior School

This takes the form, most often, of a holiday diary, which should include artwork, postcards, collections, etc. Such work is **entirely optional** and house points are awarded by the Head of the Junior School in recognition of effort made.

All boys are required to read a given number of books per holiday. Remedial work and or handwriting, is set only to specific individuals, in co-operation with parents who can ensure that it is done.

Senior School/Middle School

As a boy approaches his entrance examinations for his Senior

School it is likely that past papers will be used to aid the boys preparation

Use of the Internet

The Internet can be a valuable research tool. The staff will check any sites that they recommend for suitability. Unfortunately, it can be very tempting for a boy simply to download work and to submit it as his own for projects or book reviews. This is never acceptable.

