Introduction

This booklet is designed to assist parents and caregivers in supporting their children during the home study tasks. It is hoped that this information will provide a clear picture of teacher expectations and the various homework assignment systems this school has in place.

As with all our policies, we encourage you to consult with us and discuss any matters of concern at a mutually agreeable time. Please find the time to peruse the contents of this publication and contact us should you require any further information.

The Purpose of Homework

Homework is encouraged as it:

a) Gives the child another opportunity of doing individualised learning
b) Develops work and study habits
c) Allows children to catch up on or practise school work
d) Allows parents to see the standard and content of work performed at school
e) Encourages children to think that education is a lifelong process and does not exist solely in a school.

When and Where to do Homework

Each family’s routine and household is unique and therefore the actual location and time of children's homework will differ. We would suggest that the following be taken into consideration when setting the homework routines in your house:

1. Where possible, homework should be done at the same time each day. This helps to promote consistency [and helps to avoid last minute rushing!]. It also encourages children to see that homework is important by setting aside a special time.
2. When choosing the location for children to work on home study tasks, choose a place away from distortions such as televisions, computer games, radios, stereos and other noises.
3. Children should do their work on a flat surface such as a desk or table. There should be plenty of room for any required study aids. [Sitting on the floor or lying on a bed will not produce the best writing].
4. Remember that children may differ in their needs and thinking patterns. Some may wish to do their homework as soon as they get home, others may wish to wind down and play first. Some students may work better early in the morning before school. See which method works well for your child and then make it part of the routine.

Suggested Times per Year Level

The listed times are suggestions only. The actual time your child will need to spend on homework will depend on a range of factors:

1. The child’s ability
2. The range of activities for the week
3. The difficulty level of the week’s work
4. Any interruptions or distractions that may occur during the homework period.

The suggested times per weeknight [Monday to Thursday] are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year(s)</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1, 2</td>
<td>10 to 15 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3, 4</td>
<td>15 to 25 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5, 6</td>
<td>25 to 30 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>30 to 45 mins</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The School Homework Routines
Each class has a different system of homework. These are carefully explained to all children at the beginning of each year. A summary of these occurs below.

**Years 1 – 3**

1. Each child will receive a weekly homework sheet that will list maths activities, language activities, class reminders and spelling activities (Year 2 & 3 only). This will be housed in a homework folder and should be brought to school each day so that the teacher can check progress. Parents are asked to sign this sheet upon completion of the activities. All activities should be completed and handed in by Friday morning.

2. Each child in the lower grades will also be given a reading folder. This folder will contain a reading book and a comments page. Children are asked to read the allocated book each night (Monday to Thursday). Some longer books may take two or three nights. Parents are then asked to sign the comments sheet and list any appropriate comments. These may include: ‘This book was easily read’ or ‘had difficulty with the following words…’ or ‘This book was very difficult’.
   
The time spent doing this reading activity will differ depending upon the child’s ability and age. (Parents must bear the suggested allocated times in mind). The reading folder should be handed in daily to allow the staff to check comments and allocate a new reader.

3. Homework sheets will be marked and returned to the child on the following Monday. This allows children to review their corrected work. Sheets should be returned the next day and will be retained by the teacher as part of an ongoing work file that is kept for each child.

**Years 4 – 7**

1. Each child will receive a weekly homework sheet that will list a homework plan, maths activities, language activities, class reminders and spelling activities. This will be housed in a homework folder that also contains their Personal Spelling and Number facts List. The whole folder should be brought to school each day so that the teacher can check progress and help with revision where necessary.
   
   Parents are asked to sign this sheet upon completion of the activities. All activities should be completed and handed in by Friday morning.

2. Homework sheets will be marked and returned to the child on the following Monday. This allows children to review their corrected work and to remedy any errors they may have made. This ‘repeated’ work should be listed on the back of the appropriate homework sheet clearly showing the activity number etc. Sheets should be returned the next day and will be retained by the teacher as part of an ongoing work file that is kept for each child.

3. Students are encouraged to seek help from the teacher if they encounter any difficulty with a set task, however this consultation must occur before the due date of the activity.

**How the Homework Plan Works**

Students in the older class are asked to set themselves a homework plan each week. An outline of this plan appears on each homework sheet children in Years 4 – 6 and in their student diary for children in Year 7.

The aim of the homework plan is to encourage children to think about and plan for their home learning activities. In this way, they are practising setting and achieving work goals which is a very important skill needed in future years of education. By checking the progress of homework against the plan, students, parents and teachers can assess if the child is carrying out their home study periods effectively. An example of the homework plan format occurs below.

The following diagram shows an example of a completed homework plan for a student in Year 6. In this example, the student cannot do any homework on Wednesday night because of their involvement with a youth group therefore they make up the time on the other nights.

**How Much Help Should a Parent Give?**
The amount of assistance your child will need to complete their allotted work can vary depending on a number of factors. These may include:

1. The child's ability and age
2. The nature and difficulty level of the week's work.

It is best to look through the week's homework tasks as soon as possible. This will give both students and parents some idea of the assistance that may be required during the week. (At times children may need access to books, magazines or other materials and it is best to have these on hand and in advance). The following list may help provide a step by step method for supervising homework.

1. Each night before the child starts their homework, quickly go through the allocated tasks and check that the child understands what is required.
2. Allow the child to then proceed to complete the tasks that they can do on their own.
3. Check the tasks when complete and assist if needed.
4. Now set aside some time for activities such as reading aloud etc.
5. List any appropriate comments for the teacher on reading or homework sheets.
6. Place all necessary folders and materials back in school bag ready to take to school the next day.

The level of supervision required largely depends on both the age and the attitude of the student. Generally the older the student becomes, the less supervision that is needed.

Hints for Helping with Number Facts

There are many ways to learn and revise number facts (Tables). Try a combination of these:

**Quick Test**
Test a different operation each night. For example Mon. (+), Tues (-), Wed. (+), Thurs. (x)

**Turn Around Facts**
Take one number fact and turn it around to make three others.
For example: 6+4=10 can be turned around to make 4+6=10, 10-4=6, 10-6=4
18 ÷3=6 can be turned around to make 18÷6=3, 6x3=18, 3x6=18 etc.

**Doubles and Near Doubles**
Have children practise their doubles facts. Eg. 5+5=10, 6+6=12, 7+7=14 etc. then add near doubles to the list 4+5=9 → 5+5=10 ← 5+6=11 etc.

**Count On/Count Back**
Children start with one number and count on or back to add and subtract another number. For example 8+3 would be done as 8 (count one) 9 (count two) 10 (count three) = 11

**Arrays and Patterns**
This method is especially good for lower and middle grades
For example 3x4=12 can be shown as * * * * or 12 ÷ 3 = 4 can be shown as * * * *

**Speed Facts**
Check how fast your children can write out a given set of number facts. For example the first ten multiplication facts of 5 in 40 seconds etc. Try and set a household record!

Patterns of 10
Revise pattern of 10 and links to patterns of 9 (or less)
For example

\begin{align*}
10 + 1 &= 11 & 9 + 1 &= 10 \\
10 + 2 &= 12 & 9 + 2 &= 11 \\
10 + 3 &= 13 & 9 + 3 &= 12 \\
\end{align*}

Hints for Helping with Spelling

The most important aspect of spelling revision is for students to revise all core works and their Personal Spelling List and not just the words of the week. Try these strategies for revision.

**Syllables**
Break works into syllables and learn each part. Eg: happy = hap + py
Carpenter = car + pen + ter

**Nightly Testing**
Test (verbal or written) a group of words each night. Try a different group each night.

**Affixes**
Practise base words and add affixes to them. Build up families of words this way.
Smile → smiles → smiled → smiling
Happy → happiness → happily

**Spelling Signs**
Make small signs to show the different words from spelling lists and place these in locations where children often look. For example: bedroom door, bathroom, mirror, etc.

**Spelling in Context**
Use the spelling words in written sentences and have children identify them in a passage. Children could also write their own sentences using the words.

**Jumble Words**
Jumble up the letters in a word and ask children to sort them out. G: jgnlue → jungle etc.

**Word Mazes**
Create a word maze out of several words and ask children to find them. For example: mean, cat
men combine to make a maze like this:
\[
\begin{array}{cccc}
n & m & m & r \\
t & e & a \\
t & c & a & t \\
m & e & n & o \\
\end{array}
\]

**Rhyming Parts/Groups**
Ask children to put words into rhyming parts or groups. This will mean they link words to each other. Eg. bag, rag, tag, nag, sag are linked by the ag ending.

**Look, Cover, Spell, Check**
Have children use this strategy to revise a list of words.
- Look at the word (and spell it out loud)
- Cover the word
- Spell the word (out loud)
- Check by spelling the word (out loud)

**Speed Spelling**
See how fast your child can write out the words of the week. Set family records and try to beat it each week.

Hints for Helping with Reading
All children should be encouraged to read a variety of material. One of the best methods of motivating your child to read is by leading by example. Allow your child to see you reading often.

**Here are some other hints for reading with your child.**

**What to do when they come to a word they don’t know.**
1. Skip the word and come back to it later when further text may have given clues.
2. Look at any pictures in the book which may provide a clue.
3. Look for smaller words within the word which might help. Eg. Walk-a-thon or cupboard
4. Break the word into syllables.
5. Think of words that are similar that the child may know to provide a clue. Eg. tall → stall
6. Sound it out.

**Starting a new book**
When starting a new book, allow the child some time to look quickly through the book at any pictures there may be. Ask the child to guess what the book might be about. This helps set the child’s mind to the task at hand.

**Keeping track of text**
Often younger children lose their place in text easily. They can jump form line to line missing words as they go. If this occurs ask the child to reread the passage to check whether it makes sense. (They could also use their finger or a ruler to keep their place but this method should be used sparingly).

**Comprehending**
It is important that the child not only be able to read but s/he must also be able to understand what they are reading. When your child finishes a passage, ask them to retell it to you in their own words. Another way is to ask them to predict what might happen next in the story.

**Encouraging Reading**
All children should be encouraged to read and most children will read especially if the subject matter interests them. This may mean they prefer to read comics or magazines rather than longer novels. It is probably better for them to read magazines than nothing at all!
Take them to the library regularly. Even the fussiest reader will have difficulty not finding something to read there.
Make a game out of reading by challenging children to see who can find a road or advertising sign first while you are driving, etc.
Encourage and discuss reading of newspaper articles with older children. This can lead to some very interesting family debates!

**Shared Reading**
Some reluctant readers may feel happier if you share the reading load with them. If this is the case then take turns to read the text, i.e. you read a page then they read a page etc. Make sure you praise good reading and encourage fluency and expression.

**Planning for Assignments**
Children in older classes will be given regular assignments. These may take the form of research activities, science reports, biographies, group projects etc.

The more complex assignments will be set on a basis of one per term. These activities will be explained to students and a written outline of the project and deadlines will be issue. Children are encouraged to inform their parents about all assignments and reminders will regularly be placed on the homework sheets.

Although each assignment will be different in nature and content, the following overview may help in planning for their completion.
1. Before the assignment
   At many times, children will be allowed to choose their own topics within a given subject area. It is important that they make this choice based on the resource materials available to them. Therefore when choosing a topic, children should check they have enough of the appropriate information available to them. Once a choice is made, it may be too late to change it later.

2. Starting the assignment
   Children should carefully review the information about the assignment details given to them (verbally or written) by the teacher. They must be clear about the expectations of the teacher before they start. They must then use a calendar to set deadlines about each of the steps needed to complete the assignment. (Students in Year 7 should use pages in their student diary for this purpose). The basic steps are set out below.

3. Planning the assignment
   Children should do a plan that shows the different parts of their project. They may even make a sketch of what the finished project may look like. Once their plan is complete they can start ot research the separate areas.

4. Draft Notes
   Under the appropriate headings children should gather notes from a variety of sources concerning their set topic. They should ensure they keep a list of their sources as children in the older classes are expected to complete a bibliography for many of their projects.

5. First Draft
   Using their plan and draft notes, children can now write their first draft. It is often better to write on every second line which allows more space for editing. Those students who use a word processor should regularly save and print out their work in case a fault develops with the computer. The first draft should be carefully checked by the student and amended where necessary.

6. Diagrams, Charts Pictures
   Now is a good time to gather appropriate diagrams or pictures to support the written text. Students should refer to the assignment guidelines to check that the chosen pictures etc. are relevant.

7. Second Draft
   Using their amended first draft, children should compile their second draft. Incorporating spaces for diagrams or pictures etc. This draft could be checked by a fellow student or parents to ensure accuracy.

8. Final Draft
   This step may not be necessary if the second draft is adequate however some children may need to write a third copy.

When to Ask Teachers for Help

All home study tasks are given to children along with an explanation of what is required however at times more detail may be needed by the individual.

Students should always feel free to approach the teacher for assistance with a home study task. This approach should be made after they have attempted to solve the problem themselves. They may even be asked “Show me what you have tried” before the teacher gives some help. It is best to ask for help before school or at lunch time rather than waiting until the bus is about to depart for the afternoon!
Asking for help does not mean the teacher will automatically provide the answer. He/she may simply provide clues to assist the students or indeed they may work through a similar problem to illustrate a point.

Parents should not hesitate to talk to the teacher (at a mutually agreeable time) about any homework concerns especially if your child is having difficulty with the work that is set. At times parent themselves, can be challenged by the content of homework sheets. One of the most common phrases we hear is “But you don’t do the … the way I learnt it at school”. We are only too happy to explain the format or methods that are used.

Please remember that homework is just another aspect of the partnership that exists between the home and the school in the process of providing the best education possible for your child.

Feel free to contact us if you require more information about this part of your child’s education at our school.