Fairfield Primary School

Homework Policy

Rationale:

This policy is based on the belief that homework plays a positive role in a child’s education. It is of value when it is a positive experience consolidating the learning occurring in the classroom.

Aim:

To provide guidance to the school community about the purpose and nature of homework provided to students.

Implementation:

1. Homework tasks are designed to be aligned with the curriculum program and supportive of student learning development.
2. Homework tasks are designed for individual students or cohorts of students depending upon the nature of student learning.
3. Homework tasks are designed to enable students to independently practise and automatize known skills. For example; students reading independently to practise reading skills and strategies, practising multiplication facts or spelling words.
4. Homework may occasionally include tasks that extend student learning in relation to a learning topic in the classroom.
5. Teachers will communicate the specific nature and requirements of homework tasks to students and parents using appropriate means available.
6. Teachers are responsible for providing educational guidance and feedback about homework tasks. 

Appendix 1.

7. Feedback to students about homework will be timely.

Evaluation:

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school’s three-year review cycle in 2015.

This policy was last ratified by School Council August 2012

Appendix 1

Summary of teacher views about homework
Fairfield Primary School

Teachers have engaged in a process of professional discussion to evaluate the effects of homework in improving student learning outcomes. This process included a qualitative survey and discussion of focus questions in grade level teams. A smaller working party has considered the results of these discussions to prepare this summary. The working party also reviewed existing research on the topic.

The views expressed by teachers are the result of factors such as professional training, direct experience and reflection about the learning process. Teachers reflect on their own practice and evaluate the effectiveness of various teaching strategies in supporting student learning.

From the professional discussions of teachers a number of common issues and shared views about homework may be clearly identified. These include:

1. The value of homework in supporting student learning varies greatly depending on factors such as the age of the student, their learning needs and the nature of the task.

2. Homework tasks may be beneficial to student learning when they enable students to independently practise known skills. These tasks are not focused on new learning but on the practise of skills already developed with the guidance of a teacher.

   The clearest example of positive benefit to learning is regular home reading in which students read (or are read to) for enjoyment and practice known decoding or comprehension strategies. Other tasks which may be of moderate benefit, depending on the individual needs of students, include practising basic number facts, multiples or spelling words.

3. Homework tasks that are too challenging for students or that require a high degree of adult support usually have a limited or even negative effect on student learning. This view is supported by research which suggests that such tasks may reinforce negative student self perceptions, a ‘deficit’ view of learning or create unnecessary tension within the home or between home and school. (Hattie, 2009, p.235)

4. Occasionally students may undertake specific projects, research or gathering of data or materials at home. These projects are designed to meet specific learning objectives and integrated within the classroom learning program. This enables the teacher to provide the ongoing guidance and feedback to support student learning.

5. Teachers don’t support requiring homework for the sake of homework or with the aim of developing ‘good study habits’. There is no evidence to suggest that this is age appropriate or supportive of student learning in the primary years (Hattie, 2009, p.235). The administration and tendency to rely on worksheet tasks are neither time effective or beneficial to learning.

6. Teachers generally have a holistic view of learning in the home context. They believe that the key factor is positive encouragement and expectations about learning that parents communicate to their children. They also believe that talking, hands on experiences such as cooking or building, life experiences, sports and giving children time to play and enjoy childhood are some of the most beneficial supports to learning that parents can provide.