

PARENT INFORMATION

HOMEWORK POLICY AND GUIDELINES

RATIONALE

At high school, the completion of set homework and assignment work by students becomes increasingly important. Not only does this work consolidate and reinforce what is taught in the class room but it also can affect the child's assessment for a particular unit of work.

Homework can also be given to extend the student beyond what was taught or to provide for remediation. It provides an opportunity for research and to complete unfinished work.

PURPOSE

To establish a procedure to identify homework and provide support structures to assist students to complete homework goals.

BROAD GUIDELINES

Homework is of four types:

- 1. Casual Homework:** Completing work not finished in the classroom; preparation for school for the next day by making sure that all equipment is in good order and ready; that questions a student may wish to ask about work that is not understood are prepared for the appropriate teacher; pre-reading and writing short summaries.
- 2. Set Homework:** Teachers will allocate specific homework on a regular basis. Students will be given a date to complete and submit this. This homework may include research and answering questions, doing specific exercises from text books and attempting worksheets.
- 3. Assignment Work:** While working through units, students may be given assignment work. Ample time will be allocated for the completion of this work. Assignment work will often extend the student beyond work taught in the classroom and students may be given opportunities to do some research work in the library during school time if required.
- 4. Home Study:** In order to gain the most out of time spent doing formal school work, students need to develop a good understanding of concepts taught in all subject areas. Maximum understanding is reached if students regularly read through and write out these concepts in their own words. This of course is what studying is all about and all students need to have a regular program of study. A homework study timetable should be prepared as indicated in the homework notebook. Recommended homework and study times for students who wish to do well are also outlined on this page.

Students should work out a homework timetable in conjunction with their parents and teachers. Again, study should be regular and concentrated. Where a student has difficulty with a concept or an area of work, that student must arrange to see the teacher concerned in order to get help.

The student should continue to ask for help until a good understanding has been reached. Teachers need to make every effort to ensure that this is the case.

Parents will be informed where students regularly fail to submit homework by the use of a standard notice.

All homework set is issued with a completion date and collected or dealt with on that day. Any extensions given must be seen to be fair in the eyes of students who have completed the work. Work handed in late could be penalised.

Homework diaries should be checked on a regular basis. Students who make little effort to use the diaries properly should have a note sent home to their parents informing them about this. Parents also need to check these diaries regularly.

CONCLUSION

Reading and Recommended Study Times

It is recommended that all students be encouraged to read at home every day to improve fluency and enjoyment of reading. In the secondary school, a minimum of 30 minutes daily should be set aside for reading, in addition to set homework. This means that every high school student has at least half an hour of homework (reading) every day. Suggested study times for each year group are outlined in the homework notebook issued to all students.

Secondary students who want to do well at school should use the following suggested times as a guide.

| Year | Hours per Night | Number of Nights |
|------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 7 | 1 hour | 5 nights per week |
| 8 | 1 to 1.5 hours | 5 nights per week |
| 9 | 1 to 2 hours | 5 nights per week |
| 10 | 2 to 3 hours | 5 nights per week |
| 11+ | 4+ hours | 5 nights per week |

Experience has shown that the best place to do homework is in a place in your home where you will not be constantly interrupted. Your bedroom may be such a place. Set up a desk or small table and a reasonably comfortable chair and make sure there is plenty of light.

Always do your homework in this special place.

You should set a regular time each day to do your homework. If something special comes up and you can't do your homework on a particular day, try to make the time up over the next few days. If you have a lot to do, take a five or ten minute break after a 50 minute session of work.

PARENT GUIDELINES FOR HOMEWORK

(from L Canter and L Hausner "Homework Without Tears" Perennial Library, 1987)

1. Homework Must Be Done in a Proper Study Area

- Tell your children that they must have a special place where they will do their homework.
- Choose a location where your children will do homework.
- Make sure the space is well lit.
- Post a "Do Not Disturb" sign during homework time.
- Equip your children's workspace with all the materials needed to do their homework (writing implements, tape, paper, stapler, hole punch, scissors, paperclips, index cards, dictionary, rubber bands, compass, calculator, almanac, protractor).

2. Homework Must Be Done on Time

- Tell your children how you expect homework time to be scheduled ("We want to help you to schedule time when you will do your homework so that there is not a question as to when you will do it")
- Make sure that all your children's scheduled activities are written down on a daily schedule.
- Determine the length of time needed each day for homework (15 minutes for younger children, three hours plus for older adolescents).
- Determine the best time period each day to be set aside for homework and write down on the designated space in your daily schedule.

3. Children Must Do Homework on Their Own (Independently)

- Tell your children that you expect them to do homework on their own.
- Emphasise your confidence in your children's ability to do the work with a little boost from you.
- Break down the "overwhelming" assignment into simple steps you know the child can do successfully.
- Provide encouragement each time children succeed at any step. Then have them move forward to complete the assignment.
- Once children begin gaining confidence, have them do a small part of the assignment on their own.

4. Motivate Your Children to Do Their Best Work

- Consistently praise your children's efforts.
- Tell your children specifically what you like about what they are doing or what they have done.
- A hug or a pat on the shoulder will increase the impact of your message.
- Choose an incentive which your children would like to receive for working hard.
- Given incentives consistently for several days or weeks with an eye to fading them out after awhile.
- A Homework Contract is an agreement between you and your child that states "When you do your homework appropriately, you will earn a reward".

5. If Your Children Are Not Doing Their Homework – Communicate Assertively

- Tell your children – clearly and firmly – that you expect them to do their homework responsibly.
- Don't argue with your children. Use the Broken-Record Technique which involves you simply repeating what it is you want, no matter what arguments they put in.

6. Back Up Your Words with Actions

- Give your children the choice. Either do the homework responsibly or lose privileges.
- Follow through with your demands.
- Be prepared for your children to test you to see if you mean business.
- Make sure that the person who is providing child care in your absence is prepared to enforce the rules.
- Make sure that you communicate with the school if your children will not do their homework.

THE MANY VALUES OF HOMEWORK

1. Responsibility
2. Independence
3. Commitment
4. Emotional Management
5. Self-acceptance
6. Self-confidence
7. Optimism
8. Goal Setting
9. Risk-taking
10. Time Management
11. Organisation
12. High Discomfort Tolerance
13. Delay of Gratification
14. Perseverance
15. Creativity
16. Problem Solving
17. Collaboration

Guidelines for how to get your children to work on their own (Canter and Hausner, 1987)

Year 7 to Year 12

- Other than occasional expectations, your child should be working independently. If he/she is having a great deal of trouble doing so, you must back up and follow the suggestions given here for younger students. The key is to start off with considerable involvement, then to reduce it gradually.