Homework Policy Balgownie Public School

Updated 2011

PURPOSES OF HOMEWORK

Homework:
- is a valuable part of schooling
- allows for practising, extending and consolidating work done in class
- provides training for students in planning and organising 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 children
- challenges and extends gifted and talented children.

Homework is most beneficial when:
- it reinforces and extends classwork 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.

EXPECTATIONS AT BALGOWNIE PUBLIC SCHOOL

We believe the role of the teacher is to:
- explain to students and their parents or caregivers the purpose and benefits of homework
- provide quality homework activities related to classwork.
- set a suitable amount of relevant homework which is appropriate to the ability of each student
- ensure that students are aware of what is being taught in the classroom, and how their work will be assessed
- give students sufficient time to complete their homework, taking into account, other factors
- mark homework promptly and appropriately, maintain homework records and provide feedback to students and parents or caregivers
- promptly alert parents or caregivers of any developing problems concerning their children’s homework and suggest strategies that they can use to assist their children with their homework.
We believe the task of the student is to:
- complete homework within the given time frame
- alert parents or caregivers to homework expectations
- seek assistance from teachers and parents or caregivers when difficulties arise
- show their homework to their parents or caregivers
- ensure homework is of a high standard
- organise their time to ensure that sufficient time is given to quality homework 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 children 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 the nature of homework and their children’s approach to the homework
- alerting the school to any domestic or extracurricular activities which may need to be taken into consideration when homework is being set or corrected.

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, which could include:
- consolidation exercise e.g. maths, including memorising 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 which could include:
- 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, which could include:

- writing e.g. a book review
- making or designing something e.g. an art work
- investigations e.g. science, HSIE
- 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, email 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)
Although as students progress they increasingly work independently on their homework, 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.

What homework strategies can I expect?

The school has developed a Home Reading Scheme that determines that every child has some homework every night. Students in younger classes generally read aloud to their parents and the time is monitored. However the older students can read to themselves and parents are encouraged to talk to the child about their reading: the story, its plot, the characters, or ideas for how they might change the story if they were reading it.

Most classes are given additional homework exercises to do during the week. These range across a variety of subject areas and are at the discretion of the class teacher.

K – 2:
Kindergarten: 15 minutes
Stage 1: 20 minutes
This includes Home Reading and Study Ladder.
3 - 6: Each week students can 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.

Recommended times to be spent on homework (4 nights per week)

Stage 2 (Years 3 and 4): 25-30 minutes
This includes four Study ladder activities, spelling, times tables, and one major project per term.

Stage 3 (Years 5 and 6): 30-45 minutes
This includes activities such as Spelling, Mathematics, and extension writing activities.

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