

Unley Primary School Homework Policy

At Unley Primary School we have a holistic approach to education and understand that learning takes place both at school and at home. Strong connections between school, families and the community allow students to engage in rich experiences that support authentic learning. We value the important role parents and caregivers play in working in partnership with the school to support their child's learning. We know that parents and caregivers provide this support in a wide variety of ways, including through helping their child with school-assigned homework.

Our teachers follow an evidence-based approach to the setting of homework. We value the need for students to have a balanced lifestyle, including having plenty of time for play, rest, family, recreation and cultural pursuits. We believe that homework should not intrude on family life or cause stress for students and their parents/caregivers.

Homework and Achievement

Research into the impact of homework on student outcomes has been ongoing for many decades. It is a multifaceted area of study and the results of research into the effectiveness of homework are complex.

Importantly, when considered across different stages of schooling, there is no statistical support for achievement benefits in the lower grades of primary school, and only very weak support for students in the upper grades of primary school. There is support for the achievement benefits of homework in the first years of high school but the benefit is moderately weak, while for senior high school students the achievement benefits of homework are moderately high (Horsley & Walker, 2013).

Research has established that students benefit from reading at home on their own and or with family members on a daily basis (Department for Education and Child Development, 2014). There is significant evidence to show a strong positive relationship between parental involvement in schooling and higher levels of school achievement. Parent involvement could be in the form of volunteering in the school community or simply talking about learning, playing number and word games or reading with children.

Types of Homework

Homework may be necessary at times for students who have not completed set activities during school hours or for students who will benefit from further consolidation in an identified area. This is set at the discretion of the class teacher.

Sometimes, class teachers may choose to set a task that is directly related to an aspect of the day's learning. Some teachers may also set a task for the week to be time-managed by the student.

We understand that many students have after school commitments so if a student is unable to complete an overnight task, parents/caregivers are asked to write a note in their child's diary or communication book.

Importantly, homework will not be assigned to fill a mandated time quota.

Homework in primary school has an effect of around zero... Five to ten minutes has the same effect of one hour to two hours. The worst thing you can do with homework is give kids projects. The best thing you can do is reinforce something you've already learnt (Hattie, 2013).

Homework Expectations

Apart from daily reading, there is no expectation that a timed homework allocation of tasks will be set by teachers.

Homework tasks that are assigned will be purposeful and may include:

- Daily reading - duration to be determined by the class teacher in partnership with parents/caregivers
- Completing unfinished tasks
- Activities to consolidate learning if an area has been identified for further development
- Possibly a weekly task, at the discretion of the teacher

If parents/caregivers wish to assign out of school learning tasks for their children in addition to those that teachers consider appropriate (as detailed above), they can access a wide range of commercially available resources and programs such as activity books and online programs (e.g. Study Ladder and Khan Academy). In this case, teachers are not responsible for monitoring or assessing these activities.

Children's education is most effective when teachers and parents/caregivers work in partnership. Our homework policy reflects this philosophy with a view to achieving the best outcomes for our students, in line with their current developmental needs.

References:

Department for Education and Child Development, 2014, *Reading: from beginnings towards proficiency*, Government of South Australia, South Australia.

Hattie, J 2013, *Visible Learning for Teachers: Maximizing Impact on Learning*, Publisher Taylor & Francis Ltd, London, United Kingdom.

Horsley, M & Walker, R 2013, *Reforming homework: practices, learning and policies*, International, Palgrave Macmillan, Melbourne.

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