St. Therese's School, Essendon
Home Learning Policy

Rationale

Homework is a very contentious issue with opinions ranging from no homework at all through to judging the quality of a school by the amount of homework given. Current research is questioning the value of traditional homework in light of the complex society in which we live – a greater variety of extra-curricular activities, the advent of more sedentary recreational activities such as TV, computer games and issues such as childhood obesity.

Home Learning

The following policy's design has been influenced by survey data, current research and work done by Ian Lillico, an educator and national consultant in gender education. It aims to recognize the wide range of after school activities, encourage positive family interactions and allow relaxed time for children to pursue their own learning. It is based on a broader definition of homework, which includes work done at home and incorporates an array of different and less sedentary activities, some set by school and some set by parents. To reinforce this broader definition, the school has decided to rename homework and refer to it as "Home Learning".

We believe that this approach to Home Learning can:

- Promote reading at home
- Reinforce basic skills such as tables and spelling
- Develop time and resource management skills in students
- Encourage parents or carers to talk with their child about their learning
- Support the class program through resource gathering.

For Home Learning to be effective it should:

- Be relevant to the children's lives at home and at school
- Assist in developing independence
- Be flexible, allowing for the interests and learning styles of the students and the busyness of life
- Take into account the value of informal homework and after school activities such as music lessons, tennis lessons etc.

Types of Home Learning

Examples include:
Formal

- reading
- a response to reading (e.g. book review, character analysis, summary, etc.)
- mathematics – particularly automatic response
- spelling
- curriculum specific activities that support the classroom program

Informal

- using the home environment, e.g. measuring
- bringing resources from home, interviewing family members
- drawing, reading the paper, watching the news, open-ended tasks, observation and discussion

- playing a game with an adult
- physical activity, cultural / music practice
- art
- housework
- using the computer for work
- meditation / spiritual / relaxation exercises

Implementation

A Home Learning Grid will be sent home at various times throughout the year (depending on the year level). It will outline a variety of activities that are considered valuable and manageable. Reading remains the most important activity and is expected to occur in some form every day including independent reading, being read to or reading with.

It is expected that the students will select other activities from the grid, ensuring a balance over time. The responsibility for selecting, completing and recording activities lies with the students. Parents are encouraged to talk to their children about their selection and support them in organizing themselves. It is expected that the grid will be developed to suit the age level of the students and the classroom program.

Teacher's responsibilities

- To design the grid so that it supports the students' learning both within and outside school
- To see the students' home learning books on a regular basis and discuss any issues with the students.

Student's responsibilities

- To accept responsibility for undertaking all aspects of the grid over time
- To document the activities selected in a book
- Ask for assistance from the teacher or family if necessary.
- Accept that consequences may apply if work is not completed within the given time frame

Parent's responsibilities

- To encourage independent work habits
- To assist with organisational skills by spending approximately 2 minutes helping children organize tasks before commencing
- To talk to their children about their learning, both inside and outside school.

Evaluation

This Policy will be reviewed as part of a cyclical process in accordance with the School Improvement Plan (SIP).

Document Control

Version	Author	Purpose/Change	Date
0.1	Various STS L'ship Members	Initial policy drafting	Pre 2018
1.0	L&T Team	Various updates throughout policy	Mid 2019