



LABRADOR SCHOOL DISTRICT

Homework Policy

HOMEWORK

The Labrador School Board recognizes the value of homework that furthers students' learning along their developmental continuum. It is essential that homework be a productive experience which has a positive impact on student achievement.

Research suggests that regular work at home on school-related activities increases student achievement. This appears to be especially true for children from elementary through senior high, however the reinforcement of skills at home is also very beneficial for primary children as well.

Definition

Homework can be defined as planned and purposeful learning activities connected with the instructional in-school program which are completed outside regular classroom time. When children complete homework, they consolidate and reinforce the learning from in-school experiences in a practical and meaningful way.

Parents often request that regular homework be assigned, so that they can keep track of their children's academic progress and also provide additional support. The learning expectations related to homework must be clearly and effectively communicated to parents to ensure maximum benefit for the students.

Purpose – What it is and what it is not

Homework consists of relevant learning experiences that are related to the school curriculum. In general the purpose of homework is designed to foster effective work habits, develop self discipline, independent thinking and responsible attitudes. It should also encourage good study habits. Throughout the child's school life, homework should enable the child to practice the skills necessary to succeed in the work place of the future: independent learning, self motivation and time management.

A well-designed homework program **should**:

- meet the developmental and individual needs of the student (differentiated)
- reinforce and extend school experiences.
- assist students in assuming responsibility for their own learning development.
- develop positive attitudes towards independent study and life-long learning.
- encourage the development of self-discipline, good work habits, and time management skills.
- enable parents to become involved and to participate in their child's learning.
- enable regular and on-going communication between teachers, parents and students.
- assist students in preparing for subsequent learning activities.

A well-designed homework program **should not**:

- involve completion of work based on concepts not previously taught
- be punitive.
- place unreasonable demands on the student(s).

Time Guidelines

Homework shall be assigned by teachers in a reasonable manner with appropriate supports (ie. lead time, quantity, etc.) that enhance the potential for student success. Homework shall be assigned in accordance with our assessment policy. (ie. *Classes will be given a minimum of five (5) school days to complete major projects, and unit or cumulative tests shall not be administered within 5 school days following Christmas or spring break.*)

Throughout their school years, the types and time commitment required for homework will increase based in the student's progress along the learning continuum. Some general guidelines are noted below:

Level	Maximum Time Allocation
Primary	Kindergarten – 5 to 10 minutes Grade 1 – 5 to 10 minutes Grade 2 – 10 to 20 minutes Grade 3 – 15 to 30 minutes
Elementary	Grade 4 – 20 to 40 minutes Grade 5 – 25 to 50 minutes Grade 6 – 30 to 60 minutes
Intermediate	Grade 7 – 35 to 70 minutes Grade 8 – 40 to 80 minutes Grade 9 – 45 to 90 minutes
Senior High	Level I-III: 10 to 20 hours per week *In Senior High, it is essential to recognize that the time commitment will be determined by the course or program selection of each individual student. Some courses may have more of an in-class focus for their learning while others require more out of class work.

Types of Homework

Homework should offer a variety of experiences, using a variety of mediums that support and encourage children in relation to their in-school experiences. It is essential to assign homework that is differentiated to reflect unique learning needs of individual students.

Students are expected to become increasingly independent in the learning process as they progress through the grades. Subsequently, the expectations placed on the students through their assigned homework should follow this pattern.

Due to transitional nature of the kindergarten year, teachers will provide suggestions of activities which respond to the student's individual needs by promoting readiness skills as well as early literacy and numeracy development.

Homework assigned in the early primary grades will more often take the form of reading, playing a variety of games, having discussions and interactive activities.

In the late primary and through the elementary grades, effective homework will begin to take the form of more independent work. Intermediate and senior high students will be expected to demonstrate an increasing level of independence in their assigned tasks.

TYPES	REASONS	EXAMPLES
Practice and Application	<p>To develop, review, and reinforce specific skills.</p> <p>To transfer skills or concepts into new situations.</p>	<p>Completing extra questions for practice if an assessment item demonstrates that the student has not mastered a specific skill (i.e., calculating, categorizing, etc.).</p> <p>Writing a letter after being taught the components of a business letter.</p> <p>Completing community service hours.</p> <p>Being read to, reading aloud, and independent reading</p>
Preparation	To prepare for the next day's class work or for coming lessons.	<p>Collecting information, reading background materials, or studying for quizzes, tests and exams.</p> <p>Preparation for speeches and/or presentations, designing projects or researching topics for essays</p> <p>Using planners to establish regular study and review time.</p>
Projects and Extension Activities	<p>To enrich classroom experiences and to deepen the student's understanding.</p> <p>To provide opportunities for problem-solving and critical thinking.</p> <p>To integrate skills</p>	<p>Working on projects, research and independent study</p> <p>Inventing a product to solve a problem.</p> <p>Creating designs, stories, drama, etc.</p> <p>Volunteering to help in a local community group.</p>

Considerations for Differentiation

The types and quantity of homework assigned should reflect the wide variation in students' academic ability. Careful consideration should be given to modification of expectations and/or quantity of assigned work according to the individual needs of the students, for example:

- highly motivated independent learners
- students involved in dual programs
- students experiencing difficulty
- students receiving Special Education support
- students for whom English is a second language

Roles and Responsibilities in the Homework Partnership

For homework to be an effective extension of the school program, each stakeholder must accept a shared responsibility in the development and maintenance of effective homework practices.

The **school**:

- communicates school guidelines for homework to be used by teachers, parents, and students
- provides information to assist parents in helping their children at home (ie. Curriculum Nights, interviews/conferences, newsletters, school website, etc.).
- promotes programs to provide students with support for homework (e.g. remedial programs, peer tutors, homework clubs, etc.)

The **teacher**:

- teaches appropriate grade level skills necessary for the student to complete homework (ie. strategies for organizing assignments, note-taking, preparation for upcoming test, etc.)
- ensures a measure of success by ensuring that homework is understood by the students and is appropriate to the student's ability - clear, meaningful, purposeful, relevant and understood
- assigns work that is appropriate to the student's age, developmental level, learning style, maturity, skills, and individual needs
- communicates regularly with parents (ie. progress and achievement updates, informs if homework is not being completed or class time is not being used wisely, etc.)
- uses homework as a vehicle for developing and reinforcing learning, not as a punishment for misbehaviour or failure to perform as expected

- works collaboratively with other teachers to assign reasonable amounts of homework, and to avoid overload in subject teaching situations such as in the intermediate and senior high levels.
- provides clear instructions on long term assignments including milestones that students should have reached at certain dates in order to ensure completion

The parent:

- assists the child by providing encouragement and appropriate support, without doing the homework for the student
- expects the student to complete homework regularly;
- schedules a regular quiet time when homework can be completed
- providing a comfortable work space with necessary materials (e.g. a well lit desk, pencils, crayons, etc.)
- shows interest in the student's schoolwork and progress;
- monitors homework to ensure that it is useful, realistic and takes a reasonable length on time appropriate to the child's individual strengths and needs
- maintains regular contact with the teacher and communicates concerns and/or compliments to the teacher(s) when appropriate
- continues to read to and with the student throughout the early years of a child's schooling. (ie. English, French (French Immersion), or in the home language(s) of the family)
- maintains a balance between school responsibilities and extra-curricular activities

The student:

- ensures that he/she clearly understands the homework (i.e., assignments, criteria, timelines) and asks for help if expectations are not clear
- ensures that all assignments are recorded accurately and all materials needed to complete work are taken home
- informs parents of work to be completed
- completes assigned homework tasks regularly and bringing the completed work back to school at the appropriate time
- manages time and materials appropriately (e.g., uses school agenda/planner as required, submits homework on time, organizes necessary materials)
- prepares appropriately for upcoming lessons
- studies appropriately for tests and examinations
- monitors progress and sets goals, as appropriate
- communicates regularly with teachers and parents
- participates actively in all aspects of the school program