

**THE HALL SCHOOL**  
**Prep Policy**

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Homework is a form of formative assessment, along with draft work, ungraded quizzes and other exercises used with the intent of guiding and instructing the student to promote higher-level cognitive connections.

Placing little or no emphasis on grades on those types of exercises and activities allows for focus on the mastery goal, and keeps feedback constructive.’

*Cauley, K., McMillan, J. (2009)*

## **RATIONALE**

Prep is an important part of the learning journey at The Hall.

Reasons for setting prep. It:

- encourages boys to extend their learning through further research and questioning
- teaches boys about effective time management.
- teaches boys about how to set priorities.
- helps teachers determine how well the lessons are being understood by their students.
- teaches boys how to problem solve independently.
- Promotes learning dialogue between parents and children at home.
- gives boys another opportunity to review the class material.
- gives parents a chance to see what is being learned in school.
- teaches boys how to take responsibility for their part in the educational process.
- teaches boys how to work independently.
- promotes the importance of planning, staying organised and taking action.

So with this in mind, we therefore do not believe that prep should be set for the sake of it. With an understanding of the purpose prep plays in the learning journey of boys, it is agreed that teachers will only set prep when they feel it has a specific purpose and it can be integrated into the classroom.

Across all schools there is also an understanding that the virtual learning platform should be used as much as possible to set prep, give instructions and provide further details to help boys when at home. As teachers become more familiar with this platform, it is likely that more prep will be set by teachers and handed in by the boys using this system.

## **JUNIOR SCHOOL POLICY**

Prep should not be allowed to last more than 20-30 minutes at 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. Spelling start in the middle of the Autumn Term.

Year 2

- Spelling words for 5 minutes a day over a week.

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- 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, plus times tables on-going.

## Year 3

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

## MIDDLE SCHOOL POLICY

The Head of the Middle School devises the schedule for preps and subject teachers must keep to it. Preps are to be handed in the next day, unless otherwise stated by the teacher in charge. If the subject teacher wants to make a different arrangement, he must inform the form tutor. If a subject teacher forgets to set a prep he should not set it at a different time but wait for the next week.

While we believe that prep is an important part of the learning journey of our boys, we do not believe in setting it for the sake of it. Prep should be planned, considered and useful to the boys learning. This is especially true after exams are over in the summer term when it is important there is no relaxation in the setting and marking of work. Inevitably if the system is to work effectively all work set must be marked thoroughly and promptly. Wherever possible work should be marked by the lesson after it was handed in or certainly within a week of collection.

## SENIOR SCHOOL POLICY

It is the responsibility of every subject teacher to ensure that prep is set on a regular basis. At the beginning of the academic year the Deputy Head – Learning & Teaching puts up a table in the Senior School staff room where subject staff fill in when they wish to set prep and when they wish to collect it in. When the table has been completed for each form, the form tutor then collates the information. If the prep burden is too great or too light for various times of the week, the form tutor will approach subject teachers to ask for changes to be made. Boys should not be attempting more than two preps per night.

When a suitable balance has been worked out, the form tutor produces a prep timetable for his/her form. A copy of this is stuck in each boy's prep diary and the form tutor keeps a copy for themselves, possibly displaying it in the form room.

## Quantity and Length

As a general rule the quantity of prep set should be as follows:

- Year 4: English, Maths and Spellings until half term. Then French and the occasional 'enrichment' activity for the Humanity subjects is introduced. Each prep should be set for a maximum of 20 minutes. In addition boys should read for 30 minutes per night.
- Year 5: At least one written prep per day. Some subjects, such as the Humanities, will be set after half term. Average length 30 minutes.
- Year 6: In order to accommodate the Pre Tests and to reduce the stress and workload of boys in Year 6, in the first half of term (Sept-Nov) only Maths and English prep will be set on a weekly basis. Other subjects may set the occasional prep, there is scope for ongoing or reading/researched based prep which fits in nicely with the Year process. From half term, all other subjects will set prep and the normal prep timetable will commence, e.g. one written/research prep a week in each of the

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examinable subjects plus learning of spellings, French and Latin vocabulary. Average length - 40 minutes.

- Year 7 & 8: One written/research prep a week in each of the examinable subjects plus learning of spellings, French and Latin vocabulary. Length will increase to 45-60 mins and longer if set over a few weeks.
- Extended projects are encouraged and may be set over a few weeks within a planned scheme of work. When this is done, staff should ensure that they are 'checking in' to review the progress. Preps should be engaging and use a variety of resources, such as ICT.

At all levels in the school, projects and extended pieces of work will be set in lieu of preps over a longer time span.

The length of prep is reckoned to be the average maximum time taken by the 'average' boy. Some will therefore require less time to complete the assignment, others more. Boys are therefore encouraged to spend no more than an hour, sometimes 30 minutes lower down the school, to complete a piece of prep. Boys are discouraged from spending hours completing prep and are asked to 'rule-off' work that has been completed within the advised time. In the Senior School, the majority of preps will be set with at least 24-hours notice of the need to hand them in.

## **Holiday Prep**

Teachers are discouraged from setting prep during the holidays, particularly during shorter holidays such as half term, to ensure that the boys are getting the break they need. Boys may be encouraged to review work, or in the case of year 8 when they have exams, be asked to complete some revision but this should always be optional. As a school we understand and appreciate the need for all boys to have the time to relax and reflect upon their learning without the stress of prep. At times there may be individual cases that require boys having some prep in order to catch up but this is not an expectation.

## **Prep Diaries**

Boys in Years 4-8 are issued with prep diaries. Staff are asked to insist that they bring them to every lesson. Boys should record every prep set, (including deadline), in their diaries. Each form also has a form prep diary; this is provided so that, in the Years 4 & 5, each teacher, and for the rest a nominated boy in the form, can note down the prep to provide a central record of preps set.

Staff must ensure they leave enough time at the end of a lesson to set prep. Some boys find it very difficult to write prep down from the board. It may be a good idea to photocopy prep details to be handed out and stuck into books for boys who struggle with their handwriting or copying things down with speed.

Form teachers should check the prep diaries at least once a week. The parents should also sign them every week. Parents should be encouraged to make comments in the space provided in the diary and the boys should show these to the relevant staff. This is an easy way for form tutors to become aware of problems about prep. Form tutors can award credits to those boys who have kept exemplary prep diaries during the week.

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Occasionally, the Deputy Head, Learning and Teaching or Head of the Middle School in the MS, will check the form diary to ensure that prep is being set fairly across the years. It is also the responsibility of the form tutor to be aware of what prep is being set.

## **Prep Sessions (Supervised Prep)**

The sessions run on Monday - Thursday from 4pm to 5pm and the system is administered by Head of After School Clubs (ASCs). They take place in the supervising staff's classroom and are for Senior School boys and possibly some Year 5 if identified as a need by the form teacher. School laptops may be provided. If a boy struggles to complete his prep at home, or has a habit of bringing it in late or incomplete, in dialogue with his parents, he may be requested to attend at least one session a week.

## **Open homework**

Once a year students in Years, 4, 5 and 7 take part in open homework. Boys in Year 6 and 8 are involved in pre tests or mock exams so do not take part. Open homework is about placing the regular prep schedule to one side for one week. Boys are encouraged to ask their own questions, to which they seek their own answers, centred on the theme 'CREATIVITY'. They should then produce something that represents this. This is to be their own piece of work, but they can ask adults for ideas. It might be a poster, poem, story, painting, slide show, sculpture, movie, game...the options are endless! Each year a new topic is set. The outcome is a whole range of different ideas and it provides boys the opportunity to take risks, work independently and share their work. Marks are not be given, but each boy receives feedback from their form teacher or other staff. Open Homework always produces fascinating thinking and allows us to see another side of both their interests & progress.

## **At home**

Parents and carers are asked to:

- Support the School in explaining to pupils that homework is valued and supports learning
- Check Reading records and prep diaries regularly
- Support their child with regard to homework, without 'taking over'
- Follow the guidance given by school about time spent on the completion of homework so that it remains a valuable and productive activity
- Provide a suitable environment for a child to complete homework
- Support the School by expecting homework to be completed and handed in at the correct time
- Monitor presentation
- Express any concern about any aspect of homework to the relevant member of staff