



# BRUNE PARK COMMUNITY SCHOOL

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September 2019

Dear Parents and Carers

## The Value and Importance of Homework

Students who regularly complete homework with dedication and effort further build their skills, experience and confidence – this includes:

- Being able to work and learn independently
- Organisational skills
- Having higher resilience and determination
- Becoming more efficient and effective with time management
- Seeking and taking opportunity to extend their learning
- Building genuine passion for learning beyond school that extends into adulthood

Students who work hard in school *and* with homework are able to meet and exceed their potential; put simply, students who work hard with school and homework are motivated young people, who do well in their exams and secure their first choices for post 16 / 18 study and work.

Subject teams at Brune Park have worked hard to design quality homework that compliments and supports the students' work in school. Students should expect good quality homework, enjoy and embrace the challenges of homework, and expect good quality feedback that helps them with their learning.

Please contact your child's subject teacher if you have any questions or queries about learning, including homework (details of who your child's subject teachers are can be found on your child's timetable which they will be carrying with them).

Full contact details for school can be found at: <https://brunepark.gfmat.org/contact-us/>

We are sharing with you a blog 'The purpose of homework' that was written by our former Deputy Head Boy: Joe Dawson.

*Joe reflected on how late it was, in his school career, that he came to recognise the value and importance of homework and shared his blog with us at school (as a break from revision!)*

*After the exams finished, Joe spent time in school working with staff and students supporting developments with teaching and learning, specifically hoping to inspire and motivate younger students (and their parents) to recognise the value of homework and the skills it develops, earlier in their school careers.*

We are sharing this with you in the hope you find the messages helpful in talking to your son or daughter about the importance and value of homework, a message we will regularly revisit in school across the subject areas.

This letter also shares with you details as to how to access, and use 'show my homework.'

Students will receive login details for Show My Homework via their Tutors this week.

**The School Leadership Team**

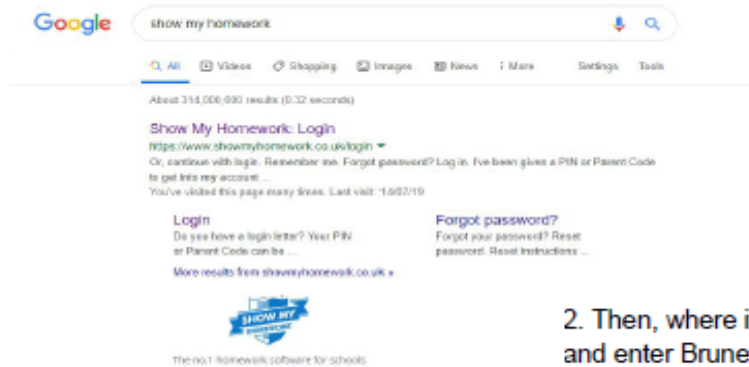
## Show My Homework

Show my homework is an online tool to help you keep track of your child's homework. Show My Homework allows you to see the details of the tasks your child has been set and all their deadlines. We launched this system in January to improve the way we communicate with parents and give you greater visibility into the homework we set.

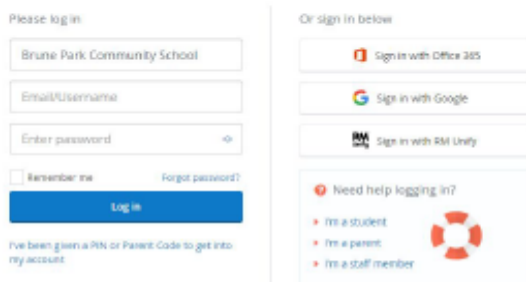
We have listened to student and parental feedback, and to reduce the number of usernames and passwords they need to remember, we are changing to use the "Sign in with Google" button:

Show My Homework also has apps on both the Apple and Android app stores which allow you to keep track of homework on your smartphone or tablet. Alternatively, visit the website at <https://www.showmyhomework.co.uk> to log in from your personal computer.

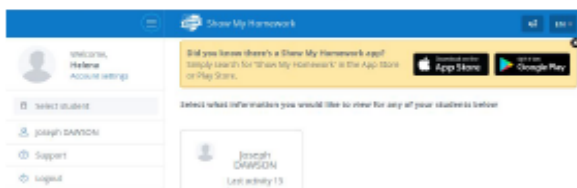
### 1. Google Show My Homework, then click this option:



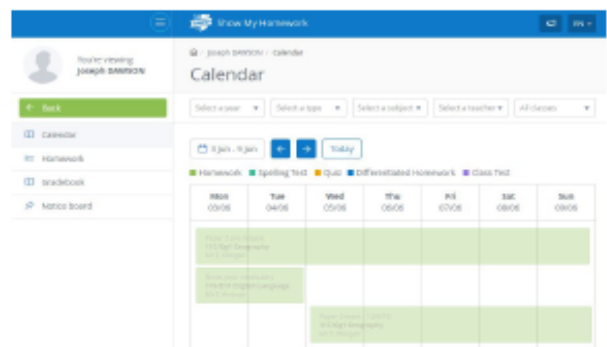
### 2. Then, where it mentions PIN or Parent Code click that and enter Brune Park and your guardian code.



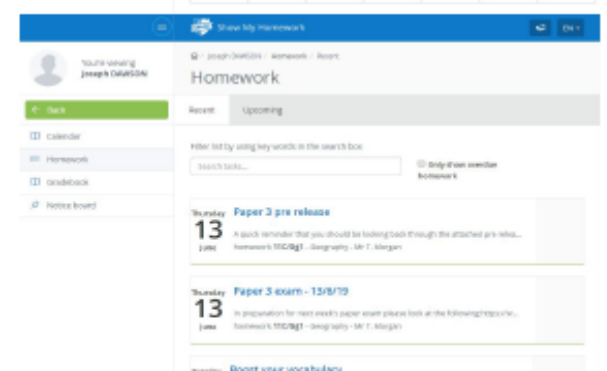
### 3. Then fill out the boxes and logon. (It will look like the below, with more students appearing if you have them)



### 4. Calendar will show you a timeline of the homeworks set



### 5. And homework will show you a chronological list of them.



Clicking on any task will show you more details about it.

## 'The Purpose of Homework', Written by Joe Dawson

Since I was a young person with a voice and opinion I have always been happy to express my views. Ones I held very adamantly for many years were my thoughts on homework.

Since I was made to sit SATs exams at 10-11 years old, if not sooner, my schools have given me homework, which was like school work, but you had to do it in your free time.

As a child I never understood this, surely it was a schools job to teach me, why would also need to do it at home? When I was feeling blunt I'd just proclaim school should teach me better so I don't have to work at home.

This was a stubborn viewpoint I held for many, many childish years, unfortunately one I now come to regret.

Make no mistake, I was a nerd and loved school (still am, still do) but the idea of answering maths questions when I could be playing was frankly abhorrent, leading to many missed deadlines and unfinished worksheets, after all the punishment for giving up my time to do work was afterschool detention, which it felt like was what they were already asking me to do...

However, after 11 years in the education system, I think I may have just figured out homework, and more importantly the skills it develops.

In an ever-evolving work environment, the expectation to work at home, partially or fully is increasing, with teachers responding to questions and emails outside of work hours. And this requires a certain level of self-control; to be in comfortable, familiar surroundings knowing you need to work whilst avoiding distractions.

Homework, however trivial it may seem at the time, shows commitment, dedication and self-control, as well as time-keeping and meeting deadlines — all vital skills for life.

By not completing homework, some students (definitely not me), may find it a challenge to complete a project in steps and stages when given a long time to complete it. It can often feel like it's not the priority, leading to the stereotype of a student cramming the night before an exam or a University student writing their dissertation in a coffee-fuelled all-nighter to hand it in moments before the deadline and then collapse immediately after; behaviours which guarantee what you submit is not your best work, not the best work you're capable of.

As I sit in trepidation, watching the days till my first exam tick away, I realise not only does the concept of how to revise escape me but so does the mindset. Years of avoiding homework copy to revision. People who work from home often have a separate office, a place they go specifically to work so that they can associate the rest of the house with comfort and family, not another place work is completed. For me, school has been that little office and outside of school has been the comfy couch in the living room. So now, with merely 3 weeks till my first exam, I'm still trying to overcome a simple mindset issue, being distracted by the most trivial thing in my home when I'm trying to revise.

So far, whilst I've been meaning to revise I've worked for hours in the garden cutting weeds, I've tidied and reorganised my room, thoroughly cleaned the house, including exterior windows and found many other trivial distractions a school environment is thankfully free from, an unusual and underrated luxury I only now appreciate as I try to remember Macbeth and Christmas Carol Quotes.

But homework is only a precursor, a foreshadowing, of the level of revision actually needed for GCSEs and A-Levels. Homework builds the vital foundations that allow for effective revising and home learning at later stages — but these benefits aren't promoted.

The common technique used to make students complete homework is the threat of detention, an easy to administer treatment but by no means effective. Realistically it only works for a small number of students, as the others realise no matter what, they are still losing free time at home.

Perhaps this begs the question, is it time we use a new technique? Instead of threatening young people into completing home learning, why don't we tell them its purpose? Its benefits? If I understood why teachers set me homework (not only would I stop thinking they're cruel monsters who hate children), I would do it wanting to reap the benefits. At least, idealistically, that's what I'd like to think I'd do. Though realistically being offered an incentive, a reward couldn't do any harm.

This was used at my school once, it was a scheme where for everything good you did, homework, classwork, behaviour, etc. teachers could award points that could be spent on a mini fridge or a guitar, or a variety of other items -stationary, vouchers, that sort of thing. It was brilliant! I still didn't understand why I had homework but who cares when you can win stuff! Each sheet of homework got me closer to that fridge!

But then my school ended the scheme and went back to the age-old detention deterrent. And when that happened, as a class, the amount of homework being returned dropped, children aren't necessarily bothered about a 30 minute detention in the future, when they could play now and do the homework then, it felt like the punishment was the same as what they were already asking you to do.

At the end of this, what I hope to have communicated is a sense that homework is important but the way it's presented to young people having to complete it, doesn't communicate the benefits. If the students were told the benefits of homework, why they were being asked to do something, perhaps they'd be more inclined to do it.

Joe