

## HOMEWORK POLICY

The School Homework Policy aims to help students establish a healthy balance between commitments in school, after school and at home. The policy also aims to aid students in planning their work time more effectively.

The policy encourages teachers to:

- a) Plan the activities of their classes more effectively,
- b) Remember that students have other classes, which make demands upon their time and mental resources,
- c) Avoid concentrating assignments, projects, or other work at the end of a grading period, and
- d) Avoid homework practices that are punitive, unreasonable, and/or futile.

Homework encompasses a range of activities but in general refers to subject work to be completed outside of class. This includes tasks such as students reviewing their notes after each class, study time for reviews, quizzes, tests etc. Students should be aware that assessment activities that have been signaled well in advance, a test for example, may require some additional preparation time in addition to regular homework time. Recent studies have examined the causal relationship between homework and student achievement by comparing experimental (homework) and control (no homework) groups. The research suggests that the relationship between the amount of student homework and achievement is positive and statistically significant.

One of the more contentious issues in the homework debate is the amount of time students should spend on homework. The benefits of homework increased as time increased, up to one to two hours of homework a night; however, the benefits decreased once the nightly commitment exceeded two hours. Also, 7 to 12 hours of homework per week produced the largest effect size for 12th grade students. The researchers suggested that for 12th graders the optimum amount of homework might lie between 1.5 and 2.5 hours per night, but they cautioned against any hard-and-fast rules. Even for older students, too much homework may diminish its effectiveness,

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eventually causing additional homework to become counterproductive.

To make sure that homework is appropriate, teachers should follow these guidelines in relation to the homework they assign:

1. Homework should have a clear academic purpose. Homework should be used not for new learning; rather, it should enhance classroom learning. The student should easily understand the ultimate goal of the assignment - pre-learning, checking for understanding, practice, or processing. *The important roles of homework are to practice skills and reinforce content taught in class.*

New material should not be given as homework. Teachers should use a balanced approach between these priorities when planning assignments.

2. Homework should focus on high quality tasks that are doable. If a student cannot complete a homework assignment independently, such an assignment can undermine student motivation. In terms of difficulty, all homework should be within the developmental/intellectual/skill capabilities of the students, for whom it is assigned. At the high school level, parental or tutorial assistance should be virtually unnecessary.
3. Homework should be personally relevant. If teachers want students to take responsibility for homework, students must have a good deal of control over what they learn, how they learn it, and how they show that they have learned it. Teachers should design homework assignments, which provide students with ample opportunities to personalize their work.
4. Homework should be customized. Differences in working speed alone show us that one-size-fits-all homework rarely works for all students. Teachers can address this inequity by differentiating homework to fit individual needs. Homework tasks can be differentiated by length, by difficulty, or by which concepts specific students need help understanding. Homework may need to be differentiated for students with specific learning needs or a significant ESL background.

## **Guidelines**

A suggested guideline for each class is to assign no more than between one to one and a half

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hours of homework per week. Teachers should remain cognizant of students' needs for rest and recovery, tailoring their homework demands accordingly. They should be especially aware of the proximity of the next period scheduled for each class.

Based on seven subjects per student this would mean that a D1 student would average around two hours a night Monday to Friday. D2 students should face similar demands.

## **Guidelines**

The policy recognizes that senior level IB courses require more time during the week and a greater amount of weekend homework than general level courses. There will always be a tension between what is required for student success in an IB course and juggling the demands of homework. It is recognized that during times such as IB internal assessment deadlines that students will be required to exceed the recommended homework time. This should be the exception rather than the norm however.

Teachers of advanced courses should plan their coverage of curriculum in such a way as to minimize demands upon students' time outside of school.

The suggested homework guideline for IB HL subjects is three hours a week while IB SL subject teachers should expect their students to complete two hours homework per week. Based on a full diploma loading this would mean that G1 and D2 students would average around three hours a night Monday to Friday.