



Policy Title: Homework Policy

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Last Reviewed: 2010

Related Policies:

- ETD – Curriculum Requirements in ACT Public Schools, Preschool to Year 10 (*Identifier CRIAPS200903*)
- ETD - Gifted and Talented Students Policy (*Identifier GAT200808*)
- ETD - Reporting On Student Achievement And Progress To Students And Parents (*Identifier SAP200606*)

Legislation: Education Act (2004)

1. Policy Statement

This policy is based upon research findings and the combined opinions expressed by the parents, carers, students and teachers of Maribyrnong Primary School. The homework policy of Maribyrnong Primary School is a guide to teachers and parents for helping children with homework. Homework is an extension of school activities. It is an opportunity for children to practice skills and enrich ideas developed at school. Homework is an opportunity for child and adult to interact in learning.

2. Purpose

This policy outlines how homework will be incorporated into education programs at Maribyrnong Primary School. It provides a rationale for homework as well as the processes and procedures for participating in homework. This policy recognises the importance to children's learning of positive partnerships between school and families.

3. Rationale

Six key factors underpin homework for Maribyrnong Primary School children:

- Children are not little adults and therefore cannot be expected to study at home as adults may study, or to work as adults may work. Children spend six hours a day at school and are usually tired or 'filled' with school learning by the end of the day, homework must be kept to a minimum and of a light, relaxed nature.
- The best homework a child can do is 'family living' - talking, listening, playing, being active and sharing interests with siblings and parents. It is these things, which promote learning about life and enhance the values of the child.
- Homework is more effective if children can see their parents and carers genuinely engaged in the same or similar activity thus providing a model of appropriate attitudes to learning.
- Homework is more effective if adults provide positive feedback to children of their work.
- Maribyrnong Primary School has a focus on whole-school approaches and therefore, homework is consistent across any given year level.
- Maribyrnong Primary School believes in developing the whole child and as such homework will focus on many developmental domains to facilitate this.

4. Definitions

- Child - Any student enrolled at Maribyrnong Primary School.
- Adult - The parent or carer of the child and/or the adult assisting with homework task/s.
- Homework – Tasks set to be completed in the home setting that build upon learning that has happened in the school setting.

5. Research

A common parental view is that homework leads to improved academic achievement. Research to date on the academic benefits of homework has produced inconclusive and mixed results. Some studies have shown that homework does deliver academic benefits for children as young as those in year 2, while other studies show little correlation between academic results and undertaking homework. The research does show that academic benefits are more obvious for secondary-school children. There is general academic agreement that homework may provide non-academic benefits, including developing children's achievement and motivation and assisting them to become mature learners. There is also research showing that parents and carers may benefit from homework through becoming more involved in their child's education. A summary of the research and literature available on homework is attached as an appendix to this policy for stakeholder's further information.

Owing to the inconclusive nature of research into the link between homework and academic achievement, homework is not included in Maribyrnong Primary School's formal reporting procedures.

6. Procedures

At Maribyrnong Primary School:

6.1 Homework time will vary in duration and frequency according to the age of the individual child. As such no set homework time is identified. Time spent on homework should be responsive to the age and development of children, and sufficient to provide an enjoyable experience without impacting adversely on family and child leisure time. As a broad guide students in kindergarten to year two undertake no more than 15 minutes homework each weeknight, students in year three and year four undertake no more than 20 minutes homework each weeknight and students in year five and six undertake no more than 30 minutes homework each weeknight.

6.2 Homework is set by year level teachers. Teaching teams plan homework together to ensure consistency across classes. At Maribyrnong Primary School we use a Learn @ Home Matrix that offers a range of learning experiences with varied time allocations and frequencies. This approach acknowledges the commitment to sport, cultural activities, community service and the arts that many students engage in out of school time and is therefore included as homework on the matrix. Physical activity and completing jobs within the home setting are also incorporated into the Learn @ Home Matrix. At times, specifically in the middle and senior grades, project-based activities will be provided to students to expand their knowledge of a topic of study by encouraging independent research.

6.3 Parents and carers are the first and lifelong educators of their children. They have the responsibility and the right to decide on their child's participation in homework. Therefore feedback on completed homework will be given but homework will not be assessed unless specifically stated by the teacher. This assessment will not contribute towards year level assessment. There will be no sanction for not participating in homework and children will not be kept from playtime or precluded from other class activities to complete unfinished homework.

6.4 Parents and carers can support their child by:

- Providing a suitable environment in which homework can be done.
- Encouraging the child to complete and submit the homework.
- Encouraging the child to 'have a go' before providing assistance.
- Ensuring that homework does not become a burden on the child by balancing 'work' and play.
- Reporting to the child's teacher any concerns with the nature and quantity of homework or any concerns the child is having completing the work.

Help and guidance by parents is encouraged, however the end result should be the child's own work.



7. Education, Communication & Evaluation

- Parents and carers will be informed of the Homework Policy when they enrol their child at Maribyrnong Primary School.
- The school will communicate the Homework Policy through the school website and a copy will also be kept in a policy register at the front office. The Homework Policy will be freely available for parents and carers through these avenues.
- The school will ensure that the information on homework procedures will be conveyed to new staff when they commence at the school.
- The school will review the Homework Policy to ensure it complies with any new guidelines that may be published by the ACT Education and Training Directorate.
- The Homework Policy is due to be formally reviewed in 2016.

8. Contact

- For further information please contact the school executive team at Maribyrnong Primary School.

Literature Review on Homework Research

Effect Size

Researchers often attempt to draw conclusions from a number of studies concerned with a particular topic or issue, either through a statistical meta-analysis or a narrative review of the relevant literature. Meta-analysis requires the researcher to quantify aspects of research studies and to submit these data to statistical analysis. Meta-analysis allows the researcher to arrive at quantitative conclusions, referred to as effect sizes, concerning a number of research studies. Effect sizes may be positive or negative, indicating enhanced or debilitated outcomes respectively. An effect size of 0.2 is generally considered small, effect sizes 0.4 to 0.5 are generally considered medium, while effect sizes of 0.6 to 0.8 are generally considered large. Effect sizes greater than 0.8 are considered to be very large, and effect size of 1.0 indicates an improvement of one standard deviation on an outcome. There are, in addition to the actual effect size score, various ways of explaining the meaning and relevance of the effect size finding. One of these is known as the Common Language Effect (Hattie 2009). The Common Language Effect is based on probability theory and indicates the probability that an effect score sampled from one statistical distribution is greater than one sampled from another distribution (Horsley and Walker, 2013).

In 2009, John Hattie conducted a synthesis (or a meta-meta-analysis) of five meta-analyses of homework and achievement (Cooper 1989, 1994; Cooper, Robinson & Patall, 2006; DeBaz, 1994; Paschal, Weinstein & Walberg, 1984) that were conducted between 1984-2006. The five meta-analysis provides the most definitive findings concerning experimental and quasi-experimental (research in which individuals cannot be assigned randomly to two groups, but some environmental factor influences who belongs to each group) studies which have examined the causal impact of homework on student achievement compared to no homework.

In this meta-analysis, about 65% of the analyses produced positive effects while 35% of the analyses produced effects that were zero or negative. Hattie found that the overall effect size for homework was 0.29, which indicates that homework has a beneficial but moderately small influence on student achievement. In terms of Common Language Effect, this result indicates that 21% of students undertaking homework will benefit from it. That is in 21 times out of 100, homework will make a positive difference, or 21 %of students will gain in achievement compared to those not accessing homework. Or, if you take two classes, the one using homework will be more effective 21 out of a 100 times. The Common Language Effect assists us in interpreting the effect size of different interventions.

Feedback

Feedback has a powerful influence on successfully completing homework and learning from it. John Hattie (2009) identified that feedback is not just something that teachers provide for students, but it is most powerful when it is initiated by students, as a result of them monitoring their learning. The effect size of feedback, when timely and individualised, is 1.13. Feedback is a critical aspect of learning from homework, and getting and using feedback is a critical student homework behavior. Immediacy of feedback is important for learning and should be desired and sought by students. In the context of homework, feedback refers to information provided by more expert others such as teachers, parents and peers about the students' performance of the tasks rather than rewards, praise and marks that do not reflect the nature of the tasks. Homework feedback should answer the following questions:

- Is my approach to this homework task correct or incorrect?
- Are the subject skills and knowledge I am using to complete it working?
- What do I need to do now to complete the homework?

Task Design

Cooper (1989a) reviewed the relationship of homework quality to achievement. He categorised homework into 'same-day tasks' and 'practice and preparation tasks'. Same-day tasks primarily involve repetitive exercises of tasks or material on the same day that the homework was assigned. Practice and preparation tasks are more cognitively demanding tasks where students prepare for upcoming class activities or help them to practice or review their understanding of activities already dealt with in class. Such tasks are often highly reflective and



connect student's current level of understanding to investigating new knowledge, skills and understanding (Wiliam, 2001). Cooper identified varied effect sizes ranging from 0.07 to 0.52 for homework that involved tasks related to practice and preparation with 0.01 effect size being attributed to 'same-day' tasks.

Parental Involvement

Homework theory and research suggests that the relationship between parental involvement and student achievement outcomes may be complicated and that parental involvement in homework may have both benefits and disadvantages when considering student achievements (Cooper, 1989a; Corno, 1996; Hoover-Dempsey, Battiato, Walker, Reed, Dejong, Jones, 2001).

Hoover-Dempsey et al (2001) summarised how parents may be involved in homework activities in ways that are beneficial to the student:

- Establish physical and psychological structures for the child's homework performance.
- Interact with the school or teacher about homework.
- Provide general oversight of the homework performance.
- Respond to student's homework performance.
- Engage in homework processes and tasks with the child.
- Engage in meta-strategies designed to create a fit between task demands and the child's skill levels.
- Engage in interactive processes supporting the child's understanding of homework.
- Engage in meta-strategies designed to help the child learn processes conducive to achievement.

Through these activities, Hoover-Dempsey et al. (2001) indicate that students benefit from parental modeling, reinforcement and feedback on personal performance and capability, and instruction that supports the development of attitudes, knowledge and behaviours associated with successful school learning and performance.

The flipside of this stance is that parental involvement in homework may lead to greater student anxiety, frustration and conflict with parents (Patall, Cooper & Robinson, 2008; Corno, 1996). The negative emotions students may experience as a consequence of parental involvement in homework may reduce their motivation and their confidence in their own abilities, leading to an unwillingness to engage in any homework task. Parental involvement may also be inappropriate and hinder a student's development when the parent does the homework for them. The latter point is given extra weight from the findings of a study by Cooper, Lindsay and Nye (2000) that found that two-thirds of parents reported excessive parental involvement, including giving students the correct answers without allowing them to solve the question and in some instances, completing the homework in its entirety.

Student Motivation and Meta-cognition

Zimmerman and Schunk (2001) suggest that the theories of self-regulation should be addressed in the homework debate. Self-regulation is concerned with the ways that learners control, direct and regulate their own cognitive and emotional learning processes. The body of research has demonstrated that self-regulated learning is essential for academic achievement outcomes at school as well as for lifelong learning habits. Theories of self-regulation also emphasise the role of meta-cognition in learning. Metacognitive regulation comprises the learner's capacity to control, direct and regulate their cognitive processes. When the learner is undertaking tasks such as underlining the key words, making notes when researching or recording the most efficient mental computation

strategy when completing math tasks they are reflecting on the strategies learners use. These strategies are often considered to be 'study skills' as they can be utilised by lifelong learners in a range of fields.

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