



# Maitland High School

## Procedure

### Homework



Education

## Homework

### Rationale:

Homework helps students by complementing and reinforcing classroom learning, fostering lifelong learning, self-discipline, concentration and study; and by providing an opportunity for students to be responsible for their own learning. It is important for students to gain confidence in the ability to learn independently, thus homework at Maitland High School is primarily designed around: writing, learning concepts and skills that have already been taught in the classroom but require practice to consolidate and improve students' skills and understanding. It may also include pre-reading and planning for the next steps to be taken in class.

Quality Research indicates that student learning may be enhanced if homework is:

- appropriate for each student's age and ability
- relevant to each student's needs
- purposeful and designed to meet specific learning goals
- varied and challenging, but achievable
- built on knowledge, skills and understanding developed in class
- clearly stated and requirements made explicit during class time
- supported by teacher strategies for students having difficulties with homework

**John Hattie's research (Visible Learning: A synthesis of over 1500 meta-analyses, 2018)** is often misquoted when saying that there is 'no research to support homework has a positive impact on learning.' Homework, taken as an aggregated whole, shows an effect size of  $d = 0.29$  that is, between small and medium positive impact. However, these studies show that the effect size at primary school age is  $d = 0.15$ , while for **secondary students it is  $d = 0.64$** . On this basis, homework for high school students can have an 'excellent' effect. However, not all homework is equal. The most effective homework in high school, especially in the junior years, is associated with: rote learning, practice or rehearsal of subject matter. Task-orientated homework has higher efficacy than deep learning and problem-solving. Overall, the more complex, open-ended and unstructured tasks are, the lower the positive effect. This stands to reason as most students require the support of the classroom learning environment -equipped with teacher, peers, resources, feedback and guidance to scaffold and provide timely assistance to move to the next step in a complex learning process.

**Homework tasks should be assigned by teachers with a specific, explicit learning purpose. On completion, teachers should acknowledge student effort and provide feedback related to student learning.** Short, frequent homework closely monitored by teachers has more impact and effects are higher for higher ability students than lower ability students; higher for older rather than younger students. 20-30 minutes maximum for these types of consolidation and practice tasks is ideal. Finally, the evidence is that teacher involvement in homework is key to its success. Therefore, it is critical that homework is validated as important through its planned inclusion in classroom learning upon its completion and feedback is given using a variety of teaching and learning strategies e.g. self-assessment, peer-assessment, class discussion, drafting and editing process in class, questioning and response, with the opportunity to refine or add more ideas or correct answers in the process. It is also crucial that teachers ensure that students understand the relevance of the homework they set to classwork and to their learning progress.

**'Busy work' is not given in this school. Homework is only valuable when it fulfils the purposes outlined above and is directly relevant to the course work and learning needs of students.** It should challenge all students appropriately, while also ensuring that the work provided is something that the student is able to do independently. It provides training for students in planning and organising time and develops a range of skills in identifying and using information sources. Students need to revise each day's work as well as completing set homework.

**The regular setting of homework by teachers is school policy. At Maitland High School, all students can expect to receive a minimum of one piece of quality\* homework per cycle** (i.e once every two weeks) in each core subject, which have six periods a cycle. Homework for other subjects with less learning periods can be expected on a pro-rata basis. The Maitland High School Homework Tracker also coordinates homework provided across teachers in different faculties and therefore avoid unreasonable workloads being placed on students. The Homework and Assessment Tracker provides helpful information to parents and carers as critical partners in their child's education. Homework will generally range from 45 - 90 minutes a day in Years 7-9, with one hour being typical in Year 7. This time may include ½ hour of reading a night and revision of the day's learning. In Years 10 to 12, homework will generally increase, and require from 1-3 hours per week night, with up to 6 hours for Year 12 on weekends during peak assessment periods.

**The quantity of homework needs to be manageable for students and will:**

- consider students' outside of school hours commitments, such as sport, cultural activities, tuition, part-time employment and home responsibilities
- take into account students' access to resources and technology beyond school
- be clearly communicated to students
- provide some flexibility and options to allow for different student circumstances

Parents/caregivers of students experiencing difficulties completing homework need to be confident that these concerns can be discussed with the teacher, and that guidance and assistance will be provided.

**Types of quality\* homework:**

**Quality homework task has a clear academic purpose such as developing writing skills, discipline-based skills which require practice and improvement**, checking for understanding, or applying knowledge or skills (consolidation).

**Homework should be:**

- Meaningful. Only learning which requires practice, improvement or consolidation is set.
- appropriate to the student's skill level and age
- interesting, challenging and engaging
- purposeful and relevant to the curriculum
- used in class and assessed by teachers with feedback and support provided

**Types of homework that meet these requirements include:**

**Practice exercises - providing students with the opportunities to apply new knowledge, or to review, revise and reinforce newly acquired skills**, such as:

- completing consolidation exercises
- practising for mastery
- practising words or phrases learnt in a Language Other Than English
- reading for pleasure
- writing responses and other creative tasks
- practising and playing musical instruments
- practising physical education skills or training for competitions
- writing up practical work or process diaries

**Preparatory homework - providing opportunities for students to gain background information so they are better prepared for future lessons, such as:**

- reading background material for History
- reading English texts for class discussion
- researching topics for class work
- collecting newspaper articles
- revising information about a current topic
- Extension assignments - encouraging students to pursue knowledge individually and imaginatively, such as:  
writing something eg. a book review  
making or designing something eg. an art work
- completing Science investigation exercises
- researching local news
- finding material on the Internet - information and retrieval skills
- monitoring advertising in a newspaper
- multimedia projects
- interdisciplinary explorations based on an important social/ historical/moral theme

**Parents and caregivers can help their children by:**

#### **At home**

- encouraging them to take increasing responsibility for their learning and organisation;
- providing a place and a desk for homework and study;
- observing and acknowledging their success and asking how their home and class work is progressing;
- encouraging them to set aside a regular daily session to read and complete homework on time;
- setting an example by reading themselves;
- helping them to complete homework by discussing key questions or directing them to resources
- helping them to balance the amount of time spent completing homework and engaging in leisure sporting or recreational activities;
- checking whether homework has been set in the Homework and Assessment Tracker
- reading texts set by teachers; discussing their child's response to the texts and asking to see work they complete in relation to these texts; and
- discussing homework in their first language, where English is not the main language spoken at home, and linking it to their previous experiences

#### **At school**

- attending school events, displays or productions in which their children are involved;
- contacting the relevant teacher to discuss any problems their children are having with homework;

**Teachers can help their students before homework is set by:**

- indicating clearly the purpose of the homework;
- assessing resources in advance and submitting a copy of research assignments to the Librarian;
- specifying assessment and assignment expectations at the beginning of a unit of work;
- setting varied, challenging and meaningful tasks related to class work that are appropriate to the students' learning needs and to the intended outcomes of the unit of work being taught;
- giving students enough time to complete homework, taking into account home obligations and extracurricular activities;
- coordinating the allocation of homework by different teachers through use of the school calendar;
- consulting with students before setting discretionary homework tasks;
- helping students develop the organisational and time-management skills needed for them to be responsible for their own learning;

- teaching revision and study skills explicitly; and
- ensuring that students have good information-gathering, analysing and reporting skills

**Once homework is due by:**

- keeping accurate records of homework set and submitted
- assessing homework and providing timely and practical feedback and support
- making effective use of homework diaries
- monitoring progress on major assignments several times before the due date; and
- developing strategies to support parents to become active partners in homework through CANVAS

**Students can help themselves by:**

- writing down all details of homework they are set in their school diaries;
- being aware of the importance of homework and of the school's homework policy;
- recording due dates for tasks and major assignments in their diaries;
- planning their homework task completion appropriately - not leaving work to the last minute;
- seeking assistance from teachers, parents or caregivers when difficulties arise;
- ensuring their homework is completed to a high standard;
- showing their homework commitments and teachers' expectations to their parents or caregivers;
- developing an effective individual study timetable; and
- completing assigned work punctually

**The school can help by:**

- Publishing a Homework and Assessment Task Tracker on the school's website.
- ensuring that parents and caregivers are aware of the school's homework policy;
- limiting homework set for completion over holiday periods or weekends (except for Stage 6);
- setting no homework the week before assessment periods except for revision exercises;
- integrating major assessment tasks within the school's calendar;
- Monitoring the homework load of students through the Homework and Assessment Task Tracker;
- Notifying parents if homework is not submitted or is unsatisfactory or incomplete; and
- encouraging staff, students and parents to communicate any homework related concerns to the class teacher

**Relevant Department of Education (DoE) Policy Documents**

Homework Policy Guidelines: May 2012.

[https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/associated-documents/Hwk\\_Pol\\_guide.pdf](https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/associated-documents/Hwk_Pol_guide.pdf)

DoE Homework Policy

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policies/homework-policy?refid=285776>

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