



**Cokethorpe**  

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**SCHOOL**

# Academic Policy

September 2025

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Next review: September 2026

## **Academic Policy**

This Academic Policy should be read in conjunction with the Curriculum Policy and outlines our commitment to fostering high standards of learning, progress, and personal growth. It sets out our approach to key academic practices (homework, assessment and marking, reporting, and stretch and challenge) ensuring they are purposeful, consistent, and aligned with our values.

We believe that academic success is built on clear expectations, meaningful feedback, and opportunities for all pupils to be challenged and supported. Homework is designed to reinforce and extend learning beyond the classroom. Assessment and marking are used not only to measure progress but to inform teaching and motivate learners. Reporting provides transparent communication between school and home, celebrating achievement and identifying next steps.

Opportunities for stretch and challenge are embedded across all subjects to ensure every pupil is encouraged to think deeply, question confidently, and strive for excellence. However, this policy also outlines how the Scholarship and Awards programme provides enrichment for those with particular strengths in key areas.

Together, these elements form a coherent framework that supports our vision of an ambitious, inclusive, and intellectually stimulating learning environment.

## **HOMEWORK POLICY**

### **PURPOSE**

We want our pupils to live busy, full lives. We want them to thrive academically, but also to appreciate the value of the multitude of opportunities available to them beyond the School environment. We want them to grow up as balanced, self-aware young people, able to engage positively with the world around them.

Homework must serve to enable this vision, not to impede it.

With this in mind, homework at Cokethorpe School is designed to be:

- Useful and relevant, clearly supporting the learning process.
- Time-sensitive and contained, recognising the value of specific, definite tasks.
- Progressive; designed to encourage increased independence as pupils progress through their School careers.

### **Our approach**

- I. As a general principle, the School expects all children to read for at least 20 minutes a day. This is an integral part of our homework policy because we recognise the crucial link between reading and academic success.
- II. Subject-specific homework will be set as an Assignment on Teams, and deadlines will be made visible on pupil calendars. A minimum 4-day deadline will be set, enabling pupils the opportunity to exercise good judgement and responsibility in allocating time to enable tasks to be completed properly.
- III. Homework should aim to integrate the principles of spaced learning and retrieval practice.
- IV. At the start of each academic year, pupils will receive dedicated guidance on how to manage time and prioritise tasks.
- V. A graduated approach will be applied so that homework demands increase as children progress through the School.

## Setting high quality homework

The guiding principle for all homework set is that quality is more important than quantity. Homework tasks should never be created as after-thoughts and must never be used to 'finish off' tasks not completed in class unless deliberately designed to do so.

Features of effective homework include:

- I. Clarity of purpose: pupils engage more effectively with tasks when they have a clear understanding of how the task relates to their learning.
- II. Clarity of expectation: when setting tasks, it is important that pupils are clear what they must do to be successful.
- III. Achievable challenge: homework that is too challenging (or not challenging enough) is demotivating. Consideration must be given to the way in which all pupils can engage with the task set.
- IV. Activities that will support and enhance classroom learning: this might include retrieval practice to embed deeper learning, deliberate practice to consolidate discipline-specific learning or reading to prepare for a particular class-based discussion.
- V. Quality feedback: pupils need to have feedback on the extent to which their efforts have, or have not, met the requirements of the task set.

## HOMEWORK EXPECTATIONS

Prep School: All pupils are expected to read daily, and learn spellings each week. Homework in English and Maths is set weekly with the expectation that it will be returned the following week.

**First Form:** All pupils are expected to read for at least 20 minutes a day. Alongside this, pupils will have compulsory homework set in Maths and English (once a week), MFL, Latin and Science (once a fortnight). In the Lent Term, History, Geography and Art homework will be added (in general, once a fortnight). Homework will be set when appropriate, not according to a specific timetable, and, with the exception of Mathematics, each piece should last no more than half an hour.

From the start of the Lent term a range of 'optional' homework tasks will be available for pupils to complete in Design Technology, Drama, Computer Science and Music. There is no expectation that pupils will complete all these tasks, but they are encouraged to exercise judgement, responsibility and ambition in making this decision.

**Second Form:** All pupils are expected to read for at least 20 minutes a day. Alongside this, pupils will have compulsory homework set in Maths and English (once a week), and MFL, Science, History, Geography, Art, and Latin (once a fortnight). Homework will be set when appropriate, not according to a specific timetable, and, with the exception of Mathematics, each piece should last no more than half an hour.

Throughout the year, a range of 'optional' homework tasks will be available for pupils to complete in Design Technology, Drama, Computer Science and Music. There is no expectation that pupils will complete all these tasks, but they are encouraged to exercise judgement, responsibility and ambition in making this decision.

**Third Form:** All pupils are expected to read for at least 20 minutes a day. Alongside this, pupils will have compulsory homework set in Maths and English (once a week), and MFL, Biology,

Chemistry, Physics, History and Geography (once a fortnight). Homework will be set when appropriate, not according to a specific timetable, and, with the exception of Mathematics, each piece should last no more than half an hour.

Throughout the year, pupils will also be expected to complete homework in their 'optional' subjects, gradually increasing the amount of homework they have in preparation for GCSE study.

**Fourth and Fifth Form:** All pupils are expected to read for at least 20 minutes a day. Alongside this, pupils will have compulsory homework set in Maths and English, the Sciences and their 'optional' subjects (once a week, if appropriate). The time allocated for these tasks will vary depending upon their nature.

**Sixth Form:** Independent learning is an integral part of Sixth Form life and the expectation is that students complete 10 hours per subject per fortnight in addition to their directed study. Some of this time will be spent completing homework set by the class teacher, but departments should aim to explicitly teach students how they might use their time productively.

Sixth Form students should be encouraged to recognise the difference between 'Homework' and 'Study'. The former relates to tasks that are explicitly set by their teacher, whilst the latter relates to more general activity that could be said to enrich and extend learning and understanding. Students should not limit themselves to the completion of set tasks only.

Where possible, deadlines for large pieces of work (EPQs, NEAs etc.) should be shared on the 'Sixth Form Academic Calendar', enabling expectations to be managed.

### **Expectations of pupils**

Part of the purpose of homework is to begin the process of learning how to manage time effectively. This will be easier for some than others, and the job of Form Teacher or Tutor is to support those who find it most challenging. The general expectation is that pupils will complete homework to the best of their ability within the time frame allocated. Where pupils travel significant distances to attend School, or where they have significant extra-curricular activities that take place in the evenings, they are encouraged to make use of Study as an option through the AOB or Prep School Activities programmes.

Homework offers an excellent opportunity for pupils to showcase the School's leadership traits:

- **Ambition:** Completing tasks to the best of their ability, taking on 'optional' tasks as and when possible.
- **Judgement:** Deciding upon priorities and planning in order to meet deadlines.
- **Integrity:** Doing what is right for their development as a learners.
- **Responsibility:** Completing tasks on time and in the appropriate way.
- **Courage:** Having a go at tasks independently, deciding upon when support might be needed.

## ASSESSMENT AND FEEDBACK POLICY

At Cokethorpe, our policy is to assess our pupils regularly, consistently, objectively and in a manner that is best suited to assist their development as pupils and individuals. The specific mechanisms employed may change depending on circumstances but the intent – to help our pupils make full use of their potential – remains consistent.

Assessment is part of the fabric of the School, occurring in the course of lessons and in marking. The aim is a system in which:

- Every pupil knows how they are doing, understands what they need to do to make progress and how to use the support which is available
- Every teacher is equipped to make well-founded judgements about pupils' attainment, understands the concepts and principles of progression and knows how to use their assessment judgements to plan for the future
- The School has in place structured systems for making regular, useful, manageable and accurate assessments of pupils and for tracking their progress
- Every parent knows how their child is doing, what they need to do to improve and how they can support the child and teachers

### Core Principles

- i) Progress over time
  - Assessment is used to track and support long-term learning, not just performance in isolated tasks.
  - Teachers use a range of formative and summative assessments to identify gaps, inform planning, and celebrate progress.
  - There is no expectation that every piece of work should be marked.
- ii) Embedded retrieval practice and spaced Learning
  - Lessons must include regular opportunities for retrieval practice to strengthen memory and deepen understanding.
  - Spaced learning strategies are used to revisit key concepts over time, supporting durable learning.
- iii) Verbal feedback
  - Timely, specific verbal feedback is a key part of classroom practice.
  - Teachers use questioning and live marking to provide immediate guidance and address misconceptions.
- iv) Peer and self-assessment
  - Pupils are taught how to assess their own and others' work against clear success criteria.
- v) Success Criteria and Rigour
  - Assessed tasks are underpinned by clear, rigorous success criteria aligned with curriculum objectives.
  - Pupils are explicitly taught how to use these criteria to improve their work.
- vi) Awareness of SEND
  - Assessment and feedback should be adapted to meet the needs of students with SEND.
  - Teachers use appropriate scaffolding, alternative formats, and personalised feedback to ensure equity and access.

- vii) Marking and Written Feedback
  - Written feedback is purposeful, concise, and focused on progress.
  - Teachers are encouraged to avoid over-marking and instead prioritise feedback that leads to action and improvement.
- viii) Monitoring and Consistency
  - Departments regularly review assessment practices to ensure consistency and impact.
  - Leaders monitor the quality of feedback and its effect on student progress through work scrutiny and pupil voice.

At GCSE and A Level, work will be assessed against the relevant examination scale, with an expectation that pupils should know the level at which they are currently working and know how to improve. In the Lower School, a selection of work should generally be assessed on a bi-weekly basis (depending upon the number of lessons taught in this period).

At GCSE and A Level there are seven summative assessment points across the two-year programme at which data will be collected. Two of these assessment points will be internal examinations.

In the Lower School, departments are expected to develop assessments in line with the school grading system four times a year. Assessments should be used to inform grades that are awarded in academic reports.

Progress is monitored by a combination of professional judgement and baseline projections.

- Prep School

In house benchmarks established by the Head of Prep School

- Lower School

All pupils are assessed using GL Assessments (CAT4) baseline testing. This provides an overview of the pupil's ability across four domains, and is used (alongside professional judgement) to inform expectations. Departments apply their own in-house assessment rubric.

- Fourth and Fifth Form

CAT4 Assessments are used to form a benchmark and projected grades. hereafter, the benchmarks for assessment are nationally recognised GCSE (or equivalent) standards

- Sixth Form

CAT4 Assessments, combined with GCSE performance are used to form a benchmark and projected grades. Hereafter, the benchmarks for assessment are nationally recognised GCE (or equivalent) standards.

One important facet of assessment is the setting of targets to help pupils and students improve their Attitude to Learning. These are discussed and reviewed at Progress Review Evenings (PREs) and Parents' Evenings (in the Prep School), which form the cornerstone of dialogue between school and home.

## **REPORTING POLICY**

### **Teacher Reporting**

Attitude to Learning is the essential component in ensuring that young people go on to become independent, curious and lifelong learners, so it is at the heart of Cokethorpe's reporting system from Prep School to Upper Sixth.

### **Prep School**

Parents receive a Form Teacher report with targets at half term in Michaelmas and Lent and a full written report in the Summer Term, as well as assessment results cards each term. In addition, formal Parent's Evenings take place in the Michaelmas and Lent terms, and Form Teacher surgeries are offered each week, should a feedback meeting be required in the interim.

### **First, Second and Third Form**

Parents receive two full written reports and one grade card over the course of each academic year. These reports focus on pupils' attitude to learning alongside a judgement regarding their attainment. In line with the School's emphasis on developing leadership characteristics, teachers report on a pupil's Ambition for Learning and their Responsibility for Learning. These aspects of learning are measured in each subject on a four point scale – Exceptional engagement, Positive engagement, Limited engagement or Poor engagement. In addition, Attainment Descriptors are supplied in each subject to reflect departmental assessment results. In addition to written reports, at least one Progress Review Evening is scheduled for each year group as an opportunity for parents and pupils to meet with the teacher to identify targets for future development.

### **GCSE & Sixth Form**

At GCSE and Sixth Form level, attainment is measured in the form of a 'Currently Working At' grade, based on recent assessment of knowledge and understanding of the skills and content covered.

### **Tutor Reporting**

Tutor reports accompany teacher reports, as the tutor's role is to spot patterns and make connections between various subjects and previous reporting periods. Tutors report on a pupil's personal development, commenting on engagement with School life.

## **SCHOLARSHIP AND AWARD POLICY**

The aim of the Scholarship and Award Programme is to recognise excellence in the fields of Academics (recognised with Academic Scholarship) and Art, Design Technology, Drama, Music and Sport (recognised through respective Awards). Such recognition carries privileges and responsibilities, enjoying considerable prestige within the school.

### **Able and Talented Pupils in the Prep School**

The Prep School approach to teaching and learning allows for all pupils to be stretched, challenged and supported as appropriate, and extension programmes are established for individuals in relevant curriculum areas. This may include working with other pupils who enjoy the same talents through lessons with other classes or enrichment groups, or activities through the Prep School Activities Scheme.

### **Scholars**

The Heads of Scholars are directly responsible for overseeing the assessment process and programme for Academic Scholars. As the programme aims to recognise for top ability in each respective area, it is policy that Academic Scholarships are to number no more than 10% of any given year group.

Academic Scholars are selected based on their performance in academic assessments over the course of the preceding academic year. Exceptions can be made based on performance in Entrance Assessments, School references and interviews. There are no Academic Scholars in the First Form; academic enrichment at that stage is promoted through departments.

In the Sixth Form, Scholars are identified according to GCSE performance, and are allocated a subject mentor who works with them to deepen their interest and enthusiasm in their chosen area of study.

Academic Scholars receive a navy and gold tie.

### **Awards**

The Director of Co-Curricular is responsible for coordinating school-wide assessment and communicating policy with the Heads of Art, Design and Technology, Drama, Music and Sport (Award Managers). To as large an extent as possible, Award Managers are autonomous in selecting the criteria needed for respective Awards and those candidates judged to be deserving of Awards.

At the discretion of the Headmaster, certain financial incentives can be put in place with specific relation to the Award in question (eg reduced fees in music lessons).

Formal assessment for Awards happens at three entry points: First Form, Third Form, and Lower Sixth Form. Details as follows:

- **First Form Award Assessment:** Occurs in the third half term of the First Form (i.e. January) Candidates are nominated by respective Heads of Department and participate in assessments administered by each HoD.

- **Third Form Award Assessment:** Occurs in March of the Second Form for external candidates. Award candidates are nominated by respective HoDs who conduct assessments administered by the HoD. External candidates are nominated by their current school.
- **Sixth Form Awards:** Awards (Art, Design and Technology, Drama, Music and Sport) are offered to prospective Sixth Form candidates as part of the 16+ Scholarships and Awards Assessment week in the Michaelmas Term of Fifth Form.
- **Sixth Form Leadership Grants:** In the Lent Term of Lower Sixth students may apply for a Sixth Form Leadership Grant. Successful applicants retain the title of Leadership Grant Holder until they leave School.

It is possible for a pupil or student who has not been previously awarded during these formal assessment periods to gain a Scholarship or Award in other years besides First Form, Third Form, and Lower Sixth. Details for Scholarship review are as follows:

All Awards are reviewed annually with the Director of Co-Curricular and Award Managers in June. Award Managers are to produce evidence as to why a particular or potential Award Holder is to gain or lose an award. These recommendations are made to the Headmaster. Any change in Award Status for a particular student is to be communicated before the end of the year through a letter home. New Award Holders are recognised in Headmaster's Assembly the following September.

Award Holders in Art, Drama, Music and Sport receive a brass ocellus badge which is to be worn on their blazers.

All-Round Scholarships are not explicitly recognised, but it is possible for a pupil or student to have a Scholarship and Award, or multiple Awards, simultaneously.

Scholars and Award Holders are aware at the time of receiving the Scholarship or Award that keeping them is conditional on good performance. However, taking a Scholarship or Award from a pupil or student should be viewed as a measure of last resort.