



HOMWORK POLICY – St Rita's School

Rationale

Background

There has been extensive research into the value of homework. The research of John Hattie on the topic seems to confirm the belief that there is little evidence linking traditional homework to improved academic performance of students (*John Hattie: Visible Learning, A Synthesis of over 800 Meta-Analyses Relating to Achievement*). Excessive homework may in fact impact negatively on student achievement and also reduce student access to leisure activities that can also teach valuable life skills.

At St Rita's School we believe that learning is a partnership between home and school. Therefore our approach is to give some homework to allow children to consolidate some of the learning being undertaken at school as well as to give parents better access to that learning.

Homework needs to meet the diverse needs of each individual student. St Rita's strongly discourages a blanket approach to appointing homework across a year level.

Policy

Homework is part of the learning process at St Rita's. It is valuable when undertaken in partnership between home and school and when it provides parents with an opportunity to be part of their child's formal learning.

Procedures

Reading

- Our school will continue to encourage students to become proficient readers through our home reading program. Home reading is the most important part of any homework program and should be given the highest priority.

- Teachers may choose how to change books but students should be recording reading at least four times per week.
- Home reading diaries ARE NOT to be signed by the students but by the person evidencing their reading.
- The completion of home reading is to be celebrated in class, eg an award when reading milestones reached (100 nights of reading).

Sight Words

- A sight word program is used in the junior school and/ or where it is deemed necessary by the classroom teacher (eg students with high learning needs). This is closely linked with our goal to promote reading as a first priority.
- Independent readers should be encouraged to read rather than learn sight words. Therefore, from 2018, sight words are deemed completed once a student has achieved the Get Reading Right Camera Words and M300 Sight Words.

Spelling

The Spelling Mastery Program used by St Rita's School discourages the sending home of words prior to testing. It states, "*When students know the exact words on a test in advance, they can memorize those specific words and may promptly forget them following the test*".

Therefore spelling words will not be sent home prior to testing. However, students are to be sent home their spelling test at the completion of each test. These words can be studied prior to the "retest" (which occurs after the completion of the next 5 lessons).

Maths

- Teachers will provide individual "Basic Facts cards" to develop automaticity in Number. This is based on a Basic Facts ladder, which progressively outlines the number facts required from Year 1 through to Year 6.
- Students entering Year 1 will be placed on the Basic Facts ladder by the LST. All other children start the year with the step they finished on the previous year.
- Students get a new card each week.
- Students will be tested on their cards on a weekly basis at school. If they have passed that level or levels on the Basic Facts ladder, they will be given the next card/s for the following week. It may be the case that students may get stuck on one level but continue to progress up the ladder while still practising that step.
- At least once per semester, the LST and/or school officers will complete a Basic Facts review. If a child has forgotten a step or steps, they will need to redo these steps as part of their homework.
- If a student progresses more than one year above their current year in Basic Facts, they are to be given alternative maths homework for the remainder of the year (eg the teacher could assign them tasks on studyladder). This policy is because we do not want parents to have to teach students concepts which are not in their current maths curriculum. It is not expected that this will affect many students.

- Although testing is completed by a school officer, **it is the classroom teacher's role** to review Basic Facts progress and to discuss with parents when they feel homework expectations are not being met.
- Each student is to have a basic facts homework book. In this book, parents will be required to sign off that their child has practised basic facts.

General

- The principles of this policy are to be communicated to parents at the beginning of each year through class meetings.
- Homework will be sent home each week. Students will return homework as directed by the teacher.
- Homework is to be checked by the teacher weekly. Parents should have signed both the reading log and basic facts card (Yrs 1-6). Teachers are to show they have checked homework with a signature/ initial and, where appropriate, some comment. Teachers need to initial both:
 - Reading log or diary
 - Year 1-6 Basic Facts Card
- Teachers should make contact with the parents if homework is not being completed on a regular basis. The non-completion of home reading or basic facts generally warrants a conversation with the parent and/ or the child.
- Students will not be assigned worksheets or other written work unless this matter has been discussed privately between the classroom teacher and parent. Written work is not in accordance with our general policy and is generally not encouraged, however, teacher discretion is used depending on the individual circumstances.
- In preparation for their transition to High School, Year 6 students can be given additional homework in Term 4 to develop study skills and habits in readiness for high school. This homework may be to carry out individual tasks towards classroom assessments.