

Hartismere School

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OSN/GC

Dear parents and carers

YEAR 7, 8 & 9 SCIENCE HOMEWORK

We are writing to let you know about an important update to the way science homework will be assigned and used to inform teaching.

As a department we will continue to innovate and utilise the latest developments in technology. We have been using online algorithm based homework for KS4 students for over 7 years and it has been a great success, so we wish to extend it to KS3 rather than the traditional paper-based homework booklets. The key benefit is that students receive personalised meaningful homework, with instant feedback, helping them improve and build confidence in the subject.

From this term, **Sparx Science** will be the central part of our homework policy. Sparx will provide students with regular, personalised homework that will strengthen their knowledge, improve recall of key scientific ideas and give them valuable practice applying what they have learned in lessons. Additional homework may also be set to help pupils revise for tests and act on feedback given, and all will be placed on the My Homework app on the school website.

Our homework expectations

Students will be set regular Sparx Science homework by their science teachers. Homework will have a clearly stated deadline and students are expected to complete **100% of the compulsory questions** by this deadline.

- Homework set on Tuesday
- Homework due on Monday
- Time limit: 30mins per week
- Questions set: max of 6 question sets per week

Completion of Sparx Science homework will be monitored by science teachers. Key weaknesses will be addressed anonymously in lessons and data will be used to inform planning. Where homework is not completed by the deadline, the school's normal procedures for incomplete homework will apply.



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How parents and carers can help

We would greatly appreciate your support in establishing a regular homework routine at home. Students who do not have access to a suitable electronic device can use school computers in the Library at lunchtimes or after school at homework club on a Tuesday.

We will set them six question sets. These consist of a variety of questions that will require them to work like a scientist. They will need rough paper, a calculator and ruler whilst doing the work.

If possible set aside 10 minutes for each subject spread throughout the week (on the day of their science lesson?) rather than doing the full 30 minutes on Sunday night.

You do not need to teach your child science or provide them with answers. The program will adapt to wrong answers and provide support by simplifying the question. In fact, allowing them to work through difficulties themselves is an important part of the learning process.

Why are we using Sparx Science?

After many successful years using a competing platform we have conducted a review of available platforms and found Sparx to have the following benefits.

- The programme provides immediate feedback
- It adapts questions to help students practise material at an appropriate level.
- It revisits previous learning, helping students to retain important knowledge over time.
- It responds to feedback received from students asking us to set homework that 'actually looks like exam questions'. The questions in Sparx include graphs, diagrams and data tables.
- It maintains vital algorithm based recall quizzing.
- It provides teachers with rich data for adapting lessons based on pupils homework.
- It provides parents with weekly emails to update you on completion of online homework (this is one email per week covering science and maths)

We recognise that the introduction of a new system can take a little time to become familiar with. We will use some lesson time over the next week to support students in school so that they understand how to access Sparx Science, complete their homework and seek help if they encounter any difficulties.

We believe that consistent use of Sparx Science will make a significant contribution to students' progress in Science and help them develop the knowledge and confidence needed for future assessments.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours faithfully

Mr O Snell (KS3 Co-ordinator for science)