Homework Policy

St Mary's Primary School

Policy Number: HOMEWORK POLICY

Status: Ratified

Date Issued: November 2013

Evaluation and Review: November 2015

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Related Documentation:
RATIONALE
At St Mary’s Primary School the dignity of the human person is the foundation of all Catholic social teaching and intrinsic to our education ministry. Consequently, the principle that the person is made in the image and likeness of God, is central to the mission of our parish school. This policy identifies the interconnectedness of the school and home in quality Catholic learning and teaching. It also highlights the value and relevance of this home/school relationship.

AIM:
● To involve parents in their children’s education.
● To reinforce concepts learned at school.
● To establish study habits and self-responsibility.
● To acknowledge students' other commitments, such as sport and home responsibilities

SCOPE
It is essential that we create and maintain a respectful and supportive learning environment that promotes student learning and enables clear communication between home/school and therefore leading to successful practice.

This Homework policy supports the school’s Mission and Vision Statements and Catholic Education in the Diocese of Lismore, Foundational Beliefs and Practices- The Essential Framework and the Contemporary Learning Framework.

This policy directs teachers to allocate homework which:
● promotes student learning
● is appropriate for each student’s age and ability
● supports a balance between school and other commitments including family time, sport and work
● takes into account access to resources to ensure that no student is disadvantaged.

PRINCIPLES
Homework is most beneficial when:
● it reinforces and extends classwork and consolidates basic skills and knowledge
● it is challenging and purposeful, but not so demanding that it has adverse effects on the student’s motivation
● parents or caregivers are involved in the formulation and implementation of the school's homework policy
● students take responsibility for their homework, supported by their parents or caregivers
● it is well coordinated and teacher expectations are well communicated
● it is set on a regular basis and establishes a routine of home study
● teachers set suitable amounts of homework which are varied and at an appropriate level considering the age, stage of schooling and capabilities of students
● it takes into account students’ home responsibilities and extracurricular activities such as clubs, sport and part-time employment
● it is marked promptly and accurately. Feedback and follow-up are provided regularly to students
● it develops and extends the core learning skills of inquiry and independent study.
DEFINITIONS
The amount of time that students are expected to spend on homework will depend upon the age, ability, home environment and extracurricular activities of students, including family and cultural obligations. It is important that students of all ages have opportunities for free time, leisure and physical activities outside of school.

The three main types of homework are:

Practice exercises - providing students with the opportunities to apply new knowledge, or review, revise and reinforce newly acquired skills, including:

- consolidation exercise e.g. maths, including memorisation of tables
- practising for mastery e.g. spelling words
- revising information about a current topic
- practising words or phrases learnt in a language other than English
- reading for pleasure
- essay writing

Preparatory homework - providing opportunities for students to gain background information on a unit of study so that they are better prepared for future lessons, including:

- background reading
- reading e.g. English text for class discussion
- researching topics for a class unit of work
- collecting items e.g. geometric shapes.

Extension assignments - encouraging students to pursue knowledge individually and imaginatively, including:

- writing e.g. a book review
- making or designing something e.g. an art work
- investigations e.g. science, social science
- researching e.g. history, local news
- information and retrieval skills eg. using a home computer to find material on the Internet
- monitoring e.g. advertising in particular newspapers.

Wherever possible homework should recognise the place of technology in today’s world and the benefits of using technology such as home computers, e-mail and the Internet for organising and accessing information. Teachers, however, should have regard for equity issues when setting homework that relies upon the use of technology. Students who do not have access to such technology at home should not be disadvantaged.
PROCEDURES

Implementation
- It is the responsibility of teachers to assign and mark homework.
- The amount of homework will vary according to age and learning needs.
- Religious Education should be compulsory on a regular basis and to Know, Worship and Love (KWL) texts should form part of this homework.
- Where homework is regularly not completed, parents should be informed.

Kindergarten - Year 2 (ES1 and Stage 1)
All activities at home or in play can assist children to develop a wide range of knowledge and skills including literacy, numeracy and problem solving. It should also be remembered that self-directed play in unstructured time is important. Language and number concepts can be introduced and consolidated in many family activities, including:

- shopping
- preparation of food
- listening to stories, learning songs and nursery rhymes
- conversations about what is happening at school
- interactive video and computer programs
- reading
- library borrowing
- family outings
- collecting items.

In Stage 1 consideration should be given to the setting of formal homework as for example in completing simple computations, copying letters or words, or completing an activity sheet.

Years 3- 6 (Stages 2 and 3)
As students progress they increasingly work independently on their homework, it is important that teachers continue to provide guidance and assistance particularly in the development of study skills. It is also important that students have the opportunity to experience different types of homework and that the amount of time students’ are expected to work on homework is realistic. Although most homework is likely to be set in the areas of English, Mathematics and Human Society and its Environment, it could be set across all areas of the curriculum.

Reading is encouraged every day. Levelled home readers are sent home and reading is recorded in a reading log. KWL texts should form part of homework.

Stage 1
Reading is encouraged every day. Levelled home readers are sent home and reading is recorded in a reading log. KWL texts should form part of homework.

Stage 2
Reading is encouraged every day. Levelled home readers are sent home where needed. Independent readers select their own books from varied sources. Reading is recorded in a reading log.
Times tables are part of homework for Stage 2.
KWL texts should form part homework.
Stage 3
Reading is encouraged every day. Students select their own books from varied sources. Reading is recorded in a reading log.
English and Mathematics concepts are also reinforced as part of homework for Stage 3. KWL texts should form part of homework.

EXPECTATIONS
Parents and caregivers can help by:
- taking an active interest in homework
- ensuring that there is time set aside for homework
- encouraging and supporting students to complete homework
- providing, where possible, a dedicated place and desk for homework and study
- encouraging their children to read and take an interest in current events
- assisting teachers to monitor homework by signing completed work if requested and being aware of the amount of homework set
- communicating with teachers any concerns about the nature of homework and their children’s approach to the homework
- alerting the school to any domestic or extracurricular activities which may need to be taken into consideration when homework is being set or corrected.

Teachers can help by:
- explaining to students and their parents or caregivers the purpose and benefits of homework
- ensuring students and parents or caregivers are aware of the school’s homework policy
- providing quality homework activities related to classwork
- setting a suitable amount of relevant homework which is appropriate to the ability of each student
- ensuring that students are aware of what is expected of them, and how their work will be assessed
- giving students sufficient time to complete their homework, taking into account, as far as possible, competing home obligations and extracurricular activities
- marking homework promptly and appropriately, maintaining homework records and providing feedback to students and parents or caregivers
- alerting parents or caregivers of any developing problems concerning their children’s homework and suggesting strategies that they can use to assist their children with their homework.

Students can help by:
- being aware of the importance of homework
- being aware of their school’s homework policy
- completing homework within the given time frame
- alerting parents or caregivers to homework expectations
- seeking assistance from teachers and parents or caregivers when difficulties arise
- showing their homework to their parents or caregivers
- ensuring homework is of a high standard
- organising their time to ensure that sufficient time is given to quality homework within set deadlines.

Evaluation
- The homework policy will be regularly reviewed.