

## Leonay Public School – Homework Policy 2020

### **Context**

The NSW Department of Education and Communities' Homework policy (2012) specifies that each school is to develop their own Homework Policy. A school's Homework Policy should be:

- relevant to the needs of students
- developed in consultation with key school community stakeholders including teachers, parents/ caregivers and students
- communicated to staff, students, parents/caregivers, particularly at the time of student enrolment

In developing a Homework Policy, schools should be aware that while the Policy itself is compulsory, the setting of homework and any indicative time allocations across year levels are not. This approach to the development of the Homework Policy is in line with a number of factors:

- community expectations about homework are variable
- research regarding the value of homework is inconclusive
- schools are best placed to make decisions about homework in consultation with their communities

### **Consultation**

When ascertaining community expectations, parents were surveyed regarding current homework practices from the end of 2019. 114 parent responses were received which represents 65% of families in the school. Parents were asked about their child/ren's homework habits, engagement with homework and extra-curricular activities. Some notable results from this survey were:

- 27% of parents viewed homework as having no value for their child and 16% believed homework to be highly valuable
- Home reading was consistently identified as the most important aspect of homework
- 97% of students are engaged in extra-curricular activities outside of school
- 50% of parents believe their child is not actively engaged in homework
- 5% of parents did not feel that homework at Leonay Public School could be improved

*Note – results have been rounded to the nearest percentage*

Parents were also offered the opportunity to make comments regarding how homework could be improved with 72 responses. The main themes in these responses were:

- The quantity of homework should be reduced
- Homework needs to be more closely linked to classroom learning
- Homework needs to be valued and appreciated by the teacher
- More authentic, interest-based tasks – less stencils and worksheets

Students in years 3 – 6 were also surveyed and asked the same questions with simplified language. 107 students completed the survey which represents 76% of the student population in this age bracket. Some notable results from this survey were:

- 30% of students felt that homework helps them learn
- Reading and project tasks were rated as the most enjoyable with grammar and editing tasks the least enjoyable
- On average, students gave themselves an effort score of 65/100 when it came to homework
- 15% of students could not think of a suggested improvement to homework

Students were also offered the opportunity to make comments regarding how homework could be improved with 58 responses. The main themes in these responses were:

- Less homework overall
- More technology involved in homework
- More variety – include art, sport, music etc.
- More projects that can be completed over several weeks
- No worksheets

When consulting with teachers, all staff were presented with a summary of the data from the parent and student surveys. They were then given the opportunity to express their opinions around the setting and marking of homework. Key themes that emerged from this discussion were:

- Manageability – the production and marking of homework needs to be time efficient in order to allow teachers to focus on the development of effective and engaging classroom lessons
- Reading focus – every stage of learning needs to set stage-appropriate reading activities as part of homework
- Stage specific – each stage of learning should look different and expectations should increase gradually. Stage 3 needs to set homework that focuses on the development of effective time management skills in preparation for high school
- Responsibility – Teachers are responsible for setting appropriate homework, marking it and acknowledging effort. Parents are responsible for what activities, including homework, their child engages in outside of school. Due to department policy, homework cannot be deemed compulsory and teachers are instructed not to disadvantage any child who does not complete homework
- Purposeful activities - Homework should be directly linked to the key learning areas and should integrate subject material where possible. Activities outside of the key learning areas is a parental responsibility

### Considerations

A summary of current research conducted by the Department of Education and Communities (2012) concluded that there is no evidence of homework lifting academic performance. However, there are noted benefits with regards to increasing independence and developing self-management skills. As a result, homework will focus on developing these traits in our students and parents need encouragement to be mindful of this.

Due to the high level of extra-curricular involvement of the students in the community, it is important that students' diligence and effort in these activities is recognised. Where these activities require regular independent practice, persistence and effort, students should be encouraged to record and reflect on these activities as an equivalent substitute to homework. Additional homework on top of these activities will not be an expectation. However, parents may deem it important for their child to complete both which is their decision to make.

### Conclusions & Actions

The following has been determined through extensive consultation with members of the school community. This policy will be fully implemented from 27 April 2020 and will be due for review within a 12-month period.

#### Set tasks

1.1 Students in **Early Stage 1 and Stage 1 (Years K – 2)** will be assigned the following tasks as homework:

- Home readers – exchanged weekly
- Sight words and/or spelling tasks related to Sound Waves
- Speaking and listening tasks
- Basic mathematics skills revision (*to be further defined*)

1.2 Students in **Stage 2 (Years 3 – 4)** will be assigned the following tasks as homework:

- Reading and comprehension log – Expectation of 10 mins reading and 5 mins reflection per night
- Spelling task related to Sound Waves
- Two staged assignments per term, one in weeks 2 – 5 and the other in weeks 6 – 9
- Weekly maths mental (*to be further defined*)

1.3 Students in **Stage 3 (Years 5 – 6)** will be assigned the following tasks as homework:

- Reading and comprehension log – Expectation of 15 mins reading and 5 mins reflection per night
- Spelling task related to Sound Waves
- Two staged assignments per term, one in weeks 2 – 5 and the other in weeks 6 – 9
- Weekly maths mental (*to be further defined*)
- Personal responses to current events and news items

1.4 Set tasks will be assigned on Mondays and will indicate the time period that students have in order to complete each task as well as the due date

- 1.5 Set tasks will be explained to students and adequate time will be provided for students to ask questions in order to seek clarification
- 1.6 Stage 2 and 3 staged assignments will allow students choice in how they present their work, including through the use of technology, in order to encourage them to pursue personal interests and showcase their skills and talents

#### Student responsibilities

- 2.1 Listen carefully and engage in discussion about homework when assignments are being given to ensure they understand the requirements of the task and seek clarification about anything that is not understood
- 2.2 Seek clarification from the teacher early if any aspect of the task has not been understood at home
- 2.3 Maintain neat and tidy homework that can be easily followed, read and understood
- 2.4 Inform the teacher when homework has been lost or not obtained due to absence so that it can be provided
- 2.5 Hand homework in to the teacher by the due date unless there is a valid reason. This reason should be relayed to the teacher by the student's parent using an accepted means of communication

#### Teacher responsibilities

- 3.1 Set tasks that are reasonable in terms of the stage of learning, that link in clearly with classroom learning and are open-ended where possible to allow for extension and support
- 3.2 Set reasonable timeframes for completion of homework tasks and communicate these timeframes clearly
- 3.3 Ensure adequate explanation of homework tasks has taken place and allow students adequate time to process and ask questions about tasks being assigned
- 3.4 Develop and implement a classroom system that acknowledges student effort and encourages effective time management without drawing negative attention to or disadvantaging any student who does not complete homework tasks
- 3.5 Actively advocate for homework to be completed and submitted by creating an expectation that homework is attempted
- 3.6 Mark all assigned tasks in a timely manner, providing reasonable feedback prior to new homework being assigned
- 3.7 Ensure that any concerns about individual student learning are clearly communicated with parents so that they can assist their child in bridging gaps
- 3.8 Recognise extra-curricular pursuits as equivalent to homework when students are able to demonstrate regular practice and persistence to improve a skill. This may be achieved by students recording a log of the practice and what they worked to achieve

#### Parent responsibilities

- 4.1 Establish and monitor expectations with their child/ren about what homework will be completed and to what standard
- 4.2 Communicate with the classroom teacher where concerns arise regarding homework tasks being assigned