



Kaimai School
Strive and Honour

HOMEWORK

HOMework

What does the research say?

In short it depends on what research you read. Education can be tricky to quantify because there are so many variables, (eg. type of homework, environment, family situations, student connection with the school, personal motivation...). Most research tends to suggest that homework does appear to be more valuable for older students (mainly college age students). It also suggests that for primary aged students homework does appear to have some effect on a student's standardised testing results (eg. learn what is in the test, then sit the test). Some research even suggests that homework can slow a student's academic progress.

How much is appropriate?

Some schools suggest 10 minutes per year level every night (ie. a year two has 20 mins, a year 4 has 40 mins). Whilst this sounds good in theory, it can become difficult for students to maintain as they get to year seven and eight. We are also aware that many of our students participate in sporting and cultural activities. These are just as important, maybe sometimes more important, for a student to do as homework set by school.

Studies have shown that on average college student homework time has not changed much in the last 50 years, which is about an hour a night. It has only increased in the primary area over the last 20 years, and this increase has been associated with neutral (and sometimes negative) effects on student achievement.

How much parental involvement should there be?

Students are more likely to turn in assignments that require parental involvement. Some students actually have lower grades and receive lower grades on tests when parents are involved. Whilst some studies show that parental involvement has no effect either way, others show there can even be a negative effect on student achievement, and others suggest that parental involvement can help. We believe that by a parent showing interest in what a child is doing at school it helps create a stronger bond between home and school, and can reinforce to the child that learning is important.

Seems pretty confusing, so why have it?

Homework usually falls into one of three categories: practice, preparation, or extension. The purpose usually varies by year level. Individualised assignments that tap into students' existing skills or interests can be motivating. At the school level, homework can help students develop study skills and habits and can keep families informed about their child's learning. It can also be a good time for a student to finish off any work that was unfinished in class. According to the BES (Best Evidence Synthesis) which includes research by Professor John Hattie, a much respected New Zealand education expert, homework designed by teachers and aimed at involving parents seems to work best.

What should I expect from school?

Looking at the research we have decided to follow the advice of BES, which states that homework that is more task-oriented is more beneficial than assignments involving deep learning and problem solving. We will set homework that involves rote learning, practice, short revision, or to complete unfinished work.

We have set out the guide below to help you to know what to expect. Students' reading books that are sent home should be books that they can read independently, or with little help. Maths will be revision of what we call 'basic facts.' This will vary from student to student, depending on what maths stage they are working at in class.

Spelling will be more focused on skills, as studies have shown that learning a list of 'words for the week' does little to improve spelling. In saying this there are some words that your child may bring home. These are known as 'essential list' words. These are words that appear frequently in a student's writing.

Please note that sometimes other homework may be set instead. This will be work that a student can finish off at home, so as it will be ready for school.

Year Level	Reading	Maths	Spelling
NE to Yr 2	5 mins (x4)	5 mins (x3)	5 mins (x3)
Yr 3 to Yr 4	5 to 10 mins (x4)	5 mins (x3)	5 mins (x3)
Yr 5 to Yr 6	10 to 15 mins (x4)	10 mins (x3)	10 mins (x3)
Yr 7 to Yr 8	15 to 20 mins (x4)	10 mins (x3)	10 mins (x3)

The (x4) and (x3) indicators refer to the number of times per week this should occur.

Years 3 to 6 will be encouraged to monitor their reading through the Home Reading Diary. These are provided by the school to help your child monitor their reading habits, as well as giving the opportunity to reflect on their reading.

What can I do?

First, homework should not be a battle. If you are having trouble, please talk to your child's teacher. For years 3 to 6 the Student Reading Diary is full of useful tips too. Remember that your child should be bringing home books that they can read with little to no help (it is known as the student's independent reading level).

The internet is full of helpful advice. By googling 'homework tips for parents' you will find screeds of helpful websites. However, we have compiled some tips below to help start you off.

1. Encouragement: Above all else, encourage your child. Praise for effort (not just the end result) this will help encourage future learning as well as help your child understand that their education is important to you. Setting a time aside to listen to each other read a story can be a great way to end a day.
2. Insist homework be your child's responsibility not yours: Resist the temptation of always sitting next to him/her and offer your help only when it's needed.
3. Timing: Agree together upon specific times for doing homework ahead of time and then stick to it. You may want to even post your agreement in a visible place and then sign it. Many kids need a break after school, while others like to delve right in. Find your child's best work time and consistently reinforce it. Drawing a clock face that shows the set homework time is helpful for younger children.
4. On the go: Some of the homework can be done 'on the go.' When your child is revising their maths basic facts, or spelling rules, it could be done in the car, when setting the table, when washing the dishes, etc. Most of this type of homework is rote learning. A student constantly going over this type of homework is the only way to remember it, but it does not need to be only done in a 'quiet homework area.' Make up songs, dances, draw pictures, variety is the spice of life.