

Homework Policy

Aim of Policy

This policy outlines the approach to help teachers pitch the appropriate homework load for the different levels of students in Northland Primary School.

Definition

Homework refers to any learning activity that students are required by the school to complete outside of curriculum time. This includes assignments and projects but not revision of school work or studying for tests and examinations.

Objectives of Homework

Homework, when used appropriately, can reinforce students' learning, provide feedback on their progress and cultivate a healthy disposition towards continual learning. However, excessive homework can have adverse impact on students' holistic development and well-being, and could negatively affect their motivation for learning.

Effective use of homework can:

- (a) reinforce learning and deepen understanding of lessons taught;
- (b) allow students to regularly practise, and apply skills and concepts taught;
- (c) develop good study skills and habits; and
- (d) encourage greater ownership and responsibility for independent learning.

Judicious use of homework allows teachers to:

- (a) consolidate learning that has taken place in class;
- (b) check for students' understanding and progress, so as to provide timely feedback, intervention and support; and
- (c) review effectiveness of lesson.

Homework also provides parents with:

- (a) timely information on the learning progress of their child; and
- (b) opportunity to be involved in the child's learning.

In general, the studies argue that homework, when appropriately used, **can improve students' study skills and improve their attitudes toward school**. Such positive effects of learning, which spans both academic and non-academic domains, are given as follows:

Immediate effects on achievement, include

- (a) better retention of factual knowledge
- (b) increased understanding
- (c) better processing of information
- (d) better critical thinking
- (e) curriculum enrichment

Long-term academic effects, include

- (a) improved attitude toward school
- (b) learning encouraged during leisure time
- (c) better study habits and skills

Non-academic long-term effects, include

- (a) greater self-direction
- (b) greater self-discipline
- (c) better time organisation
- (d) more inquisitiveness
- (e) more independent problem solving

Time Norms

Parents and students can expect homework to be assigned at least three times per week, including weekends and special holidays (according to the discretion of the teacher). **Reduced** Homework load could be assigned to students on days they have to stay in school for supplementary, remedial lessons or CCA days. **No** Homework should be assigned when the students have learning journeys or during festive seasons.

The time spent on completing homework assignments **should not be more than what is stipulated below:**

Levels	Proposed Duration per Subject (min)	Approximate Daily Norms (min)
1	15	45
2	20	60
3	25	100
4, 5 & 6	30	120

The timings for each subject and for the number of subjects are at the discretion of the teachers, considering the ability level of students. Teachers have the authority to spread the assignments or to give them at a go. Teachers who specialize must work to put a schedule with other subject teachers.

Teachers also need to be mindful that school holidays are meant for students to take a break from formal learning and they should therefore not be given excessive homework. As a guide, if homework is to be given during the school holidays, the daily homework load should not be more than 50% of the daily load given during school week.

Recording / Communication

The student diary is the primary communication tool for homework and serves to provide:

- an agent for taking responsibility for recording assignments, for organising materials to take home, and for reference when completing tasks
- a tool for teachers and parents to communicate with one another about homework (and/or other matters)

- the parent/s with a means for monitoring homework completion
- a way to promote accountability

Teachers should also document the amount and type of homework given for every occasion for tracking purposes.

Assessment

Homework is to reflect the same high standards of legibility, neatness, completeness and content as expected in the classroom. Not all homework is collected or taken for a grade. Assignments will be assessed and feedback given to students in a timely fashion, according to specific teacher practice and to the nature or purpose of the assignment.

Lack of Completion

Homework is to be completed within the prescribed time period (typically, the following day) unless otherwise specified. Should extenuating circumstances interfere with timely completion of homework, the parent is to communicate to the teacher via a note in the students' diary, e-mail or telephone.

The teacher shall communicate to parents if students have a habitual pattern of not completing homework. This may result in a more formal monitoring plan as devised by the school team of teachers, counsellor, HOD CCE and parents.

Absences

If a student is absent, he/she is responsible for obtaining missed homework assignments. In the case of an illness of two or more days, parents may request that they collect homework assignments from the General Office or that homework be sent through their child's classmate.

Monitoring Homework Load

Teachers could have a "Homework Corner" on the whiteboard in all classrooms, where teachers or class monitor could write down the homework given to the class for the day. Subject teachers should then moderate the amount of homework given based on what had already been assigned to the class. Other methods that may be adopted include:

- (a) Reflecting the amount of homework in teachers' weekly lesson plans or in schemes of work;
- (b) Using Google Docs as a platform for either teachers or students to key in homework load, which could then be collated for discussion at school management meetings;
- (c) Conducting a monthly dip stick survey of students or gather students' feedback through student-forums; and
- (d) Adopting a school-wide policy where different days of the week are assigned for different subjects to set homework, or designating that no homework be given on CCA days.
- (e) Level meetings may be used as a platform for coordinating homework load. HOLs could monitor the homework load and gather feedback from teachers during level meetings.

Monitoring of Vacation Homework Load

In monitoring vacation homework load, HODs, Level Advisers and teachers could coordinate among subjects and reach a consensus on the appropriate homework

load. Teachers could then be asked to indicate the homework to be assigned to students a few weeks before the vacation, so that HODs or level heads could review and moderate accordingly. A vacation calendar could also be created for students with vacation homework listed.

Reviewed and Revised in January 2015

Sources

1. Workplan Seminar 2012: Information for Teachers – Homework Guidelines – Notes of Seminar.
2. Revised Homework Guidelines – Norms – September 2012 – Notes of Seminar
3. Northland Primary School Homework Policy as of 2010