

## **HOMEWORK**

### **Background**

The district recognizes meaningful, carefully-planned homework can support student success and be a complementary part of a student's overall learning program. The district also recognizes:

- The potential impact of homework on family life;
- The role homework may play in supporting students' self-confidence as a successful learner;
- The benefit of a district-wide, balanced, reasonable approach to homework.

The complexity of the topic of homework also requires conversation and cooperation at the school and classroom level to provide details, to clarify expectations and to support student success with homework assignments.

This administrative procedure is further supported by related specifics as outlined in the Appendix.

### **Definition**

Homework is "any task assigned by teachers intended for students to carry out during non-instructional hours" ([Canadian Council on Learning: A Systematic Review of Literature Examining the Impact of Homework on Academic Achievement, 2009](#), p. 5).

### **Procedures**

#### **1. Types of Homework**

For the purpose of this administrative procedure four types of homework are identified: Practice, Completion, Enrichment and Projects.

##### **1.1 Practice:**

1.1.1 Practice homework reviews and reinforces skills and concepts taught during instructional time.

##### **1.2 Completion:**

1.2.1 Completion homework is work assigned during the school day that was not finished in a reasonable amount of time. This may include, but is not limited to, a written story or completing a set of questions. In situations where the majority of students have been unable to complete an assignment, additional class time is to be provided before it is assigned for homework.

##### **1.3 Enrichment:**

- 1.3.1 Enrichment homework extends the learning beyond curriculum expectations through such activities as completing research related to a student's area of interest or undertaking an independent activity agreed upon with the teacher, potentially for extra credit.
- 1.4 Projects:
  - 1.4.1 Project homework relates to the curriculum and occurs when additional time outside of the school day is required to complete an activity or task assignment. Project homework may involve a small group of students who share the work of completing the project.
  - 1.4.2 When assigning a project for homework, it is particularly important for teachers to pay careful attention to how projects are differentiated for student success. Teachers must also supply clear marking criteria for students outlining all parts of the project and must make students/parents/legal guardians aware that purchasing of supplies for project homework is optional. Projects are to avoid placing any financial burden on parents/legal guardians and students. Generally, group project homework is not recommended in elementary or junior high grades due to the challenges inherent in coordinating time among families.

While reading and writing are usually part of all homework assignments, it is also important to bear in mind that reading and other activities such as journal writing, recreational reading, vocabulary games, not assigned for mandatory completion by teachers are part of daily life and are not considered to be homework.

## 2. Guiding Principles

- 2.1 In designing homework for students, teachers must apply the following guiding principles:
  - 2.1.1 Ensure homework is purposeful and meaningful;
  - 2.1.2 Plan and differentiate assignments in order to ensure students are able to complete homework independently or with minimal support;
  - 2.1.3 Consider and be sensitive to the impact of homework on family life and balance the benefits of homework with respect for the value of family time;
  - 2.1.4 Ensure students and parents/legal guardians are aware of and encouraged to use strategies for communicating challenges students may face in successfully completing homework;
  - 2.1.5 When working with older students, seek their input into the structure of homework that best supports their learning and success;
  - 2.1.6 Strive to identify interesting, engaging learning tasks for homework assignments;
  - 2.1.7 Cooperate and coordinate homework assignments with other staff to identify best practices related to homework as a complement to learning and to avoid potential overload for the student at any one time.

2.2 The positive impact of homework relies upon student engagement, their success with completing their assignments and the ability of teachers to design assignments matched to students' learning needs. Differentiating homework assignments to meet this goal reflects the perspective that successful use of homework to support learning is not dependent upon the amount of time taken with homework but the degree to which it engages students, connects to the students' individual abilities and links to the work undertaken in class.

### 3. Holidays and Weekends

- 3.1 In addition to consideration of homework types, and the need for careful design of homework tasks, the district recognizes the importance of family time, the value of celebrating religious traditions and the need to balance homework with other demands.
- 3.2 It is therefore recommended, and supported by stakeholders, that teachers refrain from assigning homework over long weekends or holidays. Since regular weekends are often filled with many family demands, discretion is to be used to ensure homework over regular weekends is no more than what might be normally assigned on a school night. Homework is also to be differentiated to reflect varying student needs.
- 3.3 In the case of older students, Grade 4 and up, it is important to recognize students may elect to use weekends for study and homework completion in order to balance busy week nights with homework responsibilities. For details please review the Appendix.

### 4. Recommended Times

To recognize the importance of personal and family time, it is recommended teachers use the following guidelines related to the quantity of homework.

- 4.1 The amount of homework assigned to students is to be differentiated according to age, developmental stage and grade level along a continuum from lower to upper elementary, elementary to junior high and junior high school to high school. At all levels, the time a student spends on homework may vary and individual student needs and capacity are always to be considered.
- 4.2 Keeping in mind that the first grade in each divisional range below is to reflect time at the low end of the scale, with a gradual extension at the upper end of the division to the higher time range, the recommended time guidelines are:
  - 4.3.1 Kindergarten to Grade 3  
Occasional 5-10 minutes of homework per week.
  - 4.3.2 Grades 4 to 6  
Maximum of 30 minutes of homework per school night.
  - 4.3.3 Grades 7 to 9  
Maximum of 60 minutes of homework per school night.
  - 4.3.4 Grades 10 to 12

Maximum of 120 minutes of homework per school night.

- 4.3 Additional explanation related to each of these grade levels is provided in the Appendix that accompanies this administrative procedure. *Supporting Implementation of Administrative Procedure 364*. Expectations and recommendations related to incomplete homework as well as the evaluation of homework are also included in the Appendix.
5. Roles and Responsibilities

Since student learning and success are shared responsibilities, teachers, parents/legal guardians, students and school administrators all have important roles and responsibilities related to the completion of homework.

  - 5.1 Teachers

Teachers have a responsibility to:

    - 5.1.1 Maximize instruction during school hours by using strategies such as differentiated assessment and instruction;
    - 5.1.2 Make every effort to differentiate expectations when homework is assigned;
    - 5.1.3 Ensure homework is used for review, practice, enrichment or completion of work rather than to introduce concepts or provide instruction (Instruction must occur in the classroom.);
    - 5.1.4 Prepare students to succeed with homework and support them to develop skills they need to complete homework successfully;
    - 5.1.5 Implement appropriate and reasonable homework practices and continually review and assess those practices;
    - 5.1.6 Utilize appropriate strategies to communicate homework assignments to students, as well as, strategies for completing assignments. For example, student agendas, electronic means, etc.
    - 5.1.7 Establish communication strategies for parents/legal guardians and students in cases where the student encounters challenges in completing the homework;
    - 5.1.8 Undertake appropriate professional development related to homework practices.
  - 5.2 Parents/Legal Guardians

5.2.1 Parents/legal guardians are educational partners with teachers. Homework is one of the options parents/legal guardians have to support their child's learning. Homework provides parents/legal guardians with opportunities to:

    - 5.2.1.1 Encourage and supervise learning as students practice skills at home;
    - 5.2.1.2 Deepen their understanding of how their child is doing;
    - 5.2.1.3 Model the family's commitment to education;
    - 5.2.1.4 Provide appropriate assistance.

- 5.2.2 A key parental/legal guardian's responsibility is to communicate to teachers concerns related to homework completion, circumstances where their children are experiencing difficulty with their homework or if there are extenuating circumstances that made it difficult for the student to complete an assignment as planned.
  - 5.2.3 Since homework is designed to support learning and is not intended to provide instruction, parents/legal guardians are not required to take on the role of a professional teacher.
  - 5.2.4 Although, from time to time, schools may provide resources for enrichment of students, parents/legal guardians are encouraged to take advantage of community resources to support enriched learning opportunities for their children (the public library, science centres, art galleries, museums, etc.).
  - 5.2.5 Parents/legal guardians, who wish to significantly modify homework expectations for their children, are encouraged to meet with teachers and when appropriate, school administration, to discuss the details of a homework plan to meet the student's needs.
- 5.3 Students
  - 5.3.1 Students have a responsibility to do their best in completing assignments.
  - 5.3.2 Students are also to be encouraged by their teacher and parents/legal guardians to share challenges that they encounter with homework, to develop an understanding of how homework benefits their learning and to provide feedback, reflective of their development level, related to the success of homework in supporting their learning.
- 5.4 School Administration
  - 5.4.1 Homework is a complex topic which requires conversation and cooperation to develop specific details and processes that will meet school and individual student needs. Annually, principals must initiate the development or review of homework plans and procedures for their school. This must include input from parents/legal guardians, students, teachers and other district personnel, if appropriate. On an ongoing basis, principals must monitor the consistent use of the school's plans and procedures for homework.
  - 5.4.2 It is imperative that principals communicate the school homework plans and procedures through a variety of means including, but not limited to, websites, newsletters, letters to parents/legal guardians and School Council meetings.
  - 5.4.3 Principals have a responsibility to ensure students, teachers, parents/legal guardians and School Council are aware of the district's homework administrative procedure. They also have a role in supporting teachers, parents/legal guardians and students to find solutions to homework issues as well as in planning and coordinating professional development related to homework for their staff.
  - 5.4.4 In collaboration with staff, principals are encouraged to organize and deliver professional development opportunities related to homework.

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Reference: Section 12, 16, 2, 18, 20, 60, 61, 113 [School Act](#)  
[Tips for Parents](#)  
[Canadian Council on Learning: A Systematic Review of Literature Examining the Impact of Homework on Academic Achievement, 2009. p. 5](#)