

## Homework Policy

Homework refers to any activities that school students are asked to complete outside of school time.

Full consideration should be given to the **value and purpose of homework** and the principles and practices outlined in this document that ensure homework is

**educationally beneficial** and meets the **realistic expectations** of students, teachers, parents and caregivers.

### Purposes of Homework

Homework:

- allows for practising a process or skill and consolidating work done in class (Marzano 2012)
- allows students to Deepen Knowledge (Marzano 2012)
- provides parents and caregivers with insights into what is being taught in the classroom and the progress of their children
- establishes good habits and attitudes (e.g. study skills, independence, responsibility, self-discipline, sense of achievement)
- provides training for students in planning and organising time
- reaffirms the partnership in learning between parents and teachers
- challenges and extends talented or motivated children.
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### General Principles

Homework is most beneficial when:

- it reinforces class work and consolidates basic skills and knowledge already taught in class
- it is challenging and purposeful, but not so demanding that it has adverse effects on the student's motivation
- students take responsibility for their homework, supported by their parents or caregivers
- it encourages students to positively interact with their family members
- it takes into account students' home responsibilities and their diverse range of after school activities and individual interests
- it is set on a regular basis and establishes a routine of home work
- teachers set suitable amounts of homework which are varied and at an appropriate level considering the age, stage of schooling and capabilities of students
- it is marked promptly and accurately
- feedback and follow-up are provided regularly to students.

## Types of Homework

Some considerations:

The amount of time that students are expected to spend on homework will depend upon the age, ability, home environment and extra curricular activities of students, including family and cultural obligations. It is important that students of all ages have opportunities for free time, leisure and physical activities outside of school.

When too much homework is set, when parents use different methods to those taught at school, or when parents are required to assume undesired roles, **homework can cause conflict** between parents and children.

Homework is **not a teaching opportunity** but a **reinforcing tool** and should not rely on assistance from the teacher or other students. If students are in ability groups at school in reading and mathematics, then homework should also reflect the student's level of ability.

Homework tasks should recognize the benefits of using technology such as computers, E-mails and the Internet for organizing and accessing information. However, teachers should have regard for **equity issues** when setting these tasks. Students who do not have access to such technology at home should not be disadvantaged.

**Interactive homework** approaches, where the child and parent complete an activity together, can assist in making homework more meaningful for students and their families.

The concept of homework can be as broad as to include any home tasks that promote life skills and a less sedentary life style. Ian Lillico proposes a Homework Grid (*see Supporting Materials*) to ensure a balance occurs between the practice of academic skills, involvement in family life and the pursuit of physical and cultural activities. This model emphasizes diversity and enables student with learning difficulties and special needs to be engaged in homework tasks.

## Time Allocation

**The time on homework needs to be responsive to the student's age and development.** After consultation with teachers and parents / caregivers at Mountain Creek State School, the following time allocations for homework are deemed reasonable:

<b>Years 1 and 2:</b>	<b>10 - 15 minutes a day</b>
<b>Years 3, 4 and 5:</b>	<b>up to 20 minutes per day</b>
<b>Years 6:</b>	<b>up to 30 minutes per day</b>

## Homework Expectations

### **Parents and caregivers can help by ...**

- taking an active interest in homework
- ensuring that there is time spent on homework
- supporting students to complete homework (e.g. with the child, plan the work to be done and the time to be spent on each task)
- being patient and avoiding conflict over homework issues
- providing appropriate conditions conducive to study (ie good lighting, desk, stationary supplies, calm quiet environment, no TV)
- communicating with teachers any concerns about homework or alerting the teacher to domestic or extra curricular activities that may impact
- encouraging their child to read and setting an example by reading themselves
- acknowledging the child's success and giving praise for effort.

### **Teachers can help by...**

- ensuring students and parents and caregivers are aware of the school's homework policy and your homework expectations
- setting varied and meaningful tasks related to class work that are appropriate to the students' learning needs
- motivating and empowering students by negotiating the homework set or providing homework options
- giving students enough time to complete homework, taking into account home obligations and extra curricular activities.
- marking homework promptly and providing feedback and support to students and parents and caregivers
- helping students develop the organizational and time-management skills needed for them to be responsible for their own learning
- communicating with parents and caregivers any problems concerning their children's homework.

### **Students can help by...**

- being aware of the school's homework policy and the teacher's homework expectations
- organizing their time to ensure they complete homework within the given time frame
- seeking assistance from teachers and parents and caregivers when difficulties arise.

## References

*Homework Literature Review: Summary of key research findings*, Department of Education and the Arts, Queensland, November 2004  
*The Art and Science of Teaching: A comprehensive Framework for Effective Instruction*, Robert J Marzano.2007  
*Homework Policy, Department of Education and Training, New South Wales, August 2000*  
*Homework Habits: Homework Guidelines*, Department of Education, Employment and Training, Victoria, April 2001  
*Homework and the Homework Grid*, Ian Lillico, Tranton Enterprises, 2004  
Parent/Caregivers and Teacher Questionnaires - completed August 2005

## Supporting Materials

### **A Homework Grid – Ian Lillico**

This is one example of a homework grid. Teachers and their parents can negotiate the grid entries and adapt it for various age groups or school priorities, but it is important to emphasise diversity, family life and active pursuits. Each cell within the grid can represent an amount of time (10 minutes in primary schools) to ensure a balance and diversity of activities. The grid should be fortnightly so that something from each cell of the grid is covered in a fortnightly cycle.

It makes for an excellent home-school liaison and will give both teachers and parents a vehicle for enhancing relationships by working together for the mutual benefit of the children.

<b>Read</b> a variety of books including school books	<b>Be read to</b> by another member of the family	<b>Shopping</b> with parents
<b>Physical activity</b> or sports training	<b>Housework</b> (compulsory every night)	<b>Art</b>
<b>Teach your parents</b> something you were taught at school	<b>Play a game</b> with an adult	<b>Assignments</b> or project research
<b>Meditation/</b> Spiritual/ Relaxation	<b>Use a computer</b> for work	<b>Cultural /</b> Music practice

### An Explanation of the Grid:

**Read:** Research indicates that reading improves reading so this cell should be a very regular one. It includes reading for pleasure, reading fiction, newspapers, magazines, textbooks and assigned reading of texts set by teachers as class work.

**Be read to:** Being read to is an essential part of developing the desire to read, developing a love of books and stories and bonding with parents or older siblings. This is the place where parents may need to explain written instructions from assignments and set tasks.

**Shopping:** This is a family bonding activity and a very valuable one in gaining a number of life skills including budgeting, selecting, discerning, totaling, money handling, reading labels, discovering costs and value for money. It includes shopping for groceries, clothing, hardware, etc.

**Physical activity:** It is crucial that this becomes a daily part of every student's home life and work. There is a need for children to have less sedentary lives, get fit and learn active skills that should see them grow into healthy, happy adults. This entry includes sports training, family bonding activities (like walking, cycling, fishing) and a range of indoor and outdoor pursuits.

**Housework:** This is a compulsory, daily part of the grid, aimed at enhancing family life. It includes household chores, such as helping to prepare meals, cleaning, picking up and tidying their room and



other parts of the house, and outdoor work like weeding, gardening, raking, sweeping, painting and decorating.

**Art:** This aims to continue the creative talents that students show in their early years and encompasses all artistic pursuits, crafts and hobbies plus the completion of work set in class.

**Teach your parents:** One of the best ways of consolidating what has been learnt is to verbalise and teach the concept to another. This enables students to brief parents about work covered, enhancing the home-school link. It can be a set task or happen spontaneously.

**Play a game with an adult:** It can be outdoor games or indoor pastimes such as crosswords, Scrabble, Yahtzee, card games and board games. This is a special time to develop communication, problem solving and social skills that can be transferred from adult to child. It allows for parent/child interactions that have been replaced by TV and computers.

**Assignments / Project research:** This cell is where information resource skills, due dates and time factors are recognized. It requires locating, identifying and collecting information from multimedia sources at home and taking this data to school for processing and presentation.

**Meditation / Spiritual / Relaxation:** This cell recognizes the need for children to devote time to pray or introspection, community service and thinking about the needs of others. It may include some 'time out' where children listen to relaxing music, meditate, watch some television, take up Yoga or have some other technique of dealing with the stresses of everyday life.

**Use computer for work:** Emphasis is placed on using the computer as a tool rather than a toy. Tasks that involve practice of skills needed for researching information, word processing, communicating with friends and family, using paint programs, spreadsheets, databases and telecommunications are encouraged.

**Cultural:** This is an essential part of a child's life. An appreciation of the Arts can be taken from concerts, shows, productions, and carefully selected television programs. This is also the place to include music lessons, band practice, choir, drama rehearsals etc that many students already do after school.