FROM THE PRINCIPAL’S DESK

Dear Parent, Students and Carers,

Parents have been asking about homework and how much should be done. This week I have included our homework policy for you to have a look at.

Homework provides students with opportunities to consolidate their classroom learning, pattern behaviour for lifelong learning beyond the classroom and involve family members in their learning.

Homework cannot be considered mandatory and therefore the completion of homework is not enforceable. The setting of homework at Oakey State Primary School takes into account the need for students to have a balanced lifestyle. This includes sufficient time for family, recreation and cultural pursuits.

Purpose of Homework

Homework is intended to;
- enhance student learning
- be purposeful and relevant to student needs
- be appropriate to the phase of learning (early/middle)
- be appropriate to the capability of the individual student
- develop the student’s independence as a learner
- enable practice of known or taught concepts

Short term to long term memory

Homework is an opportunity for students to reflect on and practise skills from their classroom program. The time gap between the end of the school day and students’ homework time later that afternoon is important as it aids the transfer of learning from short term memory (in class) to long term memory (at home). Learning that may seem successful in the classroom may be lost if not revisited by the student within a medium time frame (later in the afternoon or early evening).

Homework tasks may include:
- Daily reading to, with and by parents/caregivers or other family members
- Daily independent reading – be coordinated across different subject areas
- Practice of taught or known concepts such as reading, spelling or number facts
- Opportunities to write for meaningful purposes

Homework should not include:
- Concepts not already taught in class
- Major KLA assessment tasks (see Assessment Tasks)
- Tasks beyond the teacher’s expectations for an individual student
- Tasks requiring close monitoring or support

Some students may already have a strong grasp of basic facts in maths and literacy. For these students, homework may be required to engage them in further independent learning to complement work undertaken in class through:
- Revision and critical reflection to consolidate learning (practicing for mastery).
- Applying knowledge and skills in new contexts (a topic of interest, an authentic local issue).
- Pursuing knowledge individually and imaginatively (investigating, researching, writing, designing, making).
- Preparing for forthcoming classroom learning (collecting relevant materials, items, information).

Learning goals

Student control of learning is also a key factor. Learning activities that seem meaningless to a student are unlikely to be beneficial. Students may still do the activities but will not draw significant learning from them. They may “do homework” but not learn from it.

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Calendar of Events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thursday 19th September</td>
<td>TYME Festival, Toowoomba</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday 20th September</td>
<td>School Concert—PM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday 20th September</td>
<td>End of Term 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Term 4 starts 8th October</td>
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Teachers as well as students dressed up for Book Week

Congratulations to all the students who did a wonderful job and dressed as their favourite book character for book week.

Pictured below are the prize winners for the lower, middle and upper school. The judges had an extremely hard time choosing the winners.
To maximise its efficacy students need to understand why they are doing an activity. It asked, many students may say “because the teacher set it”. Students may be encouraged to set some learning goals with teacher or parental guidance so that they can engage not just with the activity but with the learning opportunities that the activity provides.

Activities which allow for feedback are likely to be more beneficial. This may involve teacher monitoring of homework the next day. In the case of many on-line computer or iPad activities immediate feedback may be provided. The key is the student’s engagement with the feedback and how it relates to their personal learning goals. However understanding what learning goals are and how to set them may be difficult for many students. This must be taught explicitly and supported in the classroom environment over a period of time to become meaningful to students. Ultimately students should be able to set and monitor their own learning goals.

How much homework is expected?:

- In the Prep Year, generally students will not be set homework, but may wish to take home reading books from the library. Homework activities may be negotiated between the teacher and parents depending on the level of support or commitment from individual parents.
- In Years 1, 2 and 3, set homework could be up to approx. 15 minutes per night, four nights a week (but on average not more than 1 hour per week).
- In Year 4 and Year 5 could be up to but generally not more than 2 hours per week.
- Homework in Year 6 and Year 7 could be up to but generally not more than 3-4 hours per week.

In the interest of supervision and safety, children are not to arrive at school before 8:30am and should be collected/ have left the school grounds no later than 3:15pm.

FIND OUT MORE

Please feel free to ask your child’s teacher about specific homework for their class.

Enjoy your week.

Dave Bosworth