Atlantic Academy Portland
an Aspirations Academy

Miss Heppell - Principal

Maritime House
Southwell Business Park
Portland, Dorset, DT5 2NA

Tel: 01305 820262
Email: atlanticoffice@atlantic-aspirations.org

www.atlantic-aspirations.org

10th September 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

Key Stage 4 Homework: Know More, Remember More, Achieve More

As students progress through Key Stage 4, homework becomes increasingly important in helping them retain, retrieve and apply the knowledge required for their GCSE courses. This year, we have developed our existing Knowledge Organiser self-quizzing approach through newly designed Knowledge Maps and Homework Journals, alongside our continued use of Sparx for Maths, Science and English. Our aim is for homework to be purposeful, manageable and closely connected to GCSE learning while building effective independent study habits.

Knowledge Maps: building secure knowledge over time

For relevant subjects, students will receive a Knowledge Map containing the most important knowledge from their current unit, organised into manageable sections with Five Big Ideas, key vocabulary and important connections. Their Homework Journal provides a consistent 30-minute routine:

- **KNOW MORE –** read and understand the relevant section, focusing on the Five Big Ideas and key vocabulary.
- **REMEMBER MORE –** close the Knowledge Map and write down what they can remember in their Practice Book, using retrieval practice or "blurting".
- **CHECK MORE –** reopen the map and use purple pen to correct inaccuracies, add missed information and identify knowledge to revisit.
- **CONNECT MORE –** apply their knowledge to the Learning Question, making connections and using appropriate subject vocabulary.

This teaches a simple revision process:

Learn it → Retrieve it → Check it → Correct it → Use it.

Regular retrieval helps students build secure knowledge throughout their courses rather than trying to relearn large amounts immediately before examinations. Towards the end of a unit, Retrieve & Review activities will help students identify strengths, gaps and areas requiring further practice.

Maths, Science and English – Sparx

Maths and Science homework will continue to be set weekly through Sparx (1 hour per subject). In addition, English will set Sparx Reader each week (1 hour). Students are expected to complete all compulsory Sparx homework by the published deadline; completion is monitored by the Academy.

Additional homework at Key Stage 4

Knowledge Map and Sparx homework provide a consistent foundation, but teachers may also set additional work where it will best support GCSE progress. This may include examination questions, extended writing, revision for assessments, targeted skills practice, coursework or non-examined assessment preparation, improvements following feedback or focused revision. Additional homework may increase around assessments, mock examinations, coursework deadlines and final GCSE examinations. Teachers will provide sufficient notice so students can plan their workload.

Our expectations

At KS4, students are expected to take increasing responsibility for their learning. Homework should be

completed on time, in full and to an appropriate standard. This includes retrieving from Knowledge Maps rather than copying, checking work in purple pen, completing compulsory Sparx homework and keeping track of additional homework, assessment and coursework deadlines.

Tutors will check Knowledge Map homework on the relevant deadline day and receive Sparx completion information. Where required homework is incomplete or not of an appropriate standard, students will attend a same-day lunchtime homework session so that the outstanding learning is completed. Absence on the check day does not remove the expectation; follow-up will take place when the student returns.

Key Stage 4 homework due days:

Day	Homework Due
Monday	Sparx Maths / Mathematics Examination Preparation Tasks
Tuesday	Humanities or Option Subject Homework
Wednesday	Sparx Science
Thursday	Languages or Option Subject Homework
Friday	English (Sparx Reader) (plus English Knowledge Map / exam practice, as needed)

If a student is experiencing genuine difficulty with a task or managing their workload, they should speak to their teacher before the deadline so that appropriate support can be provided.

How can parents and carers support?

You do not need to be an expert in your child's GCSE subjects. The most valuable support is encouraging a regular homework and revision routine, looking ahead at deadlines and avoiding last-minute completion. For Knowledge Map homework, you might ask: “What can you remember without looking?”, “What did you need to add or correct in purple pen?”, “Which areas do you need to revisit?” and “What other deadlines are coming up?” Encouraging your child to explain something they have learned is also an effective way to check understanding.

Working together towards GCSE success

GCSE outcomes are built over time through consistent attendance, engagement in lessons, regular retrieval and practice, meeting deadlines, responding to feedback and revisiting areas that are not yet secure. Through Knowledge Maps, Sparx and purposeful additional homework, we want the work students complete outside lessons to contribute meaningfully to their learning and examination preparation.

Know More. Remember More. Achieve More.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours faithfully,

Sophie Ives
Assistant Principal – Curriculum