

Homework Policy and Guidelines



Purpose

St Peter's beliefs about homework takes into account the needs and developmental phase of students as well as considering the circumstances of twenty-first century families.

At St Peter's Catholic Primary School, we acknowledge that the time children spend with their families and their involvement in out of school activities, are important components in the development of the whole child. In determining homework, it is important to consider that students may be engaging in many different activities and commitments outside of school.

Learning through Homework

Hattie (2008) argues that homework is more effective for students in secondary schooling, as compared to students in primary school. Further, short and frequent homework is more effective than lengthy homework (Hattie, 2008). The effectiveness of homework is increased when homework is monitored and feedback regarding homework is provided by the teacher to the student (Hattie, 2008).

Homework can be effective in supporting learning if it:

- Is short, frequent and monitored by the teacher
- Is appropriate and adapted to particular years of schooling in line with the relevant curriculum
- Is clearly related to class work (and therefore the curriculum) and feedback is provided by the teacher
- Is used to facilitate the achievement of learning outcomes
- Is varied and differentiated to individual learning needs and reflects the diverse needs of students
- Is supported by the explicit teaching of the dispositions and skills associated with being able to learn independently
- Consolidates, revises and/or applies students' classroom learning
- Assists students to prepare for upcoming classroom learning such as formulating ideas, collecting relevant materials or completing surveys or questionnaires
- Refrains from requiring dependence on unreasonable levels of parental assistance or resources that are not readily available to the student (e.g. when assigning homework which may have a computer component, where appropriate a suitable alternative should be made available)
- Allows time for family, recreational, community and cultural activities
- Is balanced across learning areas to avoid stress and overload
- Is achievable and leads to an increase in students' self-confidence
- Is disassociated from any form of punishing students or a means of discipline
- Homework should be a positive experience for students, parents and teachers
- Homework should allow parents to engage in the learning process with their child in order to demonstrate positive attitudes to learning.

St Peter's School Homework Approach

Development of this approach to homework considers information and comment gathered from parents, staff and students through consultation and a survey instrument, as well as research and guidelines regarding homework from across Australia.

Homework should be focussed on positive, productive and supported learning which is aligned to the Australian Curriculum.

Homework will relate directly to the learning and teaching programs appropriate to the needs of students. As such, homework will be set reflecting the current work of the students and relate to the short and timely planning cycles for students using a differentiated approach. Homework, therefore will not be booklet work set for the term ahead. Teachers are responsible for setting, marking and providing feedback to students related to homework.

Appropriate supports should be put in place for the successful completion of homework (eg through provision of resources; extra support for students struggling to complete homework). Homework should take into account outside school hours activities, recreation and family time, community and cultural activities. Preparation of students for the time commitment of homework anticipated in years to come is not, in itself, a reasonable basis for setting homework.

Homework should be a positive experience for students, parents and teachers. It should allow parents to engage in the learning process with their child in order to demonstrate positive attitudes to learning.

At St Peter's consistent and effective implementation of our homework policy occurs throughout the school including a consistent approach across each year level, the amount of time students are to spend in completing homework and ensuring that students are not disadvantaged by a lack of access to resources such as computers and the internet outside of the school.

Year Level Guidelines

Prep:

- Homework expectations should not exceed 10 mins per night (4 nights per week)
- Practising literacy skills e.g. Chatting Children program and High Frequency Word recognition and Home Readers
- Reading may include: reading to; reading with; and by parent, carer/ older siblings.

Years 1-2:

- Homework expectations not to exceed 15 mins (4 nights per week)
- Practising literacy skills e.g. Reading, High Frequency Words and Spelling words
- Reading may include reading to, reading with and by parent, carer/ older siblings
- Drill & Practice of previously introduced skills

Year 3-4:

- Homework expectations not to exceed 20 mins (4 nights per week)
- Practising literacy skills e.g. Reading, High Frequency Words and Spelling words
- Reading may include reading to, reading with and by parent, carer/ older siblings
- Drill & Practice of previously introduced skills

Year 5-6:

- Homework expectations not to exceed 30 mins (4 nights per week)
- Practising literacy skills e.g. Independent Reading and Spelling words
- Drill & Practice of previously introduced skills
- Preparation for and completion of class work as required

For further information on the effectiveness of homework for students see:

Hattie, J. 2008, *Visible Learning: A Synthesis of Over 800 Meta-Analyses Relating to Achievement*, Routledge, New York.

Hattie, J. 2012, *Visible Learning for Teachers: Maximising impact on Learning*, Routledge, New York.

Horsely, M. & Walker, R. 2012, *Reforming Homework: Practices, Learning and Policies*, Palgrave Macmillan, Melbourne.