



# Homework Policy

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## Related Policies

Pastoral Care Policy  
Student Welfare and Management Policy  
Communication Policy

## Purpose

This policy sets out the school's expectations regarding homework given to students at St Thomas the Apostle and the responsibilities and expectations of all.

## Rationale

At St Thomas the Apostle School homework;

- Is a valuable part of schooling,
- allows for practising, extending and consolidating work done in class,
- provides training for students in planning and organising time in preparation for future schooling,
- develops a range of skills in identifying and using information resources,
- establishes habits of study, concentration and self-discipline which will serve students for the rest of their lives,
- strengthens home-school links,
- reaffirms the role of parents and caregivers as partners in education,
- provides parents and caregivers with insights into what is being taught in the classroom and the progress of their children,
- challenges and extends gifted and talented children.

## Procedure

Homework is most beneficial when;

- it reinforces and extends class work 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 and sport,
- 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.

### **Types of Homework**

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,
- reading for pleasure.

**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.

**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, history,
- researching e.g. history, local news,
- information and retrieval skills e.g. 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 at St Thomas the Apostle, 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.

## **Successful Practice**

### **Kindergarten - Year 2**

Generally, teachers will not set formal homework in the earliest year of school. However, 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 the latter stages of Year 2 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**

As students progress, they should 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. Homework can be set in all areas of the curriculum.

## **Implementation**

In most classes homework is given at the start of the week and children are expected to complete the tasks. Parent support is essential for supporting students and teachers. A home reading program exists in every class. In Years K-3 the children have the opportunity to choose a reader from class boxes to read each night. The reader is changed each day and parents are asked to sign the home reading record sheet. In Yrs 5-6 while students are encouraged to use library books as home readers, they may prefer to borrow readers from the class library or home reader boxes. Reading is expected to be practised by all children every night.

All primary grades are given written homework activities and are expected to complete these tasks each week. The activities are designed to be completed independently by the students. Many teachers design homework in a grid which has the flexibility for students to include extra curricula activities as part of their homework and allows students to choose activities of interest.

## **Fallow Week**

Week 7 of each term is 'Fallow Week' and no homework is given to students, however, students are still expected to read every night. During Fallow Week families are encouraged to do activities together. Many of these can be educational in nature as well as being fun e.g. Yahtzee, Scrabble, chess, various card games, etc. During this week the school usually promotes a whole school event that encourages families to come together.

## **Responsibilities**

At St Thomas we believe homework should not become a burden or to cause stress or conflict between the child and the parent/parents supervising the task. The following gives a maximum time that students in each grade level should spend completing written homework. If the child has worked consistently on their homework for this period and has not completed the written tasks we ask that parents not force the child to complete the task and communicate the fact to their teacher.

Children are encouraged to read to their parents every night when they are developing reading skills. As the students become more proficient and confident they are encouraged to extend the amount of time they read and the difficulty of the texts.

The reading time below is a minimum.

Kinder – Year 2      10 minutes reading.

Later Year 2      Formal written work commences late Year 2 and 10 – 15 minutes reading per night.

Years 3 & 4      20 minutes written homework and 15 minutes reading per night.

Years 5 & 6      30 minutes written work and 15 minutes reading per night.

## **Expectations**

Parents and caregivers can assist 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 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 assist 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 assist 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.

## References

Catholic Education Office Homework Policy 2011

## Forms

Nil

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