

INSTRUCTION

Homework Guidelines

1.0 Definition of Homework:

Homework can be defined as an important and relevant learning activity that is related to the school program, and that takes place in a variety of settings in the home or in the community. When students complete homework, they acquire new knowledge and consolidate and reinforce learning in practical and meaningful ways. Homework is a planned and purposeful part of the total program and is linked to The Ontario Curriculum learning expectations, learning skills, and the Ministry of Education reporting guidelines. The Durham District School Board believes that homework supports the student's achievement of provincial expectations in all subjects.

2. Importance of Homework for School Success:

Research has shown that students achieve academic success more consistently when parents/guardians are involved in their child's education. The influence of the home on a student's success at school is profound, and exerts a very strong impact on his or her long-term academic success. Homework is one vehicle for involving parents/guardians directly and strengthening the partnership between home and school. Positive attitudes about school and about learning routines are enhanced through the application of effective homework practices.

3. The Purpose of Homework:

For homework to be most effective, principals and teachers need to have a clear understanding of the purpose of homework in their school, and be able to articulate that purpose to students and parents/guardians. Homework gives each student the opportunity to develop important skills, knowledge, attitudes, and values. A well- designed homework program:

- meets the needs of individual students;
- extends and supports learning through related out-of-school activities;
- provides positive, rather than punitive, experiences for students;
- encourages the development of self-discipline, good work habits, and positive attitudes towards independent study and lifelong learning;
- enables parents/guardians to see for themselves what their children are learning at school;
- provides opportunities for teachers, parents/guardians and students to develop and maintain good homework practices;
- enlists the support and invites the participation of parents/guardians as partners in learning;
- is communicated to parents/guardians in many ways including curriculum nights, parent-teacher conferences, student planners, School Council meetings, newsletters, and family education workshops;
- balances work in school and work at home.

4. Types of Homework:

	TYPE	REASON	EXAMPLES
1	Completion	To keep up-to-date with classroom work	Completing classroom assignments, including reading responses, notes, exercises, pieces of writing, reading selections.
2	Preparation	To prepare for the next day's class work or for coming lessons	- Collecting information, reading background materials, or studying for quizzes, tests and exams Using (planners) student agendas to establish regular study and review time
3	Practice and Application	To develop, review, and reinforce specific skills. To transfer skills or concepts into new situations	- Completing extra questions in a textbook if an assessment item demonstrates that the student has not mastered a skill (i.e., calculating tax, categorizing plants) - Writing a letter after being taught the components of a business letter - Reviewing and drilling of number operations and troublesome spelling words, where necessary Being read to, reading aloud, and independent reading
4	Extension/ Creative	- To enrich classroom experiences and deepen student's understanding - To provide opportunities for problem-solving and critical thinking - To integrate skills	- Identifying local plant and animal life in one's environment Working on projects, research and independent study - Inventing a product to solve a problem - Creating designs, stories, drama

5.0 Roles and Responsibilities in the Homework Partnership; School, Teachers, Parent/Guardians and Students:

In order for homework to be an effective extension of the school program, the school administration, teachers, parents/guardians and students share the responsibility for developing and maintaining good homework practices.

a) The school administration:

- develops school guidelines re: homework for use by teachers, parents/guardians and students;
- co-ordinates a variety of up-to-date library facilities and resources.
- explains to students and parents/guardians the purpose and importance of homework and its connection to school success;
- provides support to parents/guardians and students on establishing homework routines and effective study habits (e.g., time management, using (school planner) the Student Agenda);

- helps parents/guardians to support younger children's learning at home;
- is aware of and communicates to staff days of significance, e.g., Holy Days when assigning homework.

b) The teacher:

- works collaboratively with other teachers to assign reasonable amounts of homework, and to avoid overload in rotary class situations;
- provides homework that is clear, meaningful, purposeful, and understood;
- assigns work that is appropriate to the student's age, developmental level, learning style, maturity, skills, and individual needs in accordance with an identified student's Individual Education Plan (IEP)
- teaches skills necessary for the student to complete homework (e.g., note-making, preparation for upcoming test);
- uses homework as a vehicle for developing and reinforcing learning; (not as a punishment for misbehaviour or failure to perform as expected);
- monitors, checks, or evaluates homework, as appropriate;
- summarizes and reports on homework completion in the Learning Skills section of the Provincial Report Card.

c) The parent/guardian:

- provides encouragement and appropriate support, without doing the homework for the student;
- expects the student to complete homework regularly;
- provides an environment (i.e., workplace, block of uninterrupted time), usually in the home or in an alternate setting, e.g., Homework Club;
- shows interest in the student's schoolwork and progress;
- maintains regular contact with the teacher;
- continues to read to and with the student in English, French (French Immersion), or in the home language(s) of the family throughout the early years of a child's schooling.

d) The student:

- ensures that he/she clearly understands the homework (i.e., assignments, criteria, timelines);
- asks for help if homework assignments or expectations are not clear;
- completes homework regularly;
- prepares appropriately for upcoming lessons;
- participates actively in all aspects of the school program;
- manages time and materials appropriately (e.g., uses school planner, submits homework on time, organizes necessary materials);
- studies appropriately for tests and examinations;
- communicates regularly with teachers and parents/guardians;
- monitors progress and sets goals, as appropriate;
- assumes appropriate responsibility for homework completion as he or she proceeds through school.

6.0 Suggested Time Guidelines:

The amount of time a student spends on homework depends on a number of factors. These include:

- the student's needs;
- the student's age and grade;
- the student's work habits;
- the specific subject and its difficulty for the student;
- the student's school and home schedules;
- the proximity of tests, examinations and due dates;
- and the opportunities which the student has during the school day to complete homework.

The following chart is suggested as a general guide. It should be noted that times will vary from individual to individual, at various times within school year:

GRADE	MOST EVENINGS
JK - K	up to 10 minutes
Grade 1 - Grade 3	up to 10 - 20 minutes
Grade 4 - Grade 6	20 - 40 minutes
Grade 7 - Grade 8	30 - 60 minutes
Grade 9 - Grade 12	60 - 120 minutes

Homework includes being read to , reading aloud and independent reading. E.g., Home Reading Programs, "Homework in a Backpack" and use of community libraries.

7.0 Key Research Findings

- The single most important activity for building the knowledge required for eventual success in reading is reading aloud to children (Anderson et al 1985). For boys, it is critical that young men see an older/adult male role model reading (Connell, 1998).
- When families are involved in their children's education in positive ways, children achieve higher grades and test scores, have better attendance at school, complete more homework, demonstrate positive attitudes and behaviour, graduate at higher rates, and have greater enrollment in higher education (Henderson & Berla 1994; Becher 1984). Parents/guardians can emphasize good work habits, value learning and good character, set high expectations for their children, stay informed about their children's progress, and monitor their children's activities.
- If possible, parents/guardians should bring in a context to the homework. For fractions, use pieces of cake or pie. Addition, subtraction, multiplication, division and ratios may be reinforced by using concrete materials such as, coins, buttons. In reading to children point out the pictures on the page and how they relate to the reading.
- Studies show that what a family does to help children learn is more important to their academic success than family income or education. This is true whether the family is rich or poor, whether the parents/guardians finished high school or not, or whether the child is in preschool or in the upper grades (Coleman 1966; Epstein 1991a; Stevenson & Baker 1987; de Kanter, Ginsburg, & Milne 1986; Henderson & Berla 1994; Keith & Keith 1993; Lontos 1992; Walberg, n.d.). Higher achievement is, in part, the result of the increased amount of homework completed by students with families who are more involved in their education. Parent/guardian attitudes about homework have direct, positive effects on their children's attitudes and, in the higher grades, on their children's classroom achievements (Cooper & Lindsay & Nye & Greathouse 1998).

- Research suggests that, in general, students who do homework have higher achievement scores than students who do not do homework. Supervised study has a more positive effect than homework in the elementary grades up to Grade 6, whereas homework is more effective for junior high (Grades 7-9) and high school students (Cooper 1994). Our attitudinal survey reports that boys often do not see the connection between homework and achievement (School Attitudinal Survey 1998-2000).
- Homework in the earlier grades promotes good attitudes and study habits, and can have a long-term effect that reveals itself later on, when the student moves into secondary school. Therefore, research supports the assignment of homework in early grades, not necessarily for its immediate effects on achievement, but rather for its potential long-term impact (Cooper & Lindsay & Nye & Greathouse 1998).
- Many studies reveal a strong link between student reports of time spent on homework and student achievement. Increasing the time spent on homework has more of a positive effect on the achievement of students in the higher grades (Cooper 1994).

Appendix:

None

Effective Date

2001-09-10

Amended/Reviewed

2006-06-07

2011-03-04

2016-11-15