



Homework Expectations

Homework is an important time when parents can help with their child's schooling and also gain insight into their child's progress. This booklet outlines our whole school approach to homework and gives some useful suggestions when working with your child at home.

Why have homework?

- Regular homework promotes healthy study habits for high school – It is important that primary school prepares children for high school and by children completing some homework each night this will assist them to be better prepared for high school routines.
- Homework helps improve reading (the basic building block for all schooling) – The quantity a child reads has been directly linked to improvements in reading ability. Take home reading gives children the opportunity to practice their reading skills and particularly in the younger grades receive additional one on one support from an adult. It is also a valuable opportunity for parents to assist their child with learning new words and making meaning from text. Working at home on sight words in Prep, year 1 and year 2 helps children to develop a bank of known sight words that helps to accelerate their reading progress.
- Homework helps improve spelling ability (another essential building block for schooling) - Learning spelling words at home will assist with writing and recent research has indicated the importance of learning to spell early so as not to consolidate the incorrect spelling of words which can be hard to break.
- Homework helps to revise concepts being learnt at school – At times children will be sent home occasional tasks that directly support what is being learnt in class. Children will also be revising spelling and maths being learnt in class at that time.
- Homework strengthens the links between school and home - Again parents can see how their child is progressing and give them some help on an important subject area.

What type of homework can I expect for my child?

- ☺ Spelling – All children in Year 1 – 7 are expected to learn spelling words on a weekly basis.
- ☺ Take Home Reading – All children in prep – 4 are expected to do take home reading which involves reading to an adult for some or all of the time (depending on year level). Most children in Year 5 – 7 are expected to do independent take home reading; however some are required to complete take home reading depending on their reading ability.
- ☺ Maths Homework – All children in Year 4-7 take home maths homework on a weekly basis and students in 1-3 are required to complete activities from their homework sheet.
- ☺ Occasional other set tasks and unfinished work – At times teachers will set small tasks to be completed at home that may relate to a unit of work they are doing. Also if children have unfinished work this may also be sent home to be completed.
- ☺ Sight Words – Prep, year 1,2 and 3 children are expected to learn sight words on a weekly basis. If necessary

How long should homework take?

Also based on feedback from parents, staff and students we have set recommended time limits both for how long children should spend on homework each night and how much they should spend on homework each week. These are in line with Education Queensland Guidelines. Parental time assisting with homework should gradually decrease as children get older. We believe that parents should not expect children to go over the recommended times suggested below.

Year Level	Recommended Daily Maximum Time set for Homework Activities	Recommended Weekly maximum set for Homework Activities	Recommended Daily Parental Support during homework
Prep	15-20 minutes	1 hour	15-20
Year 1 - 3	20 minutes	1 hour	20
Year 4 - 5	30 minutes	2½ hours	20
Year 6 - 7	45 minutes	3½ hours	15

What happens when we can't fit homework in that week?

We understand that on some occasions it may not be possible to complete homework for family reasons. However, there are consequences for homework that is routinely not completed which may include that it is completed in lunchtime or during the Friday afternoon sport program. If you find that your child can't complete the homework within the time limits but has made a genuine attempt to complete homework within the time frame please notify your child's teacher as there will be no consequences for children in this situation.

What do I do if I want extra homework for my child?

We believe that one of the best ways to extend your children further is by widening their experiences. This can be done in a number of ways. Mostly it involves spending time with your children and discussing the world around them or sharing your knowledge and skills with them. It can also be by them helping to do things at home that challenge them further. They may wish to do independent research or study things they are interested in. Keeping and learning about a pet, going to the library, making a garden, reading about gardening, watching and discussing a good documentary with them, playing a new board game etc. are more ways of developing your child's mind and lifelong interest in learning. Taking the time to explain everyday things and answer their questions about the world fully is some of the best extension work that you can do.

What can I do to make homework hassle free?

Try some of the following ideas to help make homework easier at home.

- ☺ Have a consistent time that homework occurs each day. Children respond well to routine and are more likely to do their homework if they know they have a consistent time and place to complete it.
- ☺ Ensure that the location where the homework is being done is free of distractions eg. make sure the TV is turned off.
- ☺ Have a small reward when homework is completed eg. watch 30 minutes TV or play a game with them.
- ☺ Be prepared to assist and monitor. Often when children get stuck they ponder rather than ask for help. By monitoring you can quickly help a child to move on and get through the homework.
- ☺ Make homework a positive experience by highlighting improvements rather than difficulties.
- ☺ Don't exceed the time limits listed above particularly if they are reluctant to do homework.

Helping Children With Home Reading

Here are a few ways to help your child with their reading homework.

- **MODEL** reading for your child. They need to see you reading **OFTEN** – magazines, newspapers, the TV program, a book. This way they understand that knowing how to read is a **VALUABLE SKILL**. They'll want to be a better reader so they can be like **YOU**.
- **BEFORE** they start reading....
 1. Look at the **cover** and **read the title**. Look at the title page and illustrations. Have the child guess (**PREDICT**) **what the book is going to be about**.
 2. **Discuss** what is happening and name some of the things you see in the illustrations. This will help the child create a **CONTEXT** for their reading. They will have a better idea of what unknown words might be, if they have some idea what the story is about.
 3. **Ask** the child what they know about the topic already, or if they have been in a similar situation before. (**PRIOR KNOWLEDGE**)
- **DURING** reading.....
 1. Encourage the child to **read to the end of a sentence** if they come across a word they don't know. Repeat the sentence saying 'something' for the problem word. Have them fill in a word that could make sense in the sentence. Check that the word they give starts with the correct sound.
 2. Encourage the child to **use a number of strategies** to work out unknown words. Readers should not rely on simply 'sounding out' difficult words.
 3. Looking at the **pictures** can help. Recall the context of the story. Use this knowledge, and the letters (sounds) they recognise to help them work out what the word might be.
 4. **Look for familiar parts in the word** – like an 'ing' ending, or similarities with other words that the child already knows.
 5. If the child makes a mistake when reading allow them to finish the sentence to **see if they recognise that there is something wrong** and fix it themselves. If they do, praise them. If not, repeat what they said and ask, "Does that make sense?" Help them find the part that is wrong. Encourage them to look closely at the word and attempt it using their sound knowledge.
 6. Encourage the child to **re-read** if it seems that what they are reading is not making sense to them. Often you can tell by the way they are reading that the words have no meaning to them.
 7. As they become more confident, encourage the child to **read with expression to make the story sound interesting**. This means changing the tone of their voice for different characters and asking questions in a natural tone of voice. Point out **punctuation marks** and explain how you should read these parts of the story.
 8. **PRAISE** their efforts. This is very important if they struggle with reading. Children need constant feedback that what they are doing – even the smallest things- are right.
- **DURING AND AFTER** reading.....
 1. Discuss what is happening in the story and how the characters act and feel. Ask the child if they would act and feel the same way.
 2. Stop and ask the child to guess (PREDICT) what might happen next in the story. Check afterwards to see if their guess was right.
 3. Discuss and enjoy surprise endings or favourite parts of the story
 4. Ask what they learnt from the reading.
 5. Ask if they think the story ended the right way, or if they could invent a different ending.
 6. Help the child respond in some way to the story and think about what they have read.

Try to avoid doing HOME READING when either you or your child is tired, cranky or rushed for time. Reading practice needs to be an ENJOYABLE SHARED EXPERIENCE.

Some Strategies To Assist In Learning Spellings.

As children develop the desire to communicate their ideas in writing, their skills in spelling need to be developed.

- Copy the Word.
- Check (did you copy it correctly?)
- Think about pronunciation.
- Do you know its meaning? (Find out if not).
- Look at shape of word e.g. **school, eye.**

- Look - carefully at the word.
- Say - the word then each letter.
- Cover - say the word each letter at a time.
- Write - (look at the word, say it, cover it then write it).
- Check - if wrong write it correctly 2 or 3 times (write the word in full don't just add letters . If correct write a couple more times.

Ask someone to 'test' you.

The tester should say the word clearly,

- Make a sentence using the word to show its meaning
- Say the word again clearly.
- It is best to write the word down but if time is short you may wish to answer orally.

More helpful strategies:

- Examine the word for familiar groups of letters like blends (bl, cr, st etc), digraphs (2 letters making one sound like ea in bread), trigraphs (3 letters making 1 sound like oor in door, dge in bridge) and small words in big words as long as the letter groups make the same sound (like oil in spoil, not so in some)
- Say & spell the word several times orally.
- Pay extra attention if the word has internal vowel sounds that may have a different sound from other words. (e.g. rough, cough, though, through.)
- Type words on the computer.
- Paint words on footpath with brush and water saying each letter as it is painted.
- Draw with finger in sand.
- Model using play dough.