

## TIS Policy on Home/Holiday Work

May 2009

Students at Tabubil International School are often on leave for extended periods of time. Teachers are sometimes asked to provide work for these students whilst they are out of school, or ask for extra work to be given to students outside of school hours (homework).

Parents and caregivers have an important role to play in assisting their child to learn whilst they are out of the school, however it must be remembered that the class teacher prepares work for their class with the understanding that they will be teaching and including many other learning experiences that support and scaffold each child's development. Class work is far more than just worksheets and maths exercises!

Going on an extended holiday has the potential to affirm the partnership in learning between parents and teachers and to ensure that the importance of family and leisure activities is recognised in the amounts and type of work that is set.

Full consideration should be given to the value and purpose of the work and the principles and practices outlined in this document to ensure holidays are not only educationally beneficial but meets the realistic expectations of students, teachers, parents and caregivers.

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## Purposes of Homework

Homework:

- is a valuable part of schooling
- allows for practising, extending and consolidating work done in class
- provides training for students in planning and organising time
- develops a range of skills in identifying and using information resources
- establishes habits of study, concentration and self-discipline which will serve students for the rest of their lives
- strengthens home-school links
- reaffirms the role of parents and caregivers as partners in education
- provides parents and caregivers with insights into what is being taught in the classroom and the progress of their children
- challenges and extends gifted and talented children.

## General Principles

Homework is most beneficial when:

- it reinforces and extends classwork and consolidates basic skills and knowledge
- it is challenging and purposeful, but not so demanding that it has adverse effects on the student's motivation
- parents or caregivers are involved in the formulation and implementation of the school's homework policy
- students take responsibility for their homework, supported by their parents or caregivers
- it is well coordinated and teacher expectations are well communicated
- it is set on a regular basis and establishes a routine of home study
- teachers set suitable amounts of homework which are varied and at an appropriate level considering the age, stage of schooling and capabilities of students
- it takes into account students' home responsibilities and extracurricular activities such as clubs, sport and part-time employment
- it is marked promptly and accurately
- feedback and follow-up are provided regularly to students
- it develops and extends the core learning skills of inquiry and independent study.

## Types of Homework

The amount of time that students are expected to spend on homework will depend upon the age, ability, home environment and extracurricular activities of students, including family and cultural obligations. It is important that students of all ages have opportunities for free time, leisure and physical activities outside of school.

The three main types of homework are:

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

- consolidation exercise e.g. maths, including memorisation of tables
- practising for mastery e.g. spelling words
- revising information about a current topic
- practising words or phrases learnt in a language other than English
- reading for pleasure
- essay writing.

**Preparatory homework** - providing opportunities for students to gain background information on a unit of study so that they are better prepared for future lessons, including:

- background reading
- reading e.g. English text for class discussion
- researching topics for a class unit of work
- collecting items e.g. geometric shapes.

**Extension assignments** - encouraging students to pursue knowledge individually and imaginatively, including:

- writing e.g. a book review
- making or designing something e.g. an art work
- investigations e.g. science, social science
- researching e.g. history, local news
- information and retrieval skills eg. using a home computer to find material on the Internet
- monitoring e.g. advertising in particular newspapers.

Wherever possible homework should recognise the place of technology in today's world and the benefits of using technology such as home computers, E-mail and the Internet for organising and accessing information. Tabubil International School recognises that not all students will have access to this technology at home. In these cases, alternative arrangements will be made for these students.

## **Successful Practice**

### **Prep - Year 1 (Stage 1)**

Generally teachers will not set formal homework in the earliest year of Stage 1. However, all activities at home or in play can assist children to develop a wide range of knowledge and skills including literacy, numeracy and problem solving. It should also be remembered that self-directed play in unstructured time is important. Language and number concepts can be introduced and consolidated in many family activities, including:

- shopping
- preparation of food
- listening to stories, learning songs and nursery rhymes
- conversations about what is happening at school
- interactive video and computer programs
- reading
- library borrowing
- family outings
- collecting items.

In the latter stages of Stage 1 consideration should be given to the setting of formal homework as for example in completing simple computations, copying letters or words, or completing an activity sheet.

### Years 2 - 7 (Stages 2, 3 and 4)

Although as student's progress they increasingly work independently on their homework, it is important that teachers continue to provide guidance and assistance particularly in the development of study skills.

It is also important that students have the opportunity to experience different types of homework and that the amount of time students' are expected to work on homework is realistic.

These are the guidelines set for homework across the Year levels:

Years 2 and 3: 10-20 minutes each night

Years 4 and 5: 20-30 minutes each night

Years 6 and 7: 30-40 minutes each night

Although most homework is likely to be set in the areas of English, Mathematics and Studies of Society and its Environment, it could be set across all areas of the curriculum.

### Expectations

Parents and caregivers can help by:

- taking an active interest in homework
- ensuring that there is time set aside for homework
- encouraging and supporting students to complete homework
- providing, where possible, a dedicated place and desk for homework and study
- encouraging their children to read and take an interest in current events
- assisting teachers to monitor homework by signing completed work if requested and being aware of the amount of homework set

- communicating with teachers any concerns about the nature of homework and their children's approach to the homework
- alerting the school to any domestic or extracurricular activities which may need to be taken into consideration when homework is being set or corrected.

### **Teachers can help by:**

- explaining to students and their parents or caregivers the purpose and benefits of homework
- ensuring students and parents or caregivers are aware of the school's homework policy
- providing quality homework activities related to classwork
- setting a suitable amount of relevant homework which is appropriate to the ability of each student
- ensuring that students are aware of what is expected of them, and how their work will be assessed
- giving students sufficient time to complete their homework, taking into account, as far as possible, competing home obligations and extracurricular activities and homework set by other teachers
- marking homework promptly and appropriately, maintaining homework records and providing feedback to students and parents or caregivers
- alerting parents or caregivers of any developing problems concerning their children's homework and suggesting strategies that they can use to assist their children with their homework.

### **Students can help by:**

- being aware of the importance of homework
- being aware of their school's homework policy
- completing homework within the given time frame
- alerting parents or caregivers to homework expectations
- seeking assistance from teachers and parents or caregivers when difficulties arise
- showing their homework to their parents or caregivers (this is perhaps not as important in senior high school years)
- ensuring homework is of a high standard
- organising their time to ensure that sufficient time is given to quality homework within set deadlines.