



ST EMILIE'S PURPOSEFUL PRACTICE HOMEWORK POLICY



RATIONALE

Here at St Emilie's we believe that homework is worthwhile because it has the potential to :

- extend learning opportunities beyond the school environment
- develop, consolidate and reinforce skills and understandings presented in class
- give children an opportunity to develop and practise good organisational and time management skills across their years of schooling.

The two main purposes of assigning PURPOSEFUL PRACTICE in our school is:

- 1 To provide students with an opportunity to practise and reinforce what has been learned in class, at home.
- 2 To include and value the time spent engaging with the family in positive, helpful and meaningful ways as home 'work'.

AMOUNT and TIME

The amount of time to be spent on homework will typically increase slightly as children progress from Year 1 to Year 6, however here at St Emilie's we believe children (and families) need plenty of free time to relax, explore, create, imagine, cook, read, exercise and pursue their own interests and hobbies after school and on weekends.

Maintaining a calm, positive family environment around Purposeful Practice is important. Likewise we believe that homework should not take any more than 10-15 mins a day in Years 1-2 ; 15-20 mins Year 3-4 and 20-30 minutes in Years 5-6. If after giving their very best effort they have not finished, parents are asked to please finish the session. Ideally the compulsory literacy/numeracy sections of the Grid will be completed. It will be important that you maintain good communication with your teacher regarding this however, as children do not need to feel that they have failed, or that they are to worry about returning to school with work unfinished if they have genuinely done their best. Every child is different and parents are trusted to be a wise and discerning observer at homework time, in order to support, challenge and know when it is time to stop! A note to the teacher to this effect assists the them to know how the child went, so they can support them accordingly back at school.

Our Grids run over a **two-week period, 3 grids per term**. These grids allow flexibility in families. Some families may opt for a little homework each weeknight, while for other families a different arrangement may be more suitable. What parents are to avoid however, is allowing children to leave everything to the last minute. As one of our goals is to help children practise time management and organisation, you can support your child by assisting them to perhaps create a fortnightly plan for when they will do what on their grid.

Encourage and praise your child for positive work habits and attitudes such as :

- Being proactive and responsible about getting their homework started/completed
- Being well organised
- Maintaining a neat workspace
- Taking pride in their work
- Having a plan
- Managing their time effectively
- 'Having a go' and persisting
- Doing their best work
- Giving their best effort

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

1. For children who are going away on holiday during term time, we suggest parents provide :

(a) reading (b) photos and journal writing (c) practical mathematics (d) lots of talk about what they are seeing, doing, feeling, learning, thinking.
2. Where children are going between two households, it is important that there is consistency in expectation and that children have what they need to do their homework in both locations. Good communication between parents is very helpful.

PARENT RESPONSIBILITY

- To provide an area where the child feels comfortable and is relatively free from distractions.
- To monitor the amount of time spent on homework.
- To assist your child/ren to establish a plan for completing tasks on the grid over the fortnight that takes other commitments (eg sport/music commitments) into consideration.
- To provide equipment – eg pencils, ruler, glue, tape, etc separate to the stationery the child has at school.
- To sign the child's Grid to show that the homework has been viewed by you.
- To show interest and to offer encouragement and guidance without doing the work for them.
- To communicate any questions or concerns regarding your child's homework via email to the class teacher.

- To model a positive mindset towards this aspect of your child's learning and to encourage your child to do the same.

TEACHER FEEDBACK TO STUDENTS

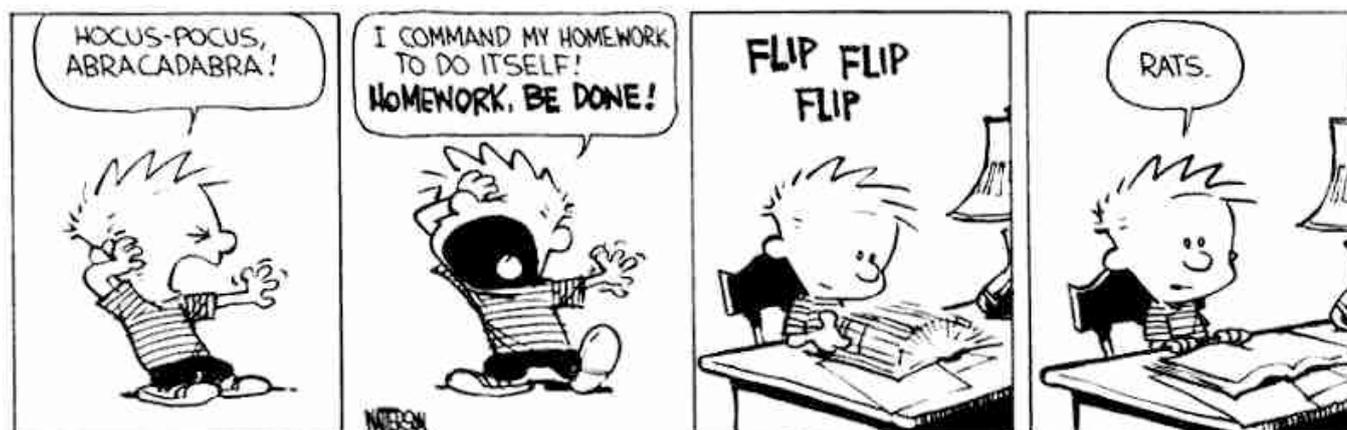
- Teachers will maintain a record of homework completed.
- Teachers will provide *timely, positive, constructive oral and/or written feedback* to the student on their homework efforts throughout the term.
- Teachers will communicate with parents if they have any concerns about any aspect of a child's homework.
- Teachers will also use the Two-way and Three-Way meetings throughout the year to discuss homework matters if necessary.



CONSEQUENCES FOR NOT DOING HOMEWORK

- Teachers will work closely with families to support and encourage students to complete set tasks to the very best of their ability, within the timeframe given.
- It is expected that parents will try to set their children up for success in regard to their homework by providing encouragement, materials, assisting them to manage their time and so on.
- If children are sick; if they have done their best but couldn't finish in the time given; if they haven't given of their best – a note or email to the teacher is important.
- If homework has not been completed, and a parent note has not been supplied, at the teacher's discretion, children may be required to complete their homework at recess or lunchtime.

Policy Updated: 2015
Due for Review: 2017





PARENTS / CAREGIVERS CAN HELP WITH PURPOSEFUL PRACTICE BY :

- Taking an active and positive interest in homework
- Creating routines
- Providing a space for students to work in and setting aside time for homework to be completed
- Listening to children read, discussing meaning
- Signing and checking that homework has been completed
- Offering encouragement and support
- Offering assistance without doing the homework for the child
- Reading to children for enjoyment regularly
- Letting the school know of any domestic or extracurricular activities which may impact on homework completion



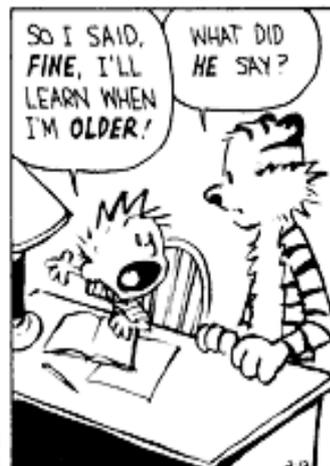
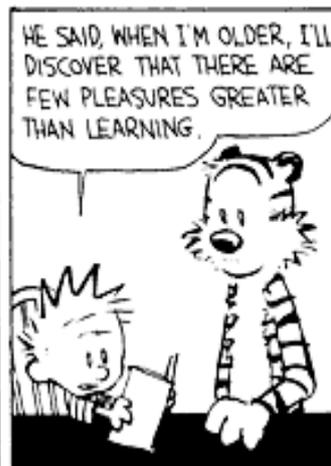
TEACHERS CAN HELP BY :

- Explaining to students and parents the purpose and benefits of homework
- Ensuring students and parents are clear about the grid and aware of the school's Homework Policy
- Providing relevant and quality homework activities related to classwork
- Including activities that encourage family time
- Making tasks achievable
- Being clear in their expectations and tasks
- Marking and monitoring homework
- Maintaining homework records and providing timely feedback



STUDENTS CAN HELP BY :

- Completing work themselves (with parent assistance only)
- Giving the same effort as they do in class i.e. their best effort Ensuring they are organised with the necessary equipment
- Managing time to ensure homework is completed (especially in older grades)
- Communicating any difficulties to the teacher and / parents
- Showing their homework to their parents and having it signed
- Taking responsibility for their homework and not giving Mums and Dads a hard time about doing it!



What does the research say?

The debate about the effectiveness of homework as a tool of learning has continued for more than a century. There have been more than 130 studies published related to the subject and these have reached different and, at times, quite contradictory conclusions. Here at St Emilie's we have weighed up what the research says and we take an approach to homework where 'less is more'.

- Students are more likely to complete homework if they know teachers are keeping track of their progress and giving feedback on errors and areas for improvement (Cooper, 2007).
- Homework may be more effective when parents receive regular information from teachers on how they might help with their children's homework (Epstein and Lee, 1995).
- Initiatives designed to support parents cope better with homework tasks appear to increase homework completion (Levin et al., 1997).
- Motivation and self-regulation strategies can be useful (Corno, 2000).
- Students' use of a homework notebook and giving students homework options in place of traditional homework (Diersen, 2000).
- Homework activities that involve students in sharing and discussing examples of their writing with their family contribute to improved writing (Epstein and Van Voorhis, 2001).
- Interactive homework encourages students to share their school learning with family members, and others in the community (Epstein and Van Voorhis, 2001).
- Some effective strategies to support students with homework include homework clubs, homework check lists (e.g. what to do when faced with problems) and study skills courses.
- Guidance and support to parents is also beneficial (Cowan and Hallam, 1999).

Research investigating the purpose of homework has identified that most teachers set homework for a range of reasons including: practice, preparation, participation, personal development, parent– teacher communication, parent–child relations, peer interactions, policy and public relations.

Educators, policy makers, and families share the desire to see all children succeed in school and this requires innovative and systematic approaches to current teaching practice (Van Voorhis, 2001).

Strategies identified in research that teachers can use to improve homework practices and demonstrate connectedness to the curriculum include:

- Designing homework that builds on students' current skills (Epstein and Van Voorhis, 2001).
- Enabling students with learning difficulties to engage in homework tasks and to take the time required to complete assigned work (Epstein and Van Voorhis, 2001).
- Providing homework help instructions and communicating homework expectations clearly and promoting parental involvement in their children's homework in the early childhood years of schooling (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 1995).

- Designing homework to meet the needs of individual students while ensuring there is no stigma attached to receiving different homework between children by dealing with differentiation sensitively (Cooper, 2001b).
- Designing homework tasks to 'spark' students' creative thinking, talents, community involvement and problem solving, by encouraging students to work together after school, in person, by telephone, or on the internet (Corno, 2000).

Researchers have identified whole-of-school practices associated with improved homework effectiveness including:

- Promoting productive home–school relationships and identifying a range of home–school collaboration opportunities including parent–teacher meetings and written communication (Patton et al., 2001).
- Teacher preparation and planning; assignments appropriate to the skill, attention, and motivation levels of students, and appropriate involvement of parents are crucial to homework effectiveness (Cooper et al., 2000).
- If students are given 'real life' assignments, homework planners and graph their progress there is likely to be an increase in homework completion rates (Bryan and Sullivan-Burstein, 1998).
- Consideration of families' experiences, particularly families where children may have difficulties with formal school learning (Dudley-Marling, 2003).

Dudley-Marling (2003) recommend the need for parents, teachers, and school administrators to work together to create homework policies that are considerate of the range of family dynamics and forms, the different ways families live and the need for schools to maintain high standards.

School staff need to be aware that for some families homework is a 'heavy burden' and is 'simply not worth it'. A challenge in any consideration of homework is to move the debate away from homework policies only stipulating time spent by students and tasks to be completed, to seeing homework as an opportunity to encourage 'seamless learning across home and school contexts' (Warton, 2001).

Summary

- The findings indicate that students, families and schools can benefit from a collaborative effort to improve the effectiveness of homework.
- A positive outcome for homework appears to be contingent on teacher preparation, teacher feedback, the motivation of students and the parental support available.
- Homework that encourages students to interact with family members seems to improve family understanding and linkages to classroom activities.
- Interventions to support students in undertaking and completing homework include homework clubs and tips for parents.

There is some evidence to suggest that the following strategies may be particularly helpful:

- parental communication and involvement
- devising short, relevant tasks that are clearly communicated
- teaching students self-monitoring and organisational techniques.