

HOMEWORK Policy



OVERNEWTON
ANGLICAN COMMUNITY COLLEGE



At Overnewton, one of our core values is learning. We aim to reflect the importance of learning within this Homework Policy and through the guidelines and practices which flow from it.

The College recognises that parents are the children's first and most significant teachers and role models. The influences within each child's family environment will play the most significant part in the development of the child's values as they mature into a young adult.

Our students are involved in many activities outside school which contribute significantly to their learning and enhance the quality of their family life. Decisions about family life and family time are best made by parents. As professional educators, we honour the concept of family time and the parenting which shapes the values of our students.

Homework provides students with opportunities to consolidate their classroom learning, to practise and establish behaviour for lifelong learning beyond the classroom, and to involve family members in their learning. The setting of homework takes into account the need for students to have a balanced lifestyle. This includes sufficient time for family, recreation, cultural pursuits and even employment for older children where appropriate.

A well-balanced, happy child is a motivated learner. Placing the developmental needs of students foremost, we aim to strengthen the home/school partnership through our Homework Policy, focusing on both the pastoral and academic needs of the individual student.

Our developmental approach at Overnewton encourages students to take greater responsibility for their own learning as they mature, and establish a clear sense of who they are as individual learners. Throughout their education, students develop skills as learners which empower them to explore pathways that take them well beyond the compulsory years of schooling. To become independent and self motivated learners, students ultimately need to develop the critical skills to make good decisions about goal setting, how to manage and spend their time, and how to reflect on the effectiveness of their decisions and choices. In the first instance, students need to have opportunities to exercise choices with respect to homework and to make some decisions about their learning. Such choices are about which tasks to complete first and when to work on them so that other important parts of their life beyond school and within the family are also given priority. Students can begin to develop these skills and practise making good decisions from a young age. At all stages in their learning, our students need the guidance of their parents and teachers working in partnership to reflect on the effectiveness of their choices, decisions and learning.

As students mature, learning activities focus increasingly on developing their independence and creativity as thinkers and problem solvers. Our thinking about homework is shaped by the goal of helping our students to achieve independence as learners.



The purposes of Homework are that it will:

- reflect the different developmental stages of individuals
- cater to the specific individual needs of each student
- enhance the cognitive, physical, social, emotional and spiritual growth of individuals
- always and only be set with the objective of supporting learning
- provide opportunities for practice in the mastery of skills
- allow for consolidating and extending learning undertaken at school
- provide training for students in planning and organising time
- enable students to establish habits of study, concentration and self-discipline which will serve them for the rest of their lives

The setting of homework strengthens the links between home and school by providing parents and caregivers with insights into what is being taught in the classroom and the progress of children. These insights in turn can provide opportunities for reflective conversations about school, facing challenges, developing resilience as learners, working effectively with teachers and peers, and celebrating successes. Children benefit enormously from participating in conversations like these about their learning and about the effectiveness of choices and decisions they make as learners.

Whilst homework provides such insights, it does not substitute for more comprehensive information about the curriculum and the College's approach to literacy and numeracy as foundational skills. It does not replace schools' information booklets, information evenings, term based curriculum overviews, parent/teacher/student interviews, program support group meetings, portfolio presentations, student-led conferences and formal reports.

Homework is most beneficial when:

- it is appropriate to the student's developmental stage and their capabilities
- it complements and reinforces current classroom learning; extends classwork and consolidates basic skills and knowledge
- it develops and extends the core learning skills of inquiry and independent study
- it provides an opportunity for students to take responsibility for their own learning, supported by their parents or caregivers
- it is purposeful and relevant to student needs
- it takes into account the student's family responsibilities and extra curricular activities such as clubs, sport and part time employment
- it is set on a regular basis; enables a student to establish their own routine of home study and to adapt their routine when circumstances change
- it is challenging and purposeful but not so demanding that it has adverse effects on a student's motivation
- it is well coordinated and teacher expectations are clearly communicated

Achieving best practice

Teachers' responsibilities are:

- to differentiate based on the needs of students
- to prepare homework tasks which are varied, challenging, meaningful, related to class work and which suit learning needs
- to give students enough time to complete homework, considering family obligations and extracurricular activities
- to provide timely and practical feedback where necessary
- to teach students to make effective use of homework diaries
- to coordinate the allocation of homework with other teachers
- to help students to develop organisational and time management skills
- to ensure parents and carers are aware of the school's homework policy
- to implement the policy and adhere to the guidelines

Students' responsibilities are:

- to take responsibility for their own learning
- to value learning outside the classroom as a valid and powerful part of their own education
- to complete tasks as required on time to enhance their learning
- to accept responsibility by:
 - being aware of the school's homework policy
 - discussing homework expectations with parents or carers
 - completing homework tasks within set timeframes
 - following up on feedback given by teachers
 - seeking assistance when difficulties arise
 - organising their time to manage family commitments, participation in physical activity and sports, recreational and cultural activities and part time employment as appropriate

Parents' responsibilities are:

- to encourage and value learning and to be involved in their children's educational process
- to encourage their children to read and to take an interest in and discuss current local, national and international events
- to encourage their children to develop a regular time to complete homework and to adapt this time if circumstances alter
- to encourage their children to take responsibility for their learning and for their homework and to support their children's completion of homework without doing it for them
- to check whether homework has been set and to encourage their children to keep a homework diary
- to ask how class learning and homework is progressing, to discuss the associated challenges and successes and to help their children by discussing key questions or directing them to resources identified by their teachers
- to help their children to reflect on the effectiveness of their decisions and choices about which tasks to tackle first and when to complete homework
- to help their children to achieve a healthy balance between the amount of time spent on homework and other important, recreational activities
- to talk with teachers to discuss problems or concerns with learning at school, or with set homework



School-specific Homework Guidelines

The following guidelines are framed by the understanding that each of our students, as an individual, is progressing towards achieving and then exercising independence as a learner. We take every care to meet the learning needs of our students as individuals at every step along their journey from Preparatory to Year 12.

We are also mindful of the significant transitions our students experience as they move from school to school within the College. Students will experience different expectations regarding homework as part of these transitions. Led by Heads of School, teachers work together to ensure that our students are well prepared to meet the challenges associated with these transitions. We aim to prepare students at every stage to develop skills which strengthen their capacity to embrace change with confidence and to see it as a part of life.

Junior Schools

Daily home reading forms a significant part of our Homework Guidelines. It is expected that students will practise their reading skills through the Home Reading Program. Students will bring home a book that has been carefully selected, based on a specific set of criteria which will ensure that individual needs are taken into consideration.

Students participating in the instrumental program are expected to undertake regular practice. The instrumental teacher will provide guidance regarding the content and the duration of the practice.

To assist the students to share and develop their knowledge beyond the classroom, communication about the curriculum being taught will be made available on a weekly basis. Specific examples of ideas for homework activities that will support areas of the curriculum being taught that week will be provided. Parents are asked to acknowledge that they have read the weekly homework slip by signing it in their child's diary.

These learning beyond the classroom activities:

- will reinforce and enhance concepts being taught that week in literacy, numeracy and the inquiry unit
- are not compulsory tasks
- do not replace home reading as the most important activity for the children to be doing on a daily basis
- are meant to provide a prompt or a guide only – families will make their own choices about what is suitable for them
- will not be "one size fits all" worksheets
- will generally not be pencil and paper tasks
- will not be corrected by teachers

Provision will be made for additional support where there is need in a specific area. This will be negotiated between parents and the teacher.

Middle Schools

- Homework must be flexible enough to accommodate individual developmental stages
- There must be a clear purpose and valid reason for any homework that is set
- Quality rather than quantity is important
- There must be consistency within a year level and coordination across subjects
- Homework will include daily independent reading
- Homework will encourage application and consolidation of classroom learning through review, practice and revision
- Homework may provide opportunities for students to gain background information so they are better prepared for future lessons
- Homework may include research for classwork
- Homework may include additional work if there is a need identified for a student to catch up on unfinished or missed class work
- Assessment tasks will not be set solely as homework. However, parts of an assessment task, such as research, may be done at home
- Homework will not be given which is due the next day, unless it should have been completed during class time

If a student is unable to complete homework in spite of the effort made, parents are asked to sign the diary indicating that he/she has worked conscientiously for a set time. Not all students work at the same pace.

It is expected that the students feel comfortable with the homework requirements and enjoy the challenges that they have been set.

Should a child continue to have difficulty meeting the homework requirements we would recommend that parents contact the child's teacher.

Year 9 ~ Canowindra

- There must be a clear purpose and valid reason for any homework that is set
- Quality rather than quantity is important
- There must be equity between key learning areas
- Self directed study is an essential component of the homework program at this level and opportunity for this should take priority
- Assessment tasks should not be set as homework, although parts of the task, such as research, may be done at home
- Homework must be flexible enough to accommodate individual developmental stages, family commitments and extracurricular commitments
- To allow students to develop planning and time management skills, homework should not be given which is due the next day

Senior School

- Please refer to the Senior School Handbook for information about study expectations.



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