

Goulburn Public School

Homework Policy



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Signed

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Purpose of Policy:

To clearly state the requirements in relation to student homework at Goulburn Public School.

Reference Information:

NSW Department of Education Homework Policy:
<https://education.nsw.gov.au/policylibrary/policies/homework-policy>

Introduction

The NSW Department of Education (May 2012) specifies that a school's Homework Policy should be:

- relevant to the needs of students.
- developed in consultation with key school community stakeholders including teachers, parents/caregivers and students.
- communicated to staff, students, parents/caregivers, particularly at the time of
- student enrolment.

In developing their Homework Policy, schools should be aware that while the Policy itself is compulsory, the setting of homework and any indicative time allocations across year levels are not.

This approach to developing a Homework Policy is in line with a number of factors:

- community expectations about homework are variable
- research regarding the value of homework is inconclusive
- schools are best placed to make decisions about homework in consultation with their communities.

The Goulburn Public School Homework Policy 2018 update is a revision of the Goulburn Public School Homework Policy 2016. It encompasses the Department's Policy and is the result of community consultation undertaken in 2017 as part of the Tell Them From Me survey. Community stakeholders were provided with the Department of Education's Homework Policy: Research Scan (May 2012) to assist the decision making process.

Rationale

The Goulburn Public School community recognises that while homework is an important aspect of schooling, students also need to have time to spend with their family as well as time for play and cultural and physical activities outside of school.

Analysis of the Tell Them From Me survey also indicated:

- Daily reading should be a compulsory component of homework.
- Spelling words to be learnt should only be those that are unknown and reflect an individual student's spelling ability.
- Literacy and numeracy activities should reflect an individual student's abilities and be designed to assist in progression. These activities should be optional.
- Access to online literacy and numeracy activities should continue but be optional.
- Parents would like to take more interest in school assignments, with preparatory activities included in homework.
- Parents would like more time engaging with their child during the completion of homework activities.

This revision of the Goulburn Public School Homework Policy is also based on the following:

- Regular reading of appropriate texts at home is clearly supported by research for its benefits to general knowledge, vocabulary, spelling, verbal fluency and comprehension (Scientific Learning Corporation, 2008 in Facchinetti, 2016).
- Homework must be purposeful and relevant to student needs and should not jeopardise the right of children to enjoy a balanced lifestyle (Dixon, 2007).
- A 'one size fits all' approach to homework should be avoided with students being given the opportunity to select from a range of activities that promote success (Vatterott, 2009 in Facchinetti, 2016) and will be of benefit to the student.
- The quality of the homework assigned is likely to be more important than the quantity (Canadian Education Association, & Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, 2010).
- The amount of homework and time spent on it should accord with the student's age and developmental level (Canadian Council on Learning, 2009).
- Effort spent on homework is a stronger correlate of academic achievement than time spent on homework (Canadian Council on Learning, 2009).
- Most researchers conclude that for primary students, there is no evidence that homework lifts academic performance. There is only a small correlation between

homework and achievement in middle school (Cooper, 1989; Walker, 2011). Only in the senior years of high school does homework clearly raise academic performance.

Year level appears to be a determinant of homework's academic effectiveness (Blazer, 2009; Cooper, 1989).

Implementation

- Homework will be issued each Monday and returned each Friday commencing after 'Meet the Teacher' session held in Term 1. At this meeting, the class teacher will outline expectations regarding homework completion and suggest activities to support reading and spelling.
- Homework will not be issued in the first or last week of each term and may not be issued in a week affected by public holidays. It is, however, expected that reading will continue during these weeks. Students may choose to complete optional activities during these weeks.

Inclusions

Compulsory

Reading:

All students are expected to read at home Monday - Thursday and maintain a reading log (your child's teacher will explain this process). For students who are non-independent readers, the school will provide an appropriately levelled text. Students who are independent readers are expected to read a variety of age appropriate texts. The time set aside for reading should reflect the child's age and ability with longer, sustained periods of twenty - thirty minutes occurring for independent readers.

Spelling:

Each Monday, a student's spelling knowledge and skills are assessed in accordance with the School's Spelling Scope and Sequence based on the Ants in the Apple Program. Students will record unknown spelling words in their homework book to learn throughout the week. Teachers will advise a range of methods for students to learn spelling words.

Preparatory activities:

From time to time, a student may be required to undertake a homework activity in order to prepare for a lesson or class activity. This preparation may include, but is not limited to: preparing a speech or news presentation, research related to a unit of work or individual study, or collecting items for an upcoming activity.

Optional

Literacy and numeracy activities: Each term, an individual student's ability for a range of literacy and numeracy aspects is assessed and recorded by the class teacher. This information is used to generate a Feedback to Parents report that lists a variety of activities for students to complete at home to support improvement and success. At the commencement of each term, students will be provided with this report. Students have the opportunity to select from the extensive list of activities across the course of the term, completing as many as they choose. Activities may be completed more than once. From time to time, it may be necessary for parents/caregivers to participate in the completion of an activity to ensure its success. Parents are required to initial and date an activity when completed.

N.B. In their first term of school, parents/caregivers of Kindergarten students will receive the Feedback to Parents report during their Best Start interview that is conducted early in Term 1.

Online activities

Reading Eggs, Studyladder, Mathletics or other recommended programs.

Expectation for Parents

At Goulburn Public School it is expected that parents/caregivers will:

- take an active interest and/or role in homework completion.
- ensure that there is time set aside for homework and that there is a dedicated place free from distractions for homework.
- encourage and support their child/ren to complete homework activities, particularly reading.
- ensure that a reasonable attempt has been made to commence, persevere and complete activities.
- ensure written activities are completed legibly.
- communicate with the teacher any concerns about the nature of homework and their child/ren's approach to the completion of homework activities.
- advise the school of any situation/belief that may impact upon the completion of homework activities.
- sign and/or annotate the work completed thereby acknowledging that the homework has been completed to an acceptable standard.
- Ensure their child/ren's homework book is returned each Friday.
- Students are not expected to persist with an activity that they genuinely do not understand. In this case, he/she should seek clarification from the teacher who may suggest an alternative activity. If a student does not have the information needed to complete the set homework, he/she should seek clarification from the teacher, as soon as possible. In this case, the teacher may suggest an alternative activity.

Expectations for Class Teachers

At Goulburn Public School it is expected that teachers will:

- inform parents/caregivers at the commencement of each year, generally at the Meet the Teacher session, of the requirements regarding homework completion. Homework will commence after this meeting.
- provide feedback to the student, as required.
- ensure assessment data accurately reflects an individual student's literacy and numeracy skills so that the Feedback to Parents report, spelling level and reading level are addressing the needs of the individual student.
- ensure students are aware of what is expected when completing homework activities.
- alert parents/caregivers to any developing problems concerning the completion of homework activities. Failure to complete homework is not punishable by detention or completion during meal breaks

Expectations for Students

At Goulburn Public School it is expected that students will:

- take responsibility, with parental support, for completing homework activities.
- read at home from Monday - Thursday and maintain a reading log.
- learn unknown spelling words on a weekly basis.
- complete compulsory preparatory activities by the due date.
- exercise the right to select from the optional activities knowing that these are specifically tailored to improve their personal literacy and numeracy abilities.
- return their homework book to school each Friday in preparation for the following Monday.

Acknowledgements

This Policy is based on:

- Goulburn Public School 'Tell Them From Me' survey (2017)
- Department of Education: Homework Policy (2000)
- Department of Education Homework Policy: Research scan (May 2012)
- Department of Education Homework Policy: Guidelines (May 2012)
- Faccinheti, A. (2016). The dog ate my homework. *Education Today*, 16 (3), pp. 14-17.

Revision

This Policy is a revision of the Goulburn Public School Homework Policy 2016 and is due for revision in 2020.