



Home Learning Policy Renewal 2015

Weetangera School has reviewed the existing homework policy, analysing School Satisfaction Survey data, parent feedback and evidence based research. The School Satisfaction Survey data along with the School Climate evidence informed the school to review communication between the school and home to further support student learning. These areas of improvement have also been supported through feedback received by the parent community, P&C Association and the School Board.

In revising this policy, evidence based research has been collated on the effect of homework on students in primary school. An analysis of current research presents happy, healthy and engaged children at school. Research conducted by Michelle Higgins (2012) clearly outlines that, “primary school children benefit more from time spent on traditional activities such as time with family and reading books... reading for pleasure was found to be the most beneficial educational at-home activity”. This notion is further supported through the research findings of Robert Marzano and Debra Pickering (2007) states homework should reflect the involvement of students in activities appropriate for the home. Weetangera School’s home learning review is further supported by recent work by leading educator John Hattie who states the following in a recent interview:

“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.”

Hattie, 2015.

Weetangera School’s Home Learning policy reflects evidence presented in current research to support the learning which takes place in classrooms.

References

Alanne, N & Macgregor, R (2009) *Homework: The upsides and downsides – towards an effective policy and practice in Australian schools*, 12 September 2014, <http://www.familyschool.org.au/files/1913/7955/4766/homework090710.pdf>

Carbonell, R (2013) ‘Study finds homework has limited value’, *ABC News*, 26 June.

Hattie, J (2015) ‘Homework in primary school has an effect of zero’, *BBC News Radio*, 1 July 2015, <http://visible-learning.org/2014/09/john-hattie-interview-bbc-radio-4/>

Higgins, M (2012) *What is the Value of Homework? Research and Reality*, 1 May

Marzano, R & Pickering, D (2007) ‘The Case For and Against Homework’ *Educational Leadership*, March Volume 64 Number 6, p 74-79.

Walker, R & Horsley, M (2012) ‘Should Australian schools ban homework?’, *The Conversation*, 13 November.



Home Learning Policy

School Procedures:	Home Learning
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Renewal Date:	2016

Draft homework policy

This draft homework policy for Weetangera School is available for community consultation. The School Board has developed the draft policy in consultation with staff and with regard to results of parent, staff and student surveys conducted in 2014/2015. Feedback from the school community on the draft is welcomed to help inform the final policy. Please provide comments to Danielle.Hoogland@ed.act.edu.au by 28th August 2015.

Purpose

This policy outlines Weetangera School's approach to home learning. It describes what home learning is, the rationale for home learning, and guidelines for implementing and participating in home learning.

1. POLICY CONTEXT

- 1.1 In developing this policy, the School Board surveyed parents, teachers and students through the Satisfaction Surveys and the Australian Schools Climate Tool. Responses revealed a very diverse range of views across the community.
- 1.2 The Board also reviewed relevant literature on potential benefits, limitations and recommendations for home learning in primary school. In summary, there is limited and inconclusive evidence that home learning contributes directly to improved academic achievement for primary aged students, and general consensus that primary school students benefit from activities appropriate for home such as reading and family time.
- 1.3 Research shows effective partnerships between families and schools, and positive parental engagement in children's learning have strong and wide-ranging benefits. The ACT Education and Training Directorate has released evidence based information and practical strategies for schools and families to support parental engagement, such as reading together, learning together, creating a positive homework environment and effective parent-school communication. Resources are available on the Directorate's website (www.det.act.gov.au).

- 1.4 These sources, and the views of all members of the school community, contributed to the development of the rationale, principles and procedures for home learning outlined below.

2. DEFINITIONS

- 2.1 We acknowledge that learning occurs in all environments with family, peers and the wider community. For the purpose of this document, the term **home learning** will be used to describe an experience or activity that has been assigned by teachers to be completed by students outside of school hours.

3. RATIONALE

- 3.1 Home Learning is acknowledged as part of the education process between students, school and home.

- 3.2 This policy aims to encourage a strong sense of community where staff, parents/carers and students can share ideas and knowledge in an inclusive environment that contributes to providing the best possible learning outcomes for our children.

- 3.3 The Weetangera School Home Learning policy provides a framework for the organisation of home learning across the school on the basis that it provides opportunities:

- for students to share some of what they are learning at school with parents and caregivers
- for parents to see some of what their children are learning, which can help them to help their children connect what they learn at school to other contexts
- help students learn to manage their time and develop study skills
- use resources additional to those available at school.

4. PRINCIPLES

- 4.1 Through consultation and review of research, Weetangera School aims to develop Home Learning that supports students by:

- valuing the role parents play in supporting students to learn
- developing life-long learning skills and positive work habits
- connecting home and school
- fostering positive attitudes towards school
- acknowledging the learning which takes place within the home environment
- encouraging personal responsibility and independent skills.

5. PROCEDURES

5.1 Teaching Team's Role

- take into consideration the importance of children spending time in cultural and sporting activities outside of school hours
- develop procedures and expectations for home learning at the beginning of each year
- communicate procedures to parents through term overviews and *Google Group* communication

- provide learning that is appropriate to the age and grade of students, sufficiently open-ended to take into account of abilities that are represented in the class
- provide resources and examples to assist parents to help students
- provide links to websites when appropriate
- ensure that home learning complements class learning and does not include new curriculum tasks
- ensure home learning completed does not count towards student achievement when reporting.

5.2 Parent's Role

- provide an environment for the child that is conducive to completing home learning
- where there are concerns about home learning, parents are to contact their child's teacher
- encourage their child to seek assistance from the teacher if necessary.

5.3 Student's Role

- accept responsibility for the completion of work and finish tasks to the best of his/her ability within the given timeframe
- ask for assistance from teachers and family where necessary
- Complete home learning diary on a daily basis.

5.4 School's Role

- *Google Group* communication will be sent on a fortnightly basis and include strategies to support learning at home
- Provide resources that help parents support home learning, using approaches that are consistent with what children are doing at school. This includes resources such as reading strategies, key numeracy strategies (eg. mental computation), graphic organisers, internet research strategies, simple referencing expectations, structure/tips for key text types (report, persuasive, narrative, presentation).

6. SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES AND TIMEFRAMES

Student participation in home learning is optional and differs across grade levels, however reading is a consistent focus of our home learning from K-6. We aim to instill in all students a love of reading and provide families with activities that foster discussions around learning, as well as, the opportunity to learn together. During Home Learning the role of parents is to discuss, listen, support, share and participate with their child, to support their learning.

KINDERGARTEN (Recommended 5-10 MINUTES DAILY):

Regular reading and the daily exchange of home readers, recorded in a home reading diary. Learning high frequency words.

YEARS 1 & 2 (Recommended 10 MINUTES DAILY):

Regular reading and the daily exchange of home readers, recorded in a home reading diary. Tasks to support and consolidate student learning, linked with the classroom.

YEARS 3 & 4 (Recommended 15 MINUTES DAILY):

Regular reading, recorded in student diary and signed by an adult. Tasks to support and consolidate student learning, linked with the classroom.

YEAR 5 (Recommended 20 MINUTES DAILY):

Regular reading, recorded in student diary and signed by an adult. Tasks to support and consolidate student learning, linked with the classroom.

YEAR 6 (Recommended 20 MINUTES DAILY):

- Regular reading, recorded in student diary and signed by an adult.
- Assignments to be completed over an extended period of time to support and consolidate lifelong learning skills and habits, linked to the classroom, as well as develop independent study skills to support student's transition to high school.

7. POLICY OWNER

7.1 Weetangera School

8. RELATED POLICIES

- 8.1** Weetangera School Communications Guidelines
ACT ETD complaints Policy 2013
ACT ETD Acceptable use of ICT Policy 2012
ACT EDT Parental Engagement Parent Fact Sheets