



HOME LEARNING POLICY

Rationale:

Homework and practise helps students by complementing and reinforcing classroom learning, fostering good lifelong learning and study habits, and providing an opportunity for students to be responsible for their own learning.

The school recognises that valuable learning takes place beyond formal school hours, including spending time with extended family, sport, outdoor play and other non-school activities. Homework and practise expectations will be balanced with this understanding of life experience.

Aims:

At Moonee Ponds Primary School, the aim of home learning is:

- To provide opportunities for students to revise, consolidate, extend and apply their learning.
- To help students develop good study habits, foster positive attitudes towards school and communicate to students the idea that learning involves practise at home as well as at school.
- To provide opportunities for parents or carers to participate in their child's education.
- To help students develop organisational and time-management skills, self-discipline, skills in using out-of-school resources and build personal responsibility for learning.

Definitions: Home Learning refers to the homework and practise tasks that are assigned to students by teachers that are meant to be completed outside of school hours.

Classroom Instruction that Works¹ explains that homework and practise can be assigned for different purposes, and depending on the purpose, the form of homework and the feedback provided students, will differ. There are two common purposes for homework:

1. **Practice** exercises, which provide opportunities for students to apply new knowledge or to review, revise and reinforce newly-acquired skills, such as practising spelling words, completing consolidation exercises for Mathematics, or practising words/phrases learnt in a Language Other Than English (LOTE). When homework is assigned for practise of a skill, students should be familiar with the skill. Practising a skill that is unfamiliar is not only inefficient but can reinforce misconceptions and habituate errors.
2. **Preparation or Elaboration** assignments, which encourage students to pursue knowledge individually and imaginatively, for example, writing a book review, finding material on the Internet, or completing online activities set by the teacher. These tasks can be set to encourage students to begin thinking about a topic or concept before learning about it in class. Similarly, after a topic or concept has been introduced, students can be asked to elaborate on what they have learnt. In both of

¹ Marzano, J., Pickering, D & Pollock, J. E. 2005 Classroom Instruction That Works: research-based strategies for increasing student achievement Pearson/Merrill Prentic Hall, Upper Saddle River, N. J.



these situations, it is not necessary that students have an in-depth understanding of the content (as is the case when homework is used for practise).

Compliance requirements & research:

The Department of Education states that schools must have a documented approach to homework which takes into account the personal and developmental needs of students.

The setting of homework needs to take into consideration the need for students to have a balanced lifestyle. This includes sufficient time for family, sport and recreation and cultural pursuits.

Implementation of good homework policy involves:

- communication between teachers; between teachers and students and parents/carers
- relates homework activity to what is taught in the classroom
- sets up an element of challenge in the homework to be set
- individualised homework activities/plans, aligned with individualised learning styles and abilities
- links homework activities with prompt, appropriate assessment and feedback.

The school homework approach should be informed by a shared understanding and be regularly monitored through feedback from teachers, students, parents/carers and the school council as appropriate.

Research: The Value of Homework

According to the Department, homework is one way of supporting and fostering life-long learning and connecting families with the learning of their children. The departmental view is that homework 'helps students by:

- complementing and reinforcing classroom learning
- fostering good lifelong learning and study habits
- providing an opportunity for students to become responsible for their own learning
- developing self-regulation processes such as goal-setting, self-efficacy, self-reflection and time management
- supporting partnerships with parents by connecting families with the learning of their children.

However, the usefulness of homework in supporting student learning at primary school level is not clearly supported by evidence. In August 2014, the Education and Training Committee of the Parliament of Victoria completed an inquiry into the approaches to homework in Victorian schools, focusing on the impact on student learning. Specific findings of the committee relevant to this homework policy included:

- 'Homework can reduce the amount of time available to pursue other activities and interests which may have equal or greater long-term benefit'.
- 'There is strong evidence and general agreement that homework at the primary school level has little impact on academic performance, but may play an important transitional role in preparing students for secondary school and beyond'.



- ‘Measuring homework by the time spent doing it is an imprecise and inadequate measure that does not take into account the quality of the work or the ability of the student or, increasingly importantly, student access to technology’.

One of the submissions to the committee was from Professor John Hattie, Director of the Melbourne Educational Research Institute at the University of Melbourne, and considered one of Australia’s leading educational researchers. Hattie has completed a “meta-study” (study of studies) of more than 800 meta-analyses (covering 50,000 studies) concerning the issue of what works best for student achievement. This meta-study, “Visible Learning” (2009), found that amongst all the influences on student achievement, homework had a very small influence. It is for this reason that the MPPS approach to homework is based around daily reading, targeted practise tasks and developing good study habits and time-management.

Implementation:

At Moonee Ponds Primary School, home learning tasks will be set according to the following guidelines:

Year level	Homework - type	Time expectations
Foundation to Year 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Will mainly consist of daily reading to, with, and by parents/carer or older siblings.• May involve simple extension tasks associated with classroom activities and gathering of additional information or materials.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 15 minutes per day (reading only)
Years 3 and 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Should include daily independent reading.• Weekly vocabulary and maths practice.• May involve simple extension tasks associated with classroom activities, projects, and research.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Will generally not exceed 30 minutes per week (plus 20 min daily independent reading).• May be set on weekends or school holidays.
Years 5 and 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Should include daily independent reading.• Weekly writing (blog), reading response and maths practise.• May involve simple extension tasks associated with classroom activities, projects and assignments, and research.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Will generally not exceed 2 hours per fortnight (plus 20+ min daily independent reading).• May be set on weekends or school holidays.

The homework types specified above are consistent with departmental guidelines. The Department no longer provides an indication of appropriate homework duration, and there is no evidence to support a specific minimum amount of time being spent on homework. The above guidelines as to time are therefore provided on an indicative basis only.



If students attend an extended family holiday, they are expected to continue reading daily and to keep a journal. Due to the large number of students who travel within our school, and the ever-changing curriculum, teachers will not provide extra tasks for students on extended holidays. Families are encouraged to plan holidays outside of school terms to maximise the time students spend at school. For further information regarding attendance, please see the DET resource “Every Day Counts” at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/health/Pages/studentattendance.aspx>

Students will have consistent homework expectations across their year level. Information regarding the homework expectations at each year level, will be published in the Year Level Information books on the class blogs and in the parent download section of the school website at <http://www.mpp.vic.edu.au/our-school/community/>

Consequences:

Consequences for not completing homework will be established by the class at the beginning of the year. For example if students do not complete their homework, they may need to complete the task during the school day (in lieu of other activities), during part of recess or part of lunch.

Where there is a concern about failure to complete homework and practise on a regular basis, a follow up meeting with the teacher and parents/carers will be arranged so that challenges can be identified and an action plan implemented.

Expectations:

The role of the teacher:

- To assign learning tasks that are appropriate to the skill level and age of the students,
- To ensure that home learning is purposeful, meaningful and relevant to the curriculum, and open-ended (where appropriate).
- To explain home learning tasks and how to complete them.
- To assess homework and provide timely and practical feedback and support. This may be done by connecting the tasks to the following days instruction, individual review and feedback, and follow up support when required.
- At the beginning of the year, to provide parents with an overall outline of the home learning expectations and the experiences that are considered appropriate.
- To contact the parents/guardians if concerned about a child’s home learning.

The role of the student:

- To take responsibility for and complete their home learning tasks.
- To read at home every day.
- To engage in learning experiences and activities at home.
- To share and communicate their home learning with their parents.
- To talk to the teacher about homework problems. In the older year levels, students should speak to or email their teacher directly when they have any concerns. This helps prepare them for the transition to secondary school.



- Students from years 3 to 6 should use home learning diaries. Diaries support students with planning and organising their time and provide a means of regular communication between parents and the school.

The role of the parents/guardians:

- To encourage your child to take responsibility for their own home learning.
- To encourage their children to establish good home learning habits from early primary school such as a home learning schedule, check list, timetable etc. Help your child establish either a consistent schedule for completing homework or help them create a schedule each Sunday night that reflects that particular week's activities. Check tasks off when they are completed.
- To help set up a consistent, conducive, organised place for home learning to be done.
- With older students: encourage motivate and prompt your child but do not sit with them and do the homework with them. The purpose of the homework is for your child to practise and use what they have learned. If your child is consistently not able to do the homework by themselves, please contact the teacher.
- If your child is practising a skill, to ask them to tell you which steps are easy for them, which are difficult, or how they are going to improve. If your child is doing a project, ask them what knowledge they are applying in the project. If your child is consistently unable to talk about knowledge they are practising, please contact the teacher.
- If completing homework in the evening, when bedtime comes, please stop your child, even if they are not done.
- To contact the teacher to discuss any concerns they may have regarding home learning.

References:

DET Homework Guidelines

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/curriculum/Pages/guidelines.aspx>

DET Homework Expectations

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/curriculum/Pages/expectations.aspx>

MPPS Student Engagement Policy

<http://www.mpp.vic.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/MPPS-Student-Engagement-Policy-2014-2.pdf>

Inquiry into the approaches to homework in Victorian Schools

Education and Training Committee "Inquiry into the approaches to homework in Victorian Schools" Final Report (August 2015), p. x. Available from: <http://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/57th-parliament/etc/article/2173>

https://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/images/stories/committees/etc/Homework_Inquiry/Homework_Inquiry_final_report.pdf

Classroom Instruction that Works

Marzano, J., Pickering, D & Pollock, J. E. 2005 Classroom Instruction That Works: research-based strategies for increasing student achievement Pearson/Merrill Prentice Hall, Upper Saddle River, N. J.

<http://www.pearson.com.au/products/D-G-Dean-Hubbell/Classroom-Instruction-that-Works-Research-Based-Strategies-for-Increasing-Student-Achievement/9780133366723?R=9780133366723>

Evaluation:

This policy will be evaluated on a 4 year review cycle.

Key Person responsible for development of the Home Learning Policy: Principal

This policy was last ratified by School Council in....

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