



CHRIST CHURCH

Church of England Secondary Academy

Prep Policy

Our mission statement

Through valuing every individual, as made in God's image, we will **learn, flourish, and celebrate truth.**

Purpose of this policy

The Prep Policy is designed to ensure consistency across the school in terms of Prep setting and marking. This policy aims to ensure that students are given the opportunity to develop specific skills, knowledge and understanding outside the classroom, without overburdening students or staff with Prep and marking respectively.

Date of last review:	September 2021	Author:	Deputy Headteacher
Date of next review:	September 2022	Owner:	Deputy Headteacher
Type of policy:	<input type="checkbox"/> Trust-wide <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Contextual to school	Approval:	Headteacher
School:	Christ Church, Church of England Secondary Academy	Key Contact Name:	Rachel Hursey
Key Contact Email:	r.hursey@christchurchsecondary.org.uk	Key Contact Phone:	TBC

Contents

Our mission statement.....	1
Purpose of this policy	1
1. Introduction	2
2. Why is Prep important?	2
Creating sustainable study habits	3
3. Prep tasks.....	4
a. Reading:	4
b. Retrieval:	4
c. Preparing for overlearning	5
4. Frequency.....	5
5. Prep expectations	6
6. Prep Feedback	6
7. Prep in practice.....	7
8. Related policies, guidance, and statute.....	7

1. Introduction

Learning at home is an essential part of good education. Prep is work done outside of the timetabled curriculum. Regular Prep is important, since it serves as an intellectual discipline, establishes good study habits, eases time constraints on the amount of curricular material that can be covered in class, and supplements and reinforces work done in school. Prep is carefully planned and integrated into subject areas curriculum plans. In addition, it fosters student initiative, independence, and responsibility, and brings home and school closer together. It helps students to become confident and independent in their learning, which will help throughout their time at school, and in adult life.

2. Why is Prep important?

If a student completes an hour's additional learning per school night for five years, it is the equivalent of an extra school year.

In addition:

- It can help students to make more rapid progress in learning.
- It can provide students with the opportunity to:
 - practise further what has been learnt in class.
 - apply what they have learnt in new contexts or situations.
 - Prepare them for future learning.
 - integrate skills with knowledge and concepts.
- It can allow students to develop the practice of independent learning. This way of working is vital at the later stages of secondary education and after.
- Work outside lesson time can provide the quiet and private conditions needed for work of all kinds.

- It gives the most enthusiastic students the opportunity to apply their passion and gain a deeper insight into the subject.
- It can allow students to use materials and other sources of information that are not always available in the classroom such as the internet, TV documentaries, and news reports.
- It can involve parents and others in students' work for their mutual benefit.
- It can give opportunities for long term research, enquiries and other work.
- It can form an important part of students notes – in preparation for the next lesson.
- It gives students valuable experience of working to deadlines.

Creating sustainable study habits

All the teaching methods, advice and guidance that we offer parents/carers is based on research and on strategies that have been proven to work. We believe that there is a positive correlation between hard work, excellent effort and success. Good study habits, how and when to study, are a key aspect of this and have proven to have a significant impact on the mental wellbeing of students, as well as on their academic success.

Clear routines, high expectations and hard work have a positive impact on students. It helps individuals work harder, focus and feel better and more confident with their learning.

How can I help and support my son/daughter at home to develop good work habits?

- Prep should take priority over any other activities. Make sure they have a quiet, undisturbed free place to complete work at home.
- Mobile phones are a distraction and are proven to reduce concentration by 20% when completing a task. Make sure your son/daughter puts their mobile in another room when they are working.
- Believe your son/daughter can achieve the highest grades and tell them so every day.
- Support 30 minutes independent reading or listen to your son/daughter read for 30 minutes aiming for at least 4 times a week. Show an interest in what they are reading and ask them questions about the book.
- Ensure they get enough sleep: have a cut off point for electronic devices and encourage them to read when in bed rather than using their phone or watching television for example.
- Buy your son/daughter an alarm clock so that they do not need a phone in their room.
- Make sure they are eating a balanced diet and drinking plenty of water.
- Talk to them about the need to be organised and help them to prepare their school bag the night before explain the connection between anxiety and being disorganised.
- Remind them that re-reading notes and highlighting notes are not effective ways to study. This is why we do not set them as Prep tasks.
- Take an interest in what they are learning. Ask them to show you their Prep Knowledge Folder and their student planner. Ask them questions using the knowledge organiser.

3. Prep tasks

a. Reading:

Reading underpins everything that our students do in school. We believe that our students are entitled to become competent, resilient and fluent readers by: equipping them with a range of skills and strategies; promoting reading of challenging texts; and developing an appreciation of a wealth of literature to build upon their cultural capital. Evidence suggests that children who read every day not only perform better in tests than those who don't, but also develop a broader vocabulary, increased general knowledge and a better understanding of other cultures. A recent Department for Education study showed that there "is a difference in reading performance equivalent to just over a year's schooling between young people who never read for enjoyment and those who read for up to 30 minutes per day".

At CCSA we recognise the importance of reading and expect that every student should be reading at least four times a week (this may include weekends) for a minimum of 30 minutes.

b. Retrieval:

Retrieval practice, also known as the testing effect or quizzing, is the process of getting students to retrieve the information that they have learnt. Despite being called testing, retrieval practice is not a test and the focus should always be on a student thinking hard and trying to retrieve the information as this is what strengthens the memory. At CCSA, we use quizzing to support students in retrieving key knowledge.

Retrieval of knowledge is proven by research to have a significant impact on long term memory retention. Retrieval Prep is designed to enable the students to develop the skills needed to be effective learners. It is a simple yet effective memory strategy that instructs students how to chunk, memorise and recall key elements of learning. It is essential that students master this skill as the new GCSE specifications requires an even stronger command of subject knowledge. Retrieval practice enables students to master information at home by ensuring that it is memorised over a longer period of time. It will hugely reduce the pressure of exams as the learning is spread over a number of years and it is a method commonly used by university students.

There are lots of different ways to learn curriculum knowledge through retrieval strategies. For example:

Students could:

- i. *Make flash cards* based on the knowledge organiser. For flash cards to work they need to be simple and straightforward. For example, on one side the English word and the other the German word or on one side, the question 'Who became king after the death of Henry VII?' and on the other side the answer 'His son King Edward VI'. Students can use the flash cards to help them self-quiz or ask someone else to quiz them.
- ii. *Draw a mind map*. Write down everything they can remember then use your knowledge organiser to fill in any gaps.
- iii. Look, cover, check quizzing following the steps below:
 - **Chunk it:** look at what they have been asked to learn. Organise the content into smaller sections if possible. Doing this will prevent the amount from becoming overwhelming.

- **Memorise the section:** repeat it aloud or write it out the information (use scrap paper) from memory increasing the amount each time over and over again until they cannot get it wrong. They could also get someone in the family to quiz them.
- **Cover it up:** cover up the section they are learning. This really gets their brain to work hard which makes it more likely to stick in the long term.
- **Write it out:** write out what they can remember. They should not look back at your knowledge organiser even if they are struggling, instead they need to engage and challenge their brain!
- **Check it:** once they have written what they can remember, they should refer back to the knowledge organiser and check and correct their work in a different colour pen.
- **Repeat:** repeat the steps and this time focus on the words/sections that they got wrong.

c. Overlearning tasks

The teachers will set students further opportunities to apply and practice their learning. For example. exam questions, worksheets, planning for extended writing pieces etc. Students will receive sufficient guidance in class about how to do this independently and all information will be available to them in their Prep Knowledge Folder.

4. Frequency

We firmly believe that getting into good study habits and building routines is the key to success - we provide students with a Prep timetable.

In Year 7 and Year 8, a streamlined timetable is in place. We expect students to complete Prep on school nights only, which means that no Prep is to be completed on the weekend, except for perhaps independent reading.

Building routines early on will ensure that foundations are secure, enabling all students to cope as Prep demands increase in later years.

Year 7 and Year 8

Students in Year 7 and Year 8 are expected to complete the following every week:

1. Reading: there is a reading log in the student planner to support the amount of reading being done each week – this will be monitored by the form tutor each week. Students are expected to read for 30 minutes at least 4 times a week.
2. Subjects will set a 20 minute task. This may be a Retrieval Prep task OR an Overlearning Prep task.
3. Three subjects will set a 20 minute task each day; totalling no more than an hours additional learning per evening.

Supporting organisation

To support students' organisation, all students will be provided with a Prep timetable which gives an overview of which subject(s) Prep is set for each day. This can be found in the student planner and on the school website.

5. Prep expectations

Prep tasks can either be completed at home after schools hours, alternatively students can choose to stay in the school library where they are provided with a calm environment in which to complete their Prep with access to books, computers and printers as appropriate. After-school **Prep sessions and study skills** are in school sessions timetabled for students to complete Prep and form study groups. These are timetabled staffed sessions where all students can attend, where staff will support with the explicit teaching of self-study skills. Those students who miss Prep deadlines will be sanctioned according to the Behaviour Policy and requested to attend Prep sessions to improve their organisational skills and Prep habits.

Quantity: We expect all students to be spending the appropriate amount of time on their Prep. However, we appreciate that some students may struggle to complete the tasks in the allocated time. If your son/daughter has spent the allocated hour (excluding reading) focusing on their Prep and not been able to complete all the tasks, please put a signed note into their planner for them to show their teacher.

Quality: We have a sharp focus on effort levels both in school and for Prep, as there is a strong correlation between the amount of quality Prep completed and student progress. All work produced must be a true representation of what your son/daughter can do when they put in their best effort. When providing feedback, teachers will make a judgement on the quality of Prep based upon the students' previous work.

When genuine reasons for not completing Prep are communicated to us, sanctions will not be given. If your son/daughter does not understand the Prep task, they should speak to their teacher well before the deadline date to clarify what to do or get some extra support. Please be aware that if your son/daughter is absent when the Prep is set, it is their responsibility to catch up with any work missed in the lesson and find out what Prep was set. However, they will not receive a sanction.

6. Prep Feedback

Tasks will be set and checked by subject teacher. However, this may not be acknowledged immediately within the lesson of submission as this may prove detrimental to teaching and learning.

Teachers will not provide detailed feedback to students on every piece of Prep completed but may elect to use certain pieces for their focussed feedback as outlined in the feedback and marking policy.

Online homework will be marked in accordance with the service provided within the specific software used.

7. Prep in practice

All students should

- record Prep tasks in their planners and ensure their understanding of the Prep tasks;
- demonstrate a commitment to spending an allocated time doing the tasks set;
- complete all work set the best of their ability;
- speak to their teacher about any issues with the Prep before the Prep completion date;
- present Prep appropriately;
- look after their Prep Knowledge Folder so that it is not lost or damaged;
- hand the work in on time; opening their folder on at the relevant piece at the start of the lesson.
- read for at least four times a week for 30 minutes a time.

All parents should

- aim to provide a reasonably peaceful, suitable place in which students can do their Prep or help students attend other places where Prep can be done, such as the Library;
- make it clear to students that they value Prep, and support the school in explaining how it can help them make progress at school;
- encourage students and praise them when they have completed Prep;
- expect deadlines to be met and check that they are;
- check that tasks have been set in line with the Prep timetable;
- sign the planner once a week;
- support your son/daughter to read for at least 30 minutes aiming for at least 4 times a week;
- inform the school if an issue arises.

8. Related policies, guidance, and statute

The list below outlines policies, additional resources from the trust or external agencies, and statutory guidance related to this policy.

Our Pedagogical Approach	Our Policies — Christ Church, Church of England Secondary Academy (christchurchsecondary.org.uk)
Feedback Policy	Our Policies — Christ Church, Church of England Secondary Academy (christchurchsecondary.org.uk)