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Homework Guidelines

Homework is recognized an important part of the student's educational experience. Our Lady of Sorrows School believes homework is a means to reinforce skills taught in class, to foster habits of independent study, and to meet growth needs of individual students. Additionally, homework represents an opportunity for cooperation between the school and home. This partnership and process is at the heart of our mission to provide a Christian environment where each child may excel spiritually, intellectually, physically, and socially. Homework is one of the important activities that help achieve that mission.

*What is homework?*

Homework can be defined as any assignment or learning activity that is related to school curriculum that takes place outside the school or classroom. Homework is a planned activity that is connected to the *Diocese of Brownsville Curriculum Guide* and *Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills*.

*What is the purpose of homework?*

Homework is the set of activities related to the school curriculum that:

- reinforce skills taught in class
- foster habits of independent study
- meet the individual developmental needs of the student
- encourage self-discipline, good work habits, and time management skills
- enable parents to be involved in and participate in their students learning
- enable ongoing communication between teachers, parents, and students
- assist students in preparing for learning opportunities

It is our goal to help each child develop responsibility in completing homework assignments. We believe that learning good homework habits will benefit students as they progress in their academic education. The following guidelines have been set to help us achieve this goal.

*How much homework should be expected?*

Because learning is an ongoing and evolving process, students should expect to spend some time doing homework every night, except Wednesday. The amount of work will vary depending on the grade level, type of assignment, and individual student. However, students should expect math and reading/language arts homework every day. Additionally, students should expect to spend additional time reading, either aloud to parents or independently, every night. Included below are APPROXIMATE amounts of time per night students should expect to work, if they work at a steady pace and prepare for long term assignments in pieces. *(This does not reflect last minute work on large assignments or preparation for exams.)*

Grade	Amount of Time (Plus Read Aloud or Independent Reading)	Grade	Amount of Time (Plus Read Aloud or Independent Reading)
K	5 to 10 min (Saxon Math/Denelian Handwriting)	5	50 to 75 min
1	10 to 20 min	6	1 to 2 hours
2	20 to 30 min	7	1 to 2 hours
3	30 to 40 min	8	1 to 2 hours
4	40 to 50 min		

*What types of homework can be expected?*

Assignments will vary based on the teacher, the course, and the content studied. Homework assignments may include individual practice of a skill, notes, reading selections, written responses, class projects, research projects, science projects, technology projects, or preparation quizzes and tests. Homework falls into four main categories:

<b>TYPE</b>	<b>REASON</b>	<b>EXAMPLES</b>
<b>Completion</b>	To keep up-to-date with classroom work.	Completing classroom assignments, including reading responses, notes, exercises, pieces of writing, reading selections
<b>Preparation</b>	To prepare for the next day's class work or for coming lessons.	Collecting information, reading background materials, or studying for quizzes, tests and exams.  Using planners to establish regular study and review time.
<b>Practice and Application</b>	To develop, review, and reinforce specific skills.  To transfer skills or concepts into new situations.	Completing extra questions in a textbook if an assessment item demonstrates that the student has not mastered a skill (i.e., calculating tax, categorizing plants).  Writing a letter after being taught the components of a business letter.  Completing community service hours.  Reviewing and drilling of number operations and troublesome spelling words, where necessary.  Being read to, reading aloud, and independent reading (materials may be English, dual track and/or first language).
<b>Extension/ Creative</b>	To enrich classroom experiences and to deepen the student's understanding.  To provide opportunities for problem-solving and critical thinking.  To integrate skills.	Identifying local plant and animal life in one's environment.  Volunteering to help in local parish or a community group.  Working on projects, research and independent study  Inventing a product to solve a problem.  Creating designs, stories, drama, prayers.

The type and quantity of homework should reflect the range of needs for the individual students' academic ability. Teachers are encouraged to take into consideration the individual students regarding assignments, for example:

- highly motivated independent learners
- students experiencing difficulty
- students receiving Special Education support
- students for whom English is a second language
- students with and Individualized Educational Program (IEP) developed by an Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) Committee

## *Roles and Responsibilities in the Homework Partnership*

For homework to be an effective extension of the school program, the school, teachers, parents, and students must **SHARE** the responsibility for developing and maintaining good homework practices.

### **The school:**

- develops and communicates school guidelines for homework to be used by teachers, parents, and students;
- offers information to assist parents in helping their children at home (e.g., Curriculum Nights, interviews/conferences, newsletters).
- works with the community to develop programs to provide students with support for homework (e.g. remedial programs, peer tutors, homework clubs)

### **The teacher:**

- explains to students the purpose and importance of homework and its connection to school success;
- teaches skills necessary for the student to complete homework (e.g., note-making, preparation for upcoming test);
- provides homework that is clear, meaningful, purposeful, and understood;
- assigns work that is appropriate to the student's age, developmental level, learning style, maturity, skills, and individual needs;
- provides support to parents and students on establishing homework routines and effective study habits (e.g., time management, using school planner);
- uses homework as a vehicle for developing and reinforcing learning, not as a punishment for misbehavior or failure to perform as expected;
- monitors, checks, or evaluates homework, as appropriate;
- works collaboratively with other teachers to assign reasonable amounts of home-work, and to avoid overload;
- communicates regularly with parents;

### **The parent:**

- provides encouragement and appropriate support, without doing the homework for the student;
- expects the student to complete homework regularly;
- provides an environment for successful completion (i.e., workplace, block of uninterrupted time), usually in the home or in an alternate setting, e.g., WOW;
- shows interest in the student's schoolwork and progress;
- maintains regular contact with the teacher;
- continues to read to and with the student in English and/or in the home language(s) of the family throughout the early years of a child's schooling.

### **The student:**

- ensures that he/she clearly understands the homework (i.e., assignments, criteria, timelines);
- asks for help if homework assignments or expectations are not clear;
- completes homework regularly;
- prepares appropriately for upcoming lessons;
- participates actively in all aspects of the school program;
- manages time and materials appropriately (e.g., uses school planner, submits homework on time, organizes necessary materials);
- studies appropriately for tests and examinations;
- communicates regularly with teachers and parents;
- monitors progress and sets goals, as appropriate;
- assumes appropriate responsibility for homework completion as he or she proceeds through school.

Adapted from Homework Guidelines of the Toronto Catholic Schools available at <http://www.tcdsb.org/curriculum/homeworkguidelines.htm>