

ST JAMES HOMEWORK POLICY (2017)

Value of homework

The current evidence and research shows that the quality of homework assigned is likely to be more important than the quantity. Research has established that homework has a positive effect on learning, particularly at the middle and secondary school levels (Xu, 2010; Zimmerman & Kitsantas, 2005). Although homework's effectiveness has been challenged by educators, parents, and students (Kohn, 2006), it continues to be an important educational supplement used by most teachers to enhance the learning experience of their students (Patall, Cooper, & Wynn, 2010). Overall, the effectiveness of homework is enhanced by providing students with choices among homework tasks, which will result in higher motivational and performance outcomes, students' autonomy, and intrinsic motivation (Patall et al., 2010). <http://www.education.vic.gov.au>

At St James we recognise that any learning done at home needs to be **appropriate, accessible and effective.**

At St James we hope to provide students and parents with opportunities to reinforce learning which consolidates or extends understandings. The role of the parent / carer is critical in the success of home learning. It becomes the responsibility of parents to work in partnership with teachers to make sure that learning at home is valuable and effective.

Home learning should include conversations with parents/carers where a child can be helped to understand misconceptions they may have or to be given timely and appropriate feedback about how they are going and what they could do to improve. Without feedback and support during home learning, learning becomes serendipitous and can simply result in wasted time and anxiety about completing tasks without any benefit on student improvement.

John Hattie, Professor of Education and Director of the Melbourne Education Research Institute at the University of Melbourne, found that the influence that homework has on student achievement is more effective for secondary students than primary age students. He concludes that for primary students it is about quality not quantity. He believes that it's not about *getting rid* of homework but about getting it right.

"Homework in primary school has an effect of around zero. In high school it's larger. (...) Which is why we need to get it right. Not why we need to get rid of it. It's one of those lower hanging fruit that we should be looking in our primary schools to say, "Is it really making a difference?" If you try and get rid of homework in primary schools many parents judge the quality of the school by the presence of homework. So, don't get rid of it. Treat the zero as saying, "It's probably not making much of a difference but let's improve it". Certainly I think we get over obsessed with homework. Five to ten minutes has the same effect of one hour to two hours. The worst thing you can do with homework is give kids projects. The best thing you can do is to reinforce something you've already learnt." [Reference](#)

Roles and responsibilities

Schools can support students by:

- fostering lifelong learning and connecting families with the learning of their children, as part of a comprehensive and balanced curriculum within Victorian schools
- ensuring the school's homework policy is relevant to the needs of students
- advising parents/carers of homework expectations and provide them with a copy of the homework policy
- encouraging parents/carers of early primary school aged children to read to and with their children for enjoyment

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Teachers can support students by:

- equipping students with the skills to solve problems
- encouraging real-life problem solving, logical thinking, creativity and imagination
- setting varied, challenging and meaningful tasks related to class work to suit the students' learning needs
- giving students enough time to complete homework, considering home obligations and extracurricular activities
- developing strategies within the school to support parents/carers becoming active partners in homework.
- offering a wide range of opportunities for families to engage in their children's learning.

Parents can support students by:

- developing a positive and productive approach to homework
- ensuring there is a balance between the time spent on homework and recreational activities
- reading to them, talking with them and involving them in learning opportunities during everyday household routines and physical activity
- attending the school events, productions or displays their child/ren is involved in
- giving children valuable time to discuss and support learning and provide feedback

Students can take responsibility for their own learning by:

- discussing with their parents or caregivers homework expectations
- accepting responsibility for the completion of homework tasks within set time frames
- following up on comments made by teachers
- seeking assistance when difficulties arise
- organising their time to manage home obligations, participation in physical activity and sports, recreational and cultural activities and part-time employment.

The information below describes quality homework practice for the different year levels.

Prep – Year 4

- will mainly consist of daily reading to, with, and by parents/carer or older siblings
- enables the extension of class work by practising skills or gathering of extra information or materials

Year 5 – 6

- should include daily independent reading
- may extend class work
- can provide opportunities to develop research skills



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Homework may take the form of a rubric which details tasks and learning to be covered over a fortnight. It may also be research based to consolidate or extend a child's understanding. The non-negotiable at St James is that students read (preferably with a significant adult who can respond and interact with the child about their understanding of the reading). A rubric may also include ideas that cover a broad range of experiences and encourage students to be: **active, creative, curious, helpful, thoughtful and responsible.**

Teachers can provide parents with advice on what children need to improve on and can direct parents towards types of activities but they are not required to provide the activities.

There will be a link on the school website that directs parents/carers to free online resources if they require additional support with ideas and learning opportunities.

Teachers at St James are not required to administer 'extra' homework or worksheets at the request of parents. We ask that parents supplement their child's homework with aspects of life lessons and spending quality time with the child instead of requesting *extra* work.

Teachers at St James will not be expected to supply homework for students who are missing school due to holidays or illness (unless the absence is due to an ailment such as a broken bone that means that the student is not sick - but physically unable to attend school).