



Homework Guidelines



Rationale:

The Homework Guidelines have been developed by the Department with the assistance of parents, teachers and students in primary and secondary schools in Victoria.

Homework Habits

Homework helps students by complementing and reinforcing classroom learning, fostering good lifelong learning and study habits, and providing an opportunity for students to be responsible for their own learning.

Principles

- Homework is another opportunity for parents to participate in their child's education. Parents, in partnership with the school, should encourage their children to establish good homework patterns from early primary school
- Parents should be advised of homework expectations at the beginning of the school year and be provided with access to the school's homework policy
- Students benefit from completing homework regularly. Homework helps them develop organisational and time-management skills, self-discipline, skills in using out-of-school resources, and personal responsibility for learning
- Upper primary and secondary school students should use homework diaries. Diaries provide a means of regular communication between parents and the school
- Failure by students to complete homework on a regular basis should be followed up with parents

Successful practice

Years Prep to 4

Prep to Year 4 homework should not be seen as a chore. Homework will:

- enable the extension of class work by practising skills or gathering extra information or materials
- mainly consist of daily reading to, with, and by parents/caregivers or older siblings

This will generally not exceed 30 minutes a day and not be set on weekends or during vacations.

Years 5 to 9

Years 5 to 9 homework:

- should include daily independent reading
- should be coordinated across teachers in secondary schools to avoid unreasonable workloads for students
- may include extension of class work, projects and assignments, essays and research.

This will generally range from 30 – 45 minutes a day at Year 5 to 45 – 90 minutes a day in Year 9.

Homework should be:

- appropriate to the student's skill level and age
- interesting, challenging, and where appropriate, open ended
- balanced with a range of recreational, family and cultural activities
- purposeful, meaningful and relevant to the curriculum
- assessed by teachers with feedback and support provided.

Types of homework that meet these requirements include:

Practice exercises — provide students with the opportunities to apply new knowledge, or to review, revise and reinforce newly acquired skills, such as:

- completing consolidation exercises for Mathematics
- practising spelling
- practising words or phrases learnt in a Language Other Than English
- reading
- writing essays and other creative tasks
- practising and playing musical instruments
- practising physical education skills.

Preparatory homework — providing opportunities for students to gain background information so they are better prepared for future lessons, such as:

- reading background material for History
- reading English texts for class discussion
- researching topics for class work
- collecting newspaper articles
- revising information about a current topic.

Extension assignments — encouraging students to pursue knowledge individually and imaginatively, such as:

- writing a book review
- making or designing an art work
- completing science investigation exercises
- researching local news
- finding material on the Internet
- monitoring advertising in a newspaper
- research projects

Expectations

Parents and caregivers

Parents and caregivers can support their children by:

- encouraging them to take increasing responsibility for their learning and organisation
- observing and acknowledging their success and asking how their home and class work is progressing
- attending school events, displays or productions in which their children are involved
- encouraging them to set aside a regular daily session to read and complete homework
- setting an example by reading themselves
- contacting the relevant teacher to discuss any problems their children are having with homework
- helping them to complete homework by discussing key questions or directing them to resources. Usually it is better to encourage children to complete homework themselves
- helping them to balance the amount of time spent completing homework, watching television, playing computer games and engaging in other leisure or recreational activities
- checking whether homework for upper primary and secondary students has been set and ensuring they keep a homework diary
- reading texts set by teachers. Discussing their child's response to the texts and asking to see work they complete in relation to these texts
- discussing homework in their first language, where English is not the main language spoken at home, and linking it to their previous experiences.

Teachers

Teachers can support students by:

- setting regular homework to help students establish a home study routine
- setting varied, challenging and meaningful tasks related to class work that are appropriate to the students' learning needs
- giving students enough time to complete homework, taking into account home obligations and extracurricular activities
- assessing homework and providing timely and practical feedback and support
- making effective use of homework diaries for upper primary and secondary students
- coordinating the allocation of homework by different teachers in secondary schools
- helping students develop the organisational and time-management skills needed for them to be responsible for their own learning
- ensuring that students have good information skills
- ensuring that parents and caregivers are aware of the school's homework policy
- developing strategies to support parents to become active partners in homework.

These guidelines were last ratified by School Council in....

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