

## Franklin School Homework Policy

### **Background**

The homework policy of the Franklin School derives from two years of work (2003-2005). During this period, the school council in conjunction with the staff reviewed the literature on homework, surveyed Franklin School teachers, surveyed all Newton elementary schools regarding policies, and viewed a policy outside the system. The charge of the committee was to create consistency among teachers at a grade level. The intent was also to ensure that homework expectations build one grade level to the next. Recognizing that student achievement is a collaborative effort between home and school, we decided to clarify expectations around roles and responsibilities.

There are many learning activities in the life of a student in addition to homework assignments. School and sports activities, cultural events, time for family discourse and other personal interests are all important for the growth and development of children. The homework policy of the Franklin School is provided as a guide to balance homework with the realities of family life in the 21st century.

It is crucial that the school and the community work in partnership. *The mission of the Franklin School urges that the school works in partnership with the community.* Such a partnership is particularly important in the area of homework. Frequent communication between home and school (staff, parents, and students) underlies the effective implementation of the homework policy.

### **Policy**

Homework is defined as written or non-written tasks that are assigned by teachers to be completed by students out side of the classroom.

The purposes of homework are to:

- ✓ **Practice** newly taught skills,
- ✓ **Review** previously mastered skills,
- ✓ **Develop** independent study skills, and
- ✓ **Extend** the curriculum.

Homework should be related to the curriculum of the classroom and promote an understanding of the importance of responsibility and lifelong learning.

Homework may be given four nights per week in grades 1-4 and should not be assigned on weekends. Homework may be assigned on Fridays in grade 5. Reading is the most crucial indicator leading to academic success and therefore, reading will be expected every night without fail.

Homework guidelines for some students with special needs may be determined by the student's educational plan and should be specifically related to the student's learning needs and profile. The modifications in an educational plan supersede the general guidelines listed here.

## **Kindergarten**

Families should read daily with their child for a minimum of 15 minutes to foster language and literacy skills. Occasional assignments will be provided to support the curriculum.

## **Grade 1-**

15 to 20 minutes of reading

10-15 minutes for an assignment connected to math or language arts

## **Grade 2-**

20-30 minutes reading

20 minutes of homework (may consist of reading response or log, math home link, etc.)

## **Grade 3-**

30 minutes reading

30 minutes of homework (may consist of reading response, math home link, spelling, etc.)

## **Grade 4-**

30 minutes of reading

40 minutes of homework (may consist of spelling, math, writing, reading response, etc.)

## **Grade 5-**

30-45 minutes

50 minutes (may consist of written responses, math, long term assignments, etc.)

\* Please note that the designated reading times at all grades are the minimum not the maximum amount of time set for reading.

## **Student's Role and Responsibilities**

- ✓ Get the assignment and ask for help if the assignment is not clear.
- ✓ Copy all assignments into assignment sheet or notebook (as determined by grade or teacher grades 3-5) carefully recording due dates, and important information.
- ✓ Take home all necessary materials (e.g. books, handouts) to accurately complete homework.
- ✓ Set a time each day to do homework.
- ✓ Do your best work.
- ✓ Check work carefully to be sure all parts are completed.
- ✓ Bring completed homework back to school when it is due.
- ✓ Be responsible for taking care of and returning any borrowed materials.
- ✓ Be responsible for getting assignments when absent from school.

## **Parent's/Guardian's Role and Responsibilities**

- ✓ Promote a positive attitude toward homework through discussion with children about the purpose of homework as part of the learning process.
- ✓ Understand, explain and reinforce expectations as to the quality of student work. (This should be done in collaboration with the teacher.)
- ✓ Provide structure, space and tools necessary to assist the child in completing his or her homework in a timely and orderly way.
- ✓ Understand the amount of parental assistance that is appropriate for homework assignments and be available for that assistance.
- ✓ Refrain from overstepping parental assistance guidelines.
- ✓ Communicate with the child and teacher regarding any homework concerns.

- ✓ Learn strategies for providing appropriate assistance through “homework clinics” or “parent homework sessions” or “homework booklets” which can be supported by the PTO and the teachers. (These strategies should include responses to children’s resistance to homework.)

### **Teacher’s Role and Responsibilities**

#### **Communication**

- ✓ Identify the purpose of homework assignments for parents and students.
- ✓ Communicate expectations to students.
- ✓ Model homework strategies and provide models as appropriate throughout the school year.
- ✓ Provide ways for parents to communicate with teachers about homework.
- ✓ Notify parents regarding homework problems and missing assignments.
- ✓ Discuss homework practice with colleagues and provide guidelines for the type of homework at each grade level in each school.

#### **Management**

- ✓ Follow the guidelines for the amount of time designated for homework, including special projects (e.g. book reports, research, writing assignments).
- ✓ In grades 3-5, post all assignments and provide time for students to record them.
- ✓ In grades K-2, homework assignments will be sent home in daily/weekly folder.
- ✓ Review homework and return it in a timely manner.
- ✓ Establish a system for recording completed homework.
- ✓ Ensure that the homework is appropriately modified, if needed, so as to be consistent with individual student learning needs.

#### **Special Projects**

- ✓ Establish objectives and guidelines for special projects, including any expectations for parent participation.
- ✓ Ensure that the student easily obtains resources and materials required for homework projects.
- ✓ Assign long-term projects so that the completion time includes more than one weekend, and is not limited to a school vacation period.

### **Administrator’s Role and Responsibilities**

- ✓ Facilitate the communication process between the school and home, and help maintain the parent /school partnership on homework.
- ✓ Support the need for balance among the many learning activities in the life of a student besides homework.
- ✓ Ensure that homework is consistent with the education goals of the Newton Public Schools.
- ✓ Facilitate communication between and among classroom teachers at each grade level concerning homework.
- ✓ Facilitate communication between specialists, support staff, and classroom teachers concerning homework so that all staff is aware of the assignment of long-term projects and their impact on the student’s overall educational program.
- ✓ Ensure that the homework is appropriately modified, if needed, so as to be consistent with individual student learning needs.
- ✓ Encourage teachers to use homework as a tool to reinforce learning.