Homework Policy

PURPOSE OF HOMEWORK

Homework:
• is a valuable part of schooling
• allows for practising, extending and consolidating work completed in class
• provides training for students in planning and organising their time
• develops a range of skills in identifying and using information resources
• establishes habits of study, concentration and self-discipline which will serve students for the rest of their lives
• strengthens home-school links
• reaffirms the role of parents and caregivers as partners in education
• provides parents and caregivers with insights into what is being taught in the classroom and the progress of their child/ren
• provides additional support for students in areas of need

Homework is most beneficial when:
• it reinforces and extends class work and consolidates basic skills and knowledge
• it is challenging and purposeful, but not so demanding that it has adverse effects on the student’s motivation
• parents or caregivers are involved in the formulation and implementation of the school’s homework policy
• students take responsibility for their homework, supported by their parents or caregivers
• it is well coordinated and teacher expectations are well communicated
• it is set on a regular basis and establishes a routine of home study
• teachers set suitable amounts of homework which are varied and at an appropriate level considering the age, stage of schooling and capabilities of students
• it takes into account students’ home responsibilities and extracurricular activities such as clubs and sport
• it is marked promptly and accurately
• feedback and follow-up are provided regularly to students
• it develops and extends the core learning skills of inquiry and independent study.
TYPES OF HOMEWORK
The amount of time that students are expected to spend on homework will depend upon the age, ability, home environment and extracurricular activities of students, including family and cultural obligations. It is important that students of all ages have opportunities for free time, leisure and physical activities outside of school.

The three main types of homework are:

Practice exercises - providing students with the opportunities to apply new knowledge, or review, revise and reinforce newly acquired skills, including:
- consolidation exercise e.g. maths, including memorisation of tables
- practising for mastery e.g. spelling words
- revising information about a current topic
- practising words or phrases learnt in a language other than English
- reading for pleasure
- essay writing

Preparatory homework - providing opportunities for students to gain background information on a unit of study so that they are better prepared for future lessons, including:
- background reading
- reading e.g. English text for class discussion
- researching topics for a class unit of work
- collecting items e.g. geometric shapes.

Extension assignments - encouraging students to pursue knowledge individually and imaginatively, including:
- writing e.g. a book review
- making or designing something e.g. an art work
- investigations e.g. science, social science
- researching e.g. history, local news
- information and retrieval skills eg. using a home computer to find material on the Internet
- monitoring e.g. advertising in particular newspapers.

Wherever possible, homework should recognise the place of technology in today’s world and the benefits of using technology such as home computers, E-mail and the Internet for organising and accessing information. Schools, however, should have regard for equity issues when setting homework that relies upon the use of technology. Students who do not have access to such technology at home should not be disadvantaged.
SUCCESSFUL PRACTICE

Kindergarten - Year 2 (Early Stage 1 and Stage 1)
All activities at home or in play can assist children to develop a wide range of knowledge and skills including literacy, numeracy and problem solving. It should also be remembered that self-directed play in unstructured time is important. Language and number concepts can be introduced and consolidated in many family activities, including: shopping; preparation of food; listening to stories, learning songs and nursery rhymes; conversations about what is happening at school; interactive video and computer programs; reading; library borrowing; family outings; collecting items.

Years 3- 6 (Stages 2 and 3)
As students progress they increasingly work independently on their homework, however it is important that teachers continue to provide guidance and assistance, particularly in the development of study skills. It is also important that students have the opportunity to experience different types of homework and that the amount of time students’ are expected to work on homework is realistic.
Although most homework is likely to be set in the areas of English, Mathematics and Human Society and its Environment, it could be set across all areas of the curriculum.

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS AT AMBARVALE PUBLIC SCHOOL

All students at Ambarvale Public School are expected to complete homework on a weekly basis, including students with additional learning needs. Adjustments will be made to the content and expected time spent on homework to meet individual learning needs.

K – 2: Each week students should be given Spelling, Mathematics and Home Reading as homework activities. Students in Year 2 should be given “times” tables activities to learn as part of their homework each week as per grade expectations.
Recommended times to be spent on homework (4 nights per week)
Kindergarten: 15 minutes per night
Year 1: 20 minutes per night
Year 2: 20 minutes per night

3 - 6: Each week students should be given Spelling, English, Mathematics and Home Reading as homework activities. Students should be given “times” tables activities to learn/revise as part of their homework each week as per grade expectations. Students in Years 3 to 6 should be given a minimum of 1 project/assignment per semester.
Recommended times to be spent on homework (4 nights per week)
Year 3: 30 minutes
Year 4: 30 minutes
Year 5: 30 minutes
Year 6: 30 - 45 minutes in preparation for high school

NB: Homework should be issued in written form to the students. If for any reason, students write down any aspects of their homework to complete, it should be checked and signed by the teacher to verify the accuracy of the homework to complete and the correctness of spelling in particular.
EXPECTATIONS AT AMBARVALE PUBLIC SCHOOL

We believe the role of the teacher is to:

- explain to students and parents/caregivers the purpose and benefits of homework
- ensure students and parents/caregivers are aware of the school's homework policy
- provide quality homework activities, which relate to class work and meet the minimum requirements at Ambarvale P.S.
- set a suitable amount of relevant homework which is appropriate to the ability of each student
- ensure that students are aware of what is expected of them, and how their work will be assessed
- give students sufficient time to complete their homework, taking into account, as far as possible, competing home obligations, extra-curricular activities and homework set by other teachers
- mark homework promptly and appropriately and maintain homework records
- provide a copy of the weekly homework sheet to their supervisor
- provide regular feedback to students
- provide parents/caregivers with relevant feedback when appropriate
- promptly alert parents/caregivers of any developing problems concerning their child's homework and suggest strategies that can be used to assist their child with his/her homework

NB: If a teacher other than the classroom teacher allocates homework to a student, it is expected that this is communicated to the classroom teacher as a priority i.e. Spanish, Reading Recovery, ESL, STLA, Library.

We believe the role of the student is to:

- complete homework within the given time frame
- alert parents/caregivers of homework expectations
- seek assistance from teachers and parents/caregivers when difficulties arise
- show their homework to their parents/caregivers and ask them to sign it when finished
- ensure homework is neatly presented and of a high standard
- organise their time efficiently to ensure adequate time is given to completing homework to a high quality and within set deadlines

We believe parents and caregivers can help by:

- taking an active interest in homework
- ensuring that there is time set aside for homework
- encouraging and supporting students to complete homework
- providing, where possible, a designated place and desk for homework and study
- encouraging their child/ren to read and take an interest in current events
- assisting teachers to monitor homework by signing completed work if requested and being aware of the amount of homework set
- communicating with teachers any concerns about homework such as the nature of the work set and their child’s approach to the homework
- alerting the school to any domestic or extra-curricular activities which may need to be taken into consideration when homework is being set or corrected

Reference: NSW Department of Education & Training ‘Homework Policy’ – August 2000