



HOMEWORK POLICY

This policy was written by the leadership team in consultation with the Education Sub-Committee and members of the Professional Learning Community. Throughout the document, evidence has been cited from the research of McREL (Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning, Denver Colorado USA), as outlined in the publication '*Classroom Instruction That Works – Research Based Strategies for Increasing Student Achievement*' 2nd Edition (2011).ⁱ

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1. The Purpose of Homework

1.1 What the research tells us

- There is a small but positive relationship between homework and student achievement levels.
- Homework is the opportunity to learn or review content/skills outside of the school day
- Homework has three key purposes – to practice skills & processes, to increase speed, accuracy, fluency & conceptual understanding, and to extend student learning.
- Homework should be assigned to help students prepare for instruction, review or practice, or extend learning opportunities.
- That the purpose of homework be clearly communicated and activities designed to support academic learning.

1.2 The Agreed Purpose of Homework at FCPS

Homework will be designed to ensure students are:

- Preparing for new learning
- Practicing and revising classroom learning
- Extending on the learning from the classroom program
- Engaged in tasks that are personal, flexible and have real-life context
- Engaged in tasks that are linked to learning goals and that allow for student input. For example, homework may be negotiated to focus on a particular area (such as spelling) for a period of time while the student works to make gains in relation to their learning goal. This would see that more time being spent on spelling than on other areas.
- Engaged in tasks that contribute to the building of their confidence, engagement, self-regulation and wellbeing.



2. Homework Guidelines

2.1 Time Spent on Homework per day

	DEECD Guidelines	FCPS Policy
		That homework will range from . . .
Prep	That homework will not exceed 30 minutes per day.	10 - 15 minutes per day
1/2		15 - 25 minutes per day
3/4		20 - 30 minutes per day
5/6	That homework will range from 30 – 45 minutes per day.	30 - 45 minutes per day

2.2 The Content of the Homework Program

Research suggests that homework, as a form of practice, is most effective when it is overt, actively involves students recalling material (through quizzes, rehearsal or self-assessment), requires students to practice more than one skill at a time and is distributed over time rather than massed into a single session. Further, it is highly recommended that students have the opportunity to access and use corrective feedback about their performance, so as to determine what and how to practice.ⁱⁱ

Based on this research and their own experience working with their children, it is the recommendation of the Education Sub-Committee that a matrix of activities be used in the homework program. It is suggested that this would allow for flexibility in the assigned tasks and cater to student interest as well as learning needs. It is also advised that rubrics for peer and adult feedback, and self-assessment, be introduced to enhance the positive impact of the homework program.

Year Level	The following information outlines the homework tasks that can be selected for each year level. Please note - this is a guide and not a checklist where all tasks must be completed.
Prep	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading of 'just right' books • Being 'read to' by an older reader • Spelling (words selected individually for each student) • Handwriting • Learning activities reflecting the Integrated Curriculum Unit
1/2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading of 'just right' books and being 'read to' • Matrix of activities for the learning of personal spelling words • Mathematics activities based on learning goals • Handwriting • Matrix of activities reflecting the Integrated Curriculum Unit
3 - 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading of 'Just Right' books • Matrix of activities for the learning of personal spelling words • Handwriting • Mathematics activities based on learning goals and revision of prior learning • Matrix of activities reflecting the Integrated Curriculum Unit

All students have access to the following online resources as part of their classroom and homework program:

Reading Eggs - Wings Online - Mathletics

Please note that it is the responsibility of the classroom teacher to ensure communication between home and school about which homework tasks need to be prioritized. There is to be flexibility in allowing different homework schedules for individual children.



3. Responsibilities of the Stakeholders

At a minimum, the purpose of homework should be clearly defined within a school. Teachers should be clear with students and parents about their purposes for assigning homework. When teachers in a school have shared understanding of and commitment to how homework will be used to improve student achievement, students reap the benefits. Taking time to fully define the general purpose of homework is the beginning to a successful, student-oriented learning culture.ⁱⁱⁱ

3.1 The responsibilities of the teacher and the school

It is imperative that, if we are to assign homework that contributes to improved student achievement, we develop and communicate a school homework policy. Therefore, this document represents the implementation of one of the key recommendations in McREL's research.

Further, it is the responsibility of the Professional Learning Teams to design homework assignments that support academic learning and communicate its purpose to students and parents. This requires teachers to know and understand McREL's research on Assigning Homework and Providing Practice, and to then act on the recommendation that providing feedback is an essential ingredient in a successful homework program.

As a Professional Learning Community, we understand that the factors influencing the positive impact of homework include the:

- Quality of the task
- Learning preferences of students
- Structure of the assignment
- Monitoring of student progress and provision of feedback

We will use this knowledge to inform the design and implementation of homework tasks and the homework program across the school.

Research has found that some of the negative consequences of homework can include disruption of family time, physical and emotional fatigue, a lack of access to community and leisure activities, and conflicts between students and their parents. We will therefore act on the recommended that teachers consider the positive and negative consequences of homework and ensure that their assignments make the best use of students' out-of-school time.^{iv}

Classroom teachers will engage in dialogue with students and their families when there is a problem with homework. This is an acknowledgement that successful learning experiences require a collective effort and collaboration between home and school.

Parents have an important role to play in encouraging their children to expend effort and intellect in regards to homework. To help parents better understand how they can support their children's efforts, Homework Forums will be offered (twice a year as a minimum). Teachers will share information on different structures and monitoring techniques that can be used at home to create conditions that match a child's learning preferences, and students will be invited to share their perspectives and needs in relation to the Homework Program.

Homework Club will be conducted each term, twice a week, to allow for a supportive environment in which to complete their tasks.



3.2 The responsibilities of the students

Teachers, Education Support Staff and parents/families will work with the students to ensure that the following responsibilities are met:

- Students understand the purpose of homework and the tasks selected
- Students are self-directed in organizing the necessary materials and the time required to complete the selected tasks
- Students consistently engage in and respond to feedback about their homework and learning needs.

3.3 The responsibilities of parents/families

McREL's 2010 study found that homework assignments that involve parent-child interaction may help to improve performance. Parents having discussions with their child/children about the topics they are studying can motivate students while also helping parents to understand learning objectives and foster communication with teachers about the objectives and their children's progress toward achieving them. ^v

Parents/families are advised to create the appropriate environment for homework – a space in the home where there distractions are minimised. Parents can support their child to organize their time for homework around family and extra-curricular commitments. Further, homework should not be a cause of stress in the home. It is recommended that parents avoid conflict with their child about homework, instead consulting with the classroom teacher and seeking their advice.

Research suggests that parents/families can best support their children by:

- Engaging in discussions with their child about the content of their homework
- Understanding the tasks and the learning objectives
- Clarifying questions their child may have
- Encouraging effort and intellect

ⁱ Ceri B. Dean, Elizabeth Ross Hubbell, Howard Pitler and BJ Stone 'Classroom Instruction That Works' 2nd Edition (2011) Hawker Brownlow Education

ⁱⁱ Ceri B. Dean et al (2011) 'Classroom Instruction That Works' chapter 7 'Assigning Homework and Providing Practice' p.102 & p.107

ⁱⁱⁱ Ceri B. Dean et al (2011) 'Classroom Instruction that Works' chapter 7 'Assigning Homework and Providing Practice' p.107

^{iv} Ceri B. Dean et al (2011) 'Classroom Instruction that Works' chapter 7 'Assigning Homework and Providing Practice' p.102

^v Ceri B. Dean et al (2011) 'Classroom Instruction that Works' chapter 7 'Assigning Homework and Providing Practice' p.105