

Year 7 – IT Systems and Homework

Dear Year 7 Parents/ Guardians,

I hope that your child's first couple of weeks at Gillotts School have been enjoyable ones despite the challenges posed by the Coronavirus pandemic. We are very pleased with the start that Year 7 have made to the new school year.

I am writing to provide you with information about two key elements which support the learning process: our IT systems and homework.

I. IT Systems

BYOD

As you will know from the information you received from us before your child joined the school, we require all students to bring a mobile device into school to support teaching and learning. This would, in normal circumstances, bring significant additional opportunities because students can make use of their device to connect to the internet as and when they need to:

- Online quizzes for immediate feedback on learning
- Accessing shared lesson and homework resources in Google Classroom
- Photographing/videoing practical work
- Research
- Accessing specific learning resources, e.g. Maths Watch and Vocab Express
- Accessing GCSE past papers and mark schemes

However, the changes which we have had to make to how the school is organised and how children learn as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic has meant that mobile devices are even more important than usual. Almost all assessed work will be completed and submitted electronically. This work will then be marked online by teachers and returned to the students on their devices.

It is therefore essential that your child has a fully charged mobile device in school every day and has access to a fixed computer or mobile device at home. Bearing in mind that the students will be completing work on this device we are strongly recommending that this device has a larger screen than a mobile device – e.g. a Chromebook, laptop or iPad.

We have spent the last few days making sure that all Year 7 students are connected to the school wifi system. This is a filtered system which means that students cannot access inappropriate website. Our BYOD Code of Conduct (attached) requires students to use the wifi when in school. If your child is still having problems getting connected, they can contact our IT Services for support by following the instructions on the IT summary document which is also attached to this e-mail. This summary also outlines the key Google applications which our students use and provides links to introductory videos on each of these.

Google Classroom

Google Classroom is a very important application which allows teachers to set work and share resources with the students in their class. It also allows students to complete the work online and submit it to their teachers for marking and feedback.

While we have had a few teething troubles getting the new Year 7 classes set up on this system, we are nearly there. Although students will be required to write the details of homework set in their Student Planners, the homework itself will be set on Google Classroom. It is therefore essential that your child understands how to use it. If s/he is unsure, please watch through the instruction video with them. If they still need help, they should discuss this with their form tutor.

2. Homework

We believe that homework is a very important part of the learning process. This is, in part, to support the teaching and learning which takes place in school. It also helps our students develop the independent learning skills that will support them in their post-16 studies and adult life.

While I am sure that all Year 7 students will have had some homework set at their primary schools, the number of different subjects and the amount of homework is likely to be much greater now they have moved to secondary school.

Homework is set according to a homework timetable and is recorded in the Student Planner. The details which your child should record include:

- description of the task
- date the task was set
- date when it is due
- initials of the teacher who has set the homework

The homework itself and any resources required to complete it will be posted by your child's teacher on Google Classroom. The students will receive a notification of this in their e-mail in box and will also be able to see it in the class folders in Google Classroom. It is important that your child follows the instructions given by their teacher.

It is an absolute requirement that homework is completed and submitted on the deadline set. The expectation is that students spend around one hour per night on homework in Year 7.

The table below shows the number of times homework should be set in each subject per fortnight and the approximate time it should take:

Subject	Frequency	Time (Approximate)
English	Weekly	45 mins per week
Maths	2 x Weekly	45 mins per week
Science	Weekly	45 mins per week
Art	Fortnightly	30 mins per fortnight
Carousel (Computing, Design Technology Drama, Food)	Weekly	30 mins per week
French	Weekly	45 mins per week
Humanities (Geography, History, RS)	Fortnightly	30 mins per fortnight
Music	Fortnightly	30 mins per fortnight

The school homework timetable can be found on our school website by clicking on the link below:

<http://gillotts.oxon.sch.uk/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/overview>

Your child should know which class they are in for each subject as this is recorded on the front of their exercise books and on the printed copy of their timetable which has been stuck in their planner. If they are still unsure, please contact your child's tutor who will be able to help.

I would like to encourage you to discuss with your child how well they feel they are managing this aspect of the transition from primary school. It is also very important that parents and guardians look in their child's Student Planner to check what homework is being set and that they are managing to complete it by the deadline date. Please can you sign your child's planner weekly.

We have also updated the Year 7 Curriculum Guide that can be downloaded from the school website by following the link below:

<http://gillotts.oxon.sch.uk/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/years7-9>

This document provides details of the topics that your child will be studying in each subject over the coming year and what you can do as a parent to support your child.

In the meantime, if you have any concerns about your child's ability to manage their homework, please contact your child's form tutor.

Yours faithfully,

Dr Newbold
Deputy Head