What is Homework?

Homework ‘bridges the gap between learning at school and learning at home’ and should therefore be consistent with and connected to the learning experiences being provided in the classroom. As well as emphasising curriculum relevance, school homework policies should ensure that homework:

- is appropriate for each student's age and ability
- takes into account students' other commitments, such as sport, part-time employment and home responsibilities
- takes into account technology, such as email and the Internet, so that students without access are not disadvantaged.

Assigning homework serves various educational needs. It serves as an intellectual discipline, establishes study habits, eases time constraints on the amount of curricular material that can be covered in class, and supplements and reinforces work done in school. In addition, it fosters student initiative, independence, and responsibility and brings home and school closer together.

Three types of homework

Practice Exercises help students to remember and practice newly acquired skills - such as memorising mathematical tables, practising spelling words, writing essays and reading for pleasure.

Preparatory Homework requires students to source and read background information to prepare them for future lessons on a specific subject - such as reading an article on the Gold Rush in preparation for a lesson in Australian history.

Extension Assignments encourage students to pursue knowledge individually and imaginatively. Assignments may include writing a book review, researching local news or retrieving items from the Internet.

Why Is Homework Important?

Research in the last decade has begun to focus on the relationship between homework and student achievement and has greatly strengthened the case for homework. Although there are mixed findings about whether homework actually increases students' academic achievement, many teachers and parents agree that homework develops students' initiative and responsibility and fulfils the expectations of students, parents, and the public. Studies generally have found homework assignments to be most helpful if they are carefully planned by the teachers and have direct meaning to students.

Homework bridges the gap between learning at school and learning at home. It reinforces work done in class. It helps develop skills such as research and time management.

Homework helps to establish the habits of study, concentration and self discipline. Parents/caregivers have the opportunity to see the progress of their child. Homework provides challenges and stimulus to gifted and talented children.

How Much Time Should My Child Spend on Homework?

According to some researchers, two ways to increase students' opportunities to learn are to increase the amount of time that students have to learn and to expand the amount of content they receive. Homework assignments may foster both these goals. Reforms in education have called for increased homework, and as a result, reports show that students are completing considerably more homework than they did a decade ago.
According to statements by the National Parent/Teacher Association and the National Education Association (NEA), the following amounts of homework are recommended:

- From kindergarten to third grade, no more than 20 minutes per day.
- From fourth to sixth grade, 20 to 40 minutes per day.

**Homework for Kindergarten-Year 2**

In general, your child will not be expected to complete formal homework in Kindergarten. However, there are things you can do at home to help your child make the most of what they learn in Kindergarten. Reading to children at home and involving them in family activities will greatly assist the development of their skills in literacy, numeracy and problem solving.

In Years 1 and 2 some formal homework is usually set. For example, students may be asked to complete simple computations, to copy letters or words, or to complete an activity sheet.

Homework completion is recorded in semester 1 and semester 2 Pupil Reports for Year 1 and Year 2.

**Homework for Years 3-6**

Homework in Years 3-6 will be varied and students will be expected to work more independently. However, teachers will still provide guidance and assistance to students having difficulties completing their homework.

Much of the homework will be in English, Mathematics and Human Society and its Environment. However, it can be set across all areas of the curriculum.

Homework completion is recorded in semester 1 and semester 2 Pupil Reports for Years 3-6.

**How Can Parents Get Involved?**

- Share any concerns you may have regarding the amount or type homework assigned with your child's teacher or principal.
- Encourage your child to take notes concerning homework assignments in case questions arise later at home.
- Provide a suitable study area and the necessary tools (for example, paper and books) to complete the homework assignments.
- Limit after-school activities to allow time for both homework and family activities.
- Monitor television viewing and establish a specific homework time.
- Plan a homework schedule with your child. Allow for free time when assignments are completed.
- Praise your child's efforts. If questions arise about the assignments, and your child asks for help, ask him or her questions or work through an example rather than simply providing the answer.
- Younger children need more parental assistance with homework than older children. Go over homework assignments with your child. Do several problems or questions together, then observe your child doing the next one or two.
- Check completed assignments. Ask to look at homework once it has been marked and returned.
- Ask your child's teachers about their homework policy and specific assignments.

**Comments**

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