



FEARNHILL SCHOOL

Headteacher – Mr T Spencer, BSc

Our ref: JWY/SCR

October 2024

Dear Parents/Carers,

Homework Expectations and Use of Sparx in Maths, English, and Science

I hope this letter finds you well. As we begin the academic year, I would like to remind our Year 8-11 parents and introduce our new Year 7 parents to Sparx, the online platform we use to support students' learning through homework assignments.

Sparx in Maths, English, and Science

Students across all year groups will continue using Sparx for homework in both Maths (Sparx Maths) and English (Sparx Reader). This year, we are pleased to introduce Sparx Science as a key tool to support learning in science subjects.

Homework Expectations

Sparx will be used to set weekly homework in all three subjects: Maths, English, and Science. The volume of work assigned will vary depending on the student's year group, with Key Stage 4 (Years 10 and 11) receiving more extensive and in-depth assignments compared to Key Stage 3 (Years 7-9).

Please note that **all students are expected to complete their assigned homework each week**. Homework will be set each week without exception, even if a teacher or student is absent, with a week to complete.

In Science, homework will always be due on Tuesdays, regardless of the student's year group or key stage. In science we expect Sparx activities to be complete to 100%.

In English, Sparx homework is set on Wednesdays for years 7, 8 and 9.

For Years 10 and 11 English homework will **not** be set on Sparx. Homework will still be set weekly as either quizzes and knowledge revision using our other online platform Seneca; or written homework and research set via Google Classroom. This is necessary to ensure all the skills have been mastered for success in their two English GCSEs. Therefore their teacher will fix a day for homework when they see them in both weeks.

Maths homework for all year groups is due on Thursdays with the exception of Year 10 students for whom the day due is Tuesday.

How Sparx Works

Sparx uses machine learning (AI) to tailor homework assignments to each student's ability, providing a personalised learning experience. The platform will adapt to students' progress, meaning the first few homework tasks may feel either too easy or too challenging. However, after 2-3 assignments, Sparx will have adapted to each student's level, ensuring the work is appropriately challenging and pushes them to reach their full potential.

Science and maths exercises on Sparx are designed to reinforce previously taught content, with assignments being set to help students revise and consolidate their learning. Typically, homework tasks will incorporate content studied in class within the last two weeks, reinforcing their classroom learning.

English homework is set via Sparx Reader. The students' Sparx journey begins with a short (25-30 minute) reading comprehension test, which accurately notes their reading age in years and months. Sparx then suggests appropriate texts for the students to read. After short paragraphs of the text, Sparx will then check for understanding through a series of quick questions. The faster the students respond correctly, the more Sparx Reading Points they gain, and the slower they respond (or by incorrectly answering questions very quickly) they gain fewer Sparx Reading Points. The expectation is to get 300 Sparx Reading Points a week, which should equate to approximately half an hour.

Sparx Reader learns about the students reading ability as they continue, and will adjust the texts and questions to make the reading more of a challenge over time, with the goal to increase a student's reading ability and age. Last year, students who engaged with the homework regularly showed an increase in their reading ability, which helps the students with their comprehension across every subject in the school.

Should you have any questions or concerns regarding Sparx or your child's homework, please do not hesitate to get in touch with us.

Thank you for your continued support.

Kind regards,



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