PARRAMATTA MARIST HIGH SCHOOL

HOMEWORK POLICY
PURPOSES OF HOMEWORK

Homework:

· is a valuable part of schooling
· allows for practicing, 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.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

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, sport and part-time employment
· 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.
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, including:

- consolidation exercise e.g. maths, including memorisation of 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, including:

- 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, including:

- writing e.g. a book review
- making or designing something e.g. an art work
- investigations e.g. science, social science
- 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, E-mail 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

High School Years 7-12 (Stages 4, 5 and 6)

In high school, homework should develop in students habits of reviewing work undertaken in class.

It is expected that homework will be set on a regular basis in each subject. Coordination across faculties is essential to accommodate competing demands in regard to homework, assessment tasks, assignments and examination preparation. This is particularly important in the senior years of high school.

There are times when students should be provided with the opportunity to negotiate the amount, type and timeframes of homework.

The quality of homework will be enhanced by students getting expert advice about homework and study skills through seminars and study days. This is important right across high school, not only in senior years.

Many schools find homework diaries useful to develop students’ organisational skills and time management, and to improve home-school communication.

As students move into the senior school it is expected that homework demands will increase.

Homework in the Secondary School

The main purposes of homework are:
• To reinforce the learning/concepts of the day’s lessons
• To extend the learning for a unit of work
• To allow for sustained quiet time when reading or writing activities can be pursued
• To promote independence in learning
• To practise and develop skills
• To allow time for consolidation of notes, memorisation and revision
• To study for tests and examinations
• To work on longer-term assignments and projects
• To prepare for the next day’s lessons
• To allow students to focus on their needs
• To facilitate cumulative/progressive learning
• To provide curriculum enrichment through time for research and information-gathering

Authentic and meaningful homework should never be “busywork”. Consequently, homework requirements set by a teacher may vary from student to student according to
their needs. Homework should be initiated by both the teacher and the student: a student who has a positive attitude to learning will always have homework to do.

Parents are asked to provide a suitable, supportive homework environment, yet still encourage and allow their sons to be independent, resourceful and self-reliant learners. We also commend to parents the many valuable learning activities which the home environment can provide: a list of such activities is provided at the end.

All teacher-initiated homework must be written in the student’s diary. Strict adherence to dates is required for completing homework. Failure to do this will be followed up by the teacher and may have significant ramifications for the student, particularly at the senior level, and parents will be notified. For students in Years 7-12 the diary is used to record infringements of homework requirements. Parents are asked to check and sign their sons’ diaries regularly.

Computer failure is an unacceptable reason for work not being handed in on the due date. Students are required to:
- Keep hard copies of progressive versions of the work in progress
- Hand in their final version on the due date in hard copy (not on a flashdrive)

**Recommended Homework Times**

**Year 7**
Students in Year 7 should not need to spend more than 1.5 hours on homework each night. Year 7 students will be supported by their homeroom teacher to foster good habits in organising their homework.

**Year 8**
Students in Year 8 need to plan their own homework timetable. They should spend 1.5-2 hours per night (over six nights).

**Years 9, 10**
Students in Years 9 and 10 also need to plan their own homework timetable. They should spend 2-2.5 hours per night (over six nights).

**Years 11, 12**

Each senior student needs to establish a homework timetable which will ensure that the demands of senior studies are met adequately. Students should include both their school study periods and out-of-school time in the timetable, as well as set blocks of time at weekends and in holidays. Consistent preparation and careful use of study periods are significant in ensuring success in senior studies.
In general, they should be spending approximately 2.5-3 hours per weeknight, together with blocks of time on the weekend and in the holiday periods.

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 dedicated 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.

Teachers can help by:

• explaining to students and their parents or caregivers the purpose and benefits of homework
• ensuring students and parents or caregivers are aware of the school’s homework policy
• providing quality homework activities related to classwork
• setting a suitable amount of relevant homework which is appropriate to the ability of each student
• ensuring that students are aware of what is expected of them, and how their work will be assessed
• giving students sufficient time to complete their homework, taking into account, as far as possible, competing home obligations and extracurricular activities and homework set by other teachers
• marking homework promptly and appropriately, maintaining homework records and providing feedback to students and parents or caregivers
• alerting parents or caregivers of any developing problems concerning their children’s homework and suggesting strategies that they can use to assist their children with their homework.
Students can help by:

- being aware of the importance of homework
- being aware of their school’s homework policy
- completing homework within the given time frame
- alerting parents or caregivers to homework expectations
- seeking assistance from teachers and parents or caregivers when difficulties arise
- showing their homework to their parents or caregivers (this is perhaps not as important in senior high school years)
- ensuring homework is of a high standard
- organising their time to ensure that sufficient time is given to quality homework within set deadlines.