

Homework Policy & Rationale
All Saints Catholic School
2010-2011

Goal: *Develop a school-wide philosophy and framework regarding homework practices to establish greater consistency among grade levels and understanding among parents.*

Survey Responses: *I am satisfied with the quality of homework given to my child.*
(Design for Excellence Self-Study, 2009)

Strongly Agree	69 (33%)
Agree	99 (47%)
No Opinion	16 (8%)
Disagree	17 (8%)
Strongly Disagree	8 (4%)

Summary of Research Findings:

Although homework is prevalent across the K-12 spectrum, no clear-cut consensus exists regarding the benefits of homework at lower grade levels. (Cooper, 1989 & Cooper, Robinson, Patall, 2006)

In response to this data, Cooper, the pre-eminent researcher on the topic of homework, has recommended that elementary students “be given homework even though it should not be expected to improve test scores. Instead, homework for young children should help them develop good study habits, foster positive attitudes toward school, and communicate to students the idea that learning takes work at home as well as at school.” Cooper has concluded that a “curvilinear relationship” exists between homework and achievement, i.e. that, up to a point, homework appears positive, but that past the optimum amount, achievement either remains flat or declines. (*Rethinking Homework: Best Practices that Support Diverse Needs*, Vatterott, 2009)

School Policy:

Homework should have different purposes at different grades. For younger students, it should foster positive attitudes, habits, and character traits; and reinforce and help students to practice basic skills. For older students, it should facilitate knowledge acquisition in specific topics. Homework should be required at all grade levels. The amount of homework a child may have on any given day will vary depending on the nature of the assignment (worksheets versus a project), the amount of work the child completed in school that day, and the speed in which the child completes his/her work.

Recognizing that the time required to complete homework will vary for each student, the following guidelines have been established for All Saints Catholic School.

- Grades 1-3: 10 to 30 minutes daily
- Grades 4-6: 30 to 60 minutes daily
- Grades 7-8: 60 minutes to 2 hours daily

Assessment for Learning:

Homework is assessment *for* learning (formative) and occurs while students are still in the process of acquiring new skills and concepts. As such, homework helps teachers better understand student needs, provides opportunities for meaningful feedback, and shows students how to improve. Homework is distinctly different from assessment *of* learning, when students are given the opportunity to demonstrate the skills and knowledge they have acquired through unit tests, projects, quizzes, etc. (Stiggins, Arter, Chappuis, and Chappuis, 2004)

Since homework is designed to provide students "practice" of new skills, no more than 20% of each student's grade will be based upon homework completion.

A School-wide Commitment ~ Effective Homework Practices

- 1) Homework should serve a sound educational purpose. It will not be assigned as a punishment, consequence or for the purpose of busy work.
- 2) Homework will always be checked and corrected the next day. Homework that will not be checked or corrected will not be assigned.
- 3) Completion of homework must be within the capabilities of the individual student. Only homework that can be independently completed by students will be assigned by the teachers. Students should be able to complete homework by themselves without the help of their friends or parents.
- 4) Students should complete all assignments carefully and to the best of their ability.
- 5) Homework assignments should grow out of a school experience. Only homework that has a creative objective will be given without previous preparation. In this case, the form and procedure will be thoroughly explained.
- 6) Whenever possible, homework will be related to students' interests.
- 7) Homework will be intended to enlarge or extend the students' knowledge and understanding of concepts.
- 8) Homework will be suited to individual students' needs and capabilities. Consideration for the particular circumstances of an individual student will be made when homework is assigned.
- 9) Students must be completely clear about what they are to do and how they are to accomplish their homework.
- 10) Homework will be given within a reasonable time frame for completion.

(*Educational Leadership*, ASCD, Volume 58, No. 7, April 2001; *Formation and Development for Catholic School Leaders*, USCC, 1993; *Elementary Principal's Survival Guide*, Knoll, Prentice Hall, 1984)

Communicating Expectations

- 1) Each teacher will identify three sets of parents to provide on-going feedback throughout the year regarding time spent completing homework.
- 2) Each teacher will update *Homework Hero* postings by 5:00 p.m. Once assignments are posted, no additional postings will be made that day. Information provided via *Homework Hero* will be identical to that posted on the classroom homework assignment chart or board.
- 3) Faculty members will coordinate project timelines to ensure a manageable workload for students. Additionally, teachers will not schedule more than 2 tests on any given school day. Teachers will strive to integrate curriculum through projects, providing opportunities for students to complete aspects of research and design within the school setting, particularly the computer lab.

Home Strategies

- 1) Parents are asked to provide a quiet space for their son/daughter to complete homework each day.
- 2) Parents are encouraged to verify completion of homework, while at the same time allowing the child to assume responsibility for the quality of the work. All work and projects should be completed independently by the student.