

Homework Policy

At St. Elizabeth's we believe that there is strong evidence and general agreement that homework at the primary school level has little impact on academic performance.¹ However, we recognise that it may play a transitional role in preparing students for secondary school and beyond.²

Rationale

We believe that homework is useful when:

- Timely feedback is provided.³
- It allows for the fact that children learn and progress at different rates.⁴
- It develops productive long term habits of learning and planning.
- Students engage willingly and are supported to achieve high expectations.
- It is balanced with a range of recreational, family and cultural activities.⁵

Aims

The goals of homework provision at St Elizabeth's School are:

- To assist the child in developing responsibility.
- To reinforce and enrich the child's daily learning process.
- To develop the child's study habits and organisational skills.⁶
- To foster an enjoyment of learning.

This policy endeavours to ensure that:

- Sound homework practices are set in place;
- Teachers and parents are clear about why we give homework;
- Parents are aware of the role that they play in the homework task;
- Students take responsibility for choosing their level of engagement;
- Homework is a positive experience for all involved.

¹ Professor John Hattie, Melbourne Graduate School of Education, *Transcript of evidence – Inquiry into the approaches to homework in Victorian Schools*, Melbourne, 29 April 2014,

² Professor Mike Horsley, Co-author of 'Reforming Homework', Central Queensland University, *Transcript of evidence – Inquiry into the approaches to homework in Victorian Schools*, Melbourne, 28 April 2014, 31.

³ Nicole Schrat Carr, 'Increasing the effectiveness of homework for all learners in the inclusive classroom' (2013) 1(23) *School Community Journal* 169, 176.

⁴ Parliament of Victoria, Education and Training Committee 2014, *Inquiry into the approaches to homework in Victorian Schools*, Parliamentary Paper, p 40-41.

⁵ Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (Victoria), *School policy & advisory guide: Homework Expectations*, <<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/curriculum/Pages/expectations.aspx>> viewed 7 November 2014.

⁶ Mr Chris Thompson, Director Priority Projects Branch, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, *Transcript of evidence - Inquiry into the approaches to homework in Victorian schools*, Melbourne, 28 April 2014, 2

Types and Frequency of Homework Recommended by St. Elizabeth's

Reading on a regular basis is vital to help students develop their reading skills.⁷ Reading can include books borrowed from the library, newspapers, playing games with sight words, comic books and age-appropriate articles on the Internet.

Spelling: learning spelling words in a fun and interactive way

Mathletics is a web-based learning platform that has many benefits for students:

- It is adaptive which means it responds to individual student strengths and weaknesses.
- It provides instant feedback for students so they know if they are on the right track.
- Animated support to guide students through concepts whenever they might need, just like a maths tutor would do.
- Teachers are also able to monitor student records in order to track progress and identify learning needs.

These benefit of having instant feedback has been shown to have a significant impact on student progress.⁸

	READING		OTHER	
	Type	Frequency ⁹	Type	Frequency
Foundation students	Parent reads to child or Parent and child read together or Child reads to parent	10 minutes each weeknight		
Level 1/2 students	Parent reads to child or Parent and child read together or Child reads to parent or Silent reading	10 minutes each weeknight	Spelling Activities	10 minutes each weeknight
Level 3/4 students	Quiet, independent reading or Parent and child read together or Child reads to parent	10 - 15 minutes each weeknight	Mathletics / Spelling Activities	10 - 15 minutes each weeknight
Level 5/6 students	Quiet, independent reading or Parent and child read together or Child reads to parent	15 - 20 minutes each weeknight	Mathletics / Spelling Activities	15 - 20 minutes each weeknight

⁷ Nagy, W., & P. Herman. 1987. Breadth and depth of vocabulary knowledge: Implications for acquisition and instruction. In M. McKeown & M. Curtiss. (Eds.) *The nature of vocabulary acquisition* (pp. 19-35), Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum

⁸ Michael Mendicino, Leena Razzaq and Neil Heffernan, 'A comparison of traditional homework to computer-supported homework' (2009) 3(41) *Journal of Research on Technology in Education* 331, 342.

⁹ Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (Victoria), *School policy & advisory guide: Homework Guidelines*,

<<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/curriculum/Pages/guidelines.aspx>> viewed 7 November 2014.

Homework Procedures

1. Each semester, parents will be asked to formally commit to providing a conducive environment for effective learning at home. In understanding and respecting that this is not always possible or reasonable for some families; families who choose not to commit to these conditions will be exempt from all homework expectations.

*** All families of children in Foundation, Levels 1 & 2 are expected to commit to supporting students in effective homework practices. This will allow children an opportunity to develop positive attitudes toward home learning and will be more likely to make an informed an appropriate choice when given the opportunity in Levels 3-6.

2. When families commit to the practice of homework, children will be expected to complete spelling and Mathletics tasks throughout the week, record this in their diary and have it signed by a parent.

Parents are asked to seriously consider the actual benefits homework provides for their child(ren).

If homework:

- is a source of great frustration and yields little, if any consolidation of learning done at school;
- does not increase children's enjoyment in learning;¹⁰
- is not a practical opportunity for parents to provide Internet access, positive and practical involvement; (perhaps due to work or lifestyle commitments)
- is not productive in developing long term habits of learning and planning;
- is not a practice students engage in willingly, with or without supportive encouragement;
- reduces the amount of time available to pursue other activities and interests;¹¹

Then the practice of homework will not benefit your child(ren). To avoid tension and anxiety, parents should consider not providing a formal commitment to the homework program.

If Families Commit

Where families commit to providing a supportive and conducive learning environment at home; then Homework will become a joint responsibility between Parents, Children and Teachers.

The teachers' responsibilities in relation to homework are:

- To give direction to children regarding the completion of assigned tasks.
- To provide a list of games or websites students can use to learn spelling words.
- To monitor Mathletics activities (3-6) in order to provide feedback and monitor how the child is coping with the work completed.
- To check and sign diaries weekly.
- To communicate with families when homework is not submitted and suggest that they may like to rethink their commitment to completing homework.

A Family Commitment to Homework

Teachers' Responsibility

¹⁰ Alfie Kohn, *The homework myth: Why our kids get too much of a bad thing* (2006) Da Capo Press, 46.

¹¹ John Buell, *Closing the book on homework: Enhancing public education and freeing family time* (2004) Temple University Press, 6

Parent's Responsibility

: Homework is specifically designed to assist children to develop good study habits. Until the child reaches a stage of independence, encouragement and support should be provided.

- Communication between home and school is essential. Parents are asked to write a note to the teacher if a child is unable to complete their homework for whatever reason, particularly if the student experienced difficulty with the tasks.
- Provide feedback to their child by writing a message in the diary.
- Set an environment and routine at home that fits their family. It is highly recommended that a comfortable area, away from the television be provided for the child to complete homework tasks. Parents are asked to support homework in order to help the child adhere to a regular time, whether it is before or after dinner, so that a sound study habit is developed.
- Encourage students to organise their time and take responsibility for their learning.
- Ensure that students remain within the time limits allocated for homework.
- Acknowledge homework completed by signing a record of reading, Mathematics and spelling activities as appropriate.

Child's Responsibilities

Children are responsible for:

- Reading for the prescribed amount of time each night and recording this in their diary (F-6).
- Completing activities using Mathematics and spelling and recording this in their diary (3-6).
- Handing in their diaries each Friday for the classroom teacher to sign (F-6).

Semester One

Students Commitment Statement

I, _____ from _____, would like to extend my learning by taking responsibility for my part in completing assigned homework tasks.

Signed: _____

Parents / Carers Commitment Statement

I, _____ agree that as part of supporting our child's learning, we wish for our child to participate fully in the school's homework program.

Signed: _____

OR

I, _____ believe that our family can support the learning process at home without our child participating in the school homework program.

Signed: _____

Semester Two

Students Commitment Statement

I, _____ from _____, would like to extend my learning by taking responsibility for my part in completing assigned homework tasks.

Signed: _____

Parents / Carers Commitment Statement

I, _____ agree that as part of supporting our child's learning, we wish for our child to participate fully in the school's homework program.

Signed: _____

OR

I, _____ believe that our family can support the learning process at home without our child participating in the school homework program.

Signed: _____