

Homework Policy

Introduction

While research supports the strong correlation between secondary students who have regular homework and those with **better academic outcomes**, the same direct correlation has not proven to be the case in primary students. One must, however, realise that effective work and study habits do not develop overnight and that primary schools can play a foundational role in preparing students for the increased demands of secondary and tertiary life.

Guardian Angels' seeks to actively promote and develop skills and attitudes necessary for life-long learning. Homework is viewed as an integral part of this.

Rationale

Guardian Angels' School affirms the following purposes\goals of homework:

- to practise skills, prepare for future study, and extend skills.
- to build home/school partnership and improve communication about student learning
- to make it clear to students that learning also takes place outside the school environment
- to enable monitoring of student progress by parents, students and teachers alike
- to improve retention and understanding of material presented
- to develop better organisational skills and attitudes such as time-management, study skills, self-discipline, concentration and personal responsibility

Guardian Angels' School affirms that

- homework should never be used as punishment or to appease parents' wishes.
- all homework should have a justifiable purpose
- tasks should be related to current classroom activities

Virtues

self-discipline, responsibility, orderliness, confidence, determination, enthusiasm, excellence, purposefulness.

PROCEDURES

Types / Content / Activities

Homework expectations should be clearly outlined to parents at beginning of year Parent Information Evenings

It is recommended that homework activities should:

- Set up students for success by ensuring that it is pitched at an appropriate level of difficulty – being easier rather than harder.
- Be mainly numeracy and literacy based
- Offer a mix of mandatory and voluntary (eg own-choice or extension)
- Be individualised and/or negotiated where necessary or advisable
- Be composed of daily (eg reading, spelling, number facts), weekly (eg contract activities) and longer-term projects (eg assignments) according to the age of the student
- Incorporate an element of fun and enjoyment wherever possible.

The three main types of homework are:

Practice homework – providing students with the opportunities to apply new knowledge, or review, revise and reinforce newly acquired skills, including:

Year 1 Semester One – reading (letters, sounds, sight words)
Semester Two - As per semester one + number facts and basic Maths activities, spelling, guided writing

Year 2 Reading, number facts, basic Maths activities, spelling and writing sentences, handwriting

Years 3 Reading, number facts and basic Maths activities, spelling, basic English activities, sentence writing, handwriting

Years 4,5, 6,7 Reading, number facts, Maths Mentals, basic Maths skills, spelling, English skills.

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:

Year 1,2,3 Oral presentations, gathering information (research) and/or artefacts for class work, investigation of weekly virtue and possibly morning prayer

Years 4,5,6,7 As above + drafting or publishing (stages of the writing process)

Extension Assignments – encouraging students to pursue knowledge individually and imaginatively including:

Year 2,3 Completion of workbook for sacramental program (where applicable)

Year 4,5, 6,7 Problem-solving activities, Integrated Unit presentation, enhancement activities eg use of community resources to satisfy individual curiosity, preparation of co-curricula activities (learning verse for Eisteddfods, practice tests for competitions), completion of workbook for sacramental program where applicable

Recommended Time/Night

	<u>Reading</u>	<u>Other</u>
Year 1	10 mins	10 min (sem. 2)
Year 2,3	10-15 mins	10 min
Year 4,5	20 mins	20 min
Year 6,7	20 mins	30 min

Procedures

- Set homework should help the student establish a *daily routine* for completion and submission of homework from the earliest years of school.
- Weekend homework is largely at the student's discretion (particularly the older students') and should take the form of reading (for all), reviewing, preparation for tests and completion of longer-term assignments (older students).
- 'HomeThink' (TM Lane Clark) forms an important part of Homework time eg Study by underlining key words in text and writing brief notes in colour at side of text. Create a mindmap (TM Tony Buzan) to capture content and meaning. Reviewing of mindmaps should take place ten minutes before bedtime and preferably to baroque music. Such reviews should take place again the next day and then once a week for a month and then once a month thereafter.
- Teachers should always correct/check homework promptly thus reinforcing its importance and value and giving prompt feedback to students.
- Teachers recognise that positive feedback on homework tasks (eg written comments, stickers) can act as a powerful motivator for students.
- Teachers should consider the development of criteria sheets, in partnership with the students, to encourage commitment to more wholehearted completion of set activities and to better meet the needs of each student.
- Teachers of years 1-3 will use Reading Folders, K.I.T. books and newsletters as mechanisms for home-school communication of home tasks. Year 4-7 students will use an expectation sheet and school diary for this purpose.
- Parents are asked to sign hometasks.
- Weekly contract homework, if given, should be manageable and relevant and should not take the place of nightly tasks.
- Homework should be modified according to student need and/or ability.
- Marking may take the following forms: teacher marking, self-marking, peer marking, classroom helper or teacher-aide hearing of spelling.
- There should be consistency of type, quantity and time expectation across classes at each year level and consistency from week to week. Any progression in quantity should be gradual.
- Teachers should inform parents in advance of change to homework

Consequences

The following consequences will follow for non-completion or unsatisfactory completion of homework –

- Completion of the set homework in student's own time i.e. lunch or afternoon tea
- Parents notified of consistent breaches of homework expectations
- Record in "Work and Social Habits" in student folio
- Scaffold students in developing time management and organisational skills- teacher/student/parent negotiation
- Homework completed but to an unsatisfactory standard

Helpful Homework Hints for Parents\Caregivers

It is recognised that, in some families, homework can be a major cause of tension in terms of insufficient time to supervise or monitor activities.

Parents\caregivers assist their children by:

- speaking positively about homework and school in general
- Being familiar with homework expectations
- Establishing a suitable study area which includes desk, straight-back chair, good lighting and ventilation
- Establishing a regular homework routine
- Ensuring students have access to necessary materials at home (ie pens, pencils, rubber, ruler, sharpener, scissors and glue)
- providing positive support, necessary assistance and direct supervision where necessary or appropriate
- having the student complete homework him\herself. There is a difference between assisting the child and completing it for him\her.
- maintaining communication with teachers regarding homework habits\concerns where necessary
- negotiating after-school routines with children, making sure that there is a balance of school and home activity
- helping students develop orderly routines eg packing bags ahead of time
- Helping students take responsibility for homework completion (not make excuses for failure to complete tasks)
- Reading to their children
- A proforma is available to assist parents to negotiate circumstances surrounding homework completion.

