



# WAHROONGA PUBLIC SCHOOL

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## HOMework POLICY UPDATE

Dear Parents,

As I signalled in the Bush Telegraph a fortnight ago, the way we have been implementing homework seems to have caused problems in some families and so I sought parent feedback through an online form, gathering general ideas, suggestions and feedback on experiences to date with homework. We acknowledge that homework is often a contentious issue as family time after school is precious and we cannot assume that all families have the same access to technology, parental availability, time and resources.

The process for policy implementation not only involves listening to parents but also consulting with staff members whose responsibility it is to implement the policy at a class level. For this reason, meetings were held with staff members following the receipt of parent feedback. The policy update therefore reflects the views of both the parent body and teaching staff.

### Key Changes:

- 1) The policy acknowledges the mixed research into the benefits of homework at the primary level. While homework assists in developing work habits and consolidates on learning in class, research does not necessarily support the notion that homework raises academic performance.
- 2) An emphasis is taken off completing tasks, and placed on attempting tasks.
- 3) Staff members will now discuss homework more formally in grade teams once each term to moderate practice.
- 4) A clear time guide is provided for each grade level. The indicative time is how long the school would hope students spend actively engaged with homework.
- 5) Staff members are to indicate which homework tasks are recommended for all students to complete (core tasks) and provide optional tasks for faster working students who enjoy a challenge.
- 6) Staff members will not be asked to provide notification when homework is not completed. It will be expected that parents are aware of their child's participation in homework. Parents should feel confident that homework will be provided by teachers.
- 7) Parents will continue to be able to set their own expectations on their children about homework. i.e. they may opt to limit or exclude their child from homework, or may supplement the work provided by the school with additional work which they are to source for themselves.

I would like to take this opportunity to outline instances where the majority of parental sentiment is not necessarily reflected in the policy and offer explanations.

### **1) DISTRIBUTING AND RECEIVING HOMEWORK**

Parents overwhelmingly supported the idea of having a school wide approach to distributing and receiving homework, with the preferred option being for teachers to hand out homework on Fridays and expect it to be returned the following Thursday.

*This suggestion has not been included in the homework policy.*

Explanation: The expectations for students, staff and parents should be reasonable. It is not necessarily reasonable to ask a teacher to mark a class set of homework in one afternoon. Many teachers mark homework over the weekend. Many teachers exercise their industrial right to work in a part time capacity and in these instances it is also not reasonable to have all homework handed in on a Thursday.

Action: The policy update requires teachers to communicate their expectations for the distribution and return of homework clearly to parents and students. In younger grades, this may be through a written note, but in senior years this may be through the taking of notes in a homework diary. Provided expectations are set and communicated effectively by teachers, and flexibility is allowed for individual circumstances, there should be adequate time for students to attempt homework inline with the guidelines set out in the policy.

### **2) CLASSES PROVIDING IDENTICAL HOMEWORK**

The benefits of all classes in a grade providing identical homework were raised by many parents.

*This suggestion has not been included in the homework policy.*

Explanation: While the notion was discussed by teachers, it was deemed too rigid and could have potentially heightened the risk that the work provided may lack relevance. Class programs are always based around similar learning outcomes, though teachers exercise some level of autonomy about the delivery of content.

Action: The policy update outlines the types of tasks students should expect to receive dependent on their year level. By class teachers adhering to the examples provided or similar, and working within the indicative time guide, the amount of work and level of challenge should remain consistent across all classes in a grade.

As different families attribute varying worth on the value of homework, this process has been both eye-opening and somewhat complex. I am hopeful that the outcome meets with your satisfaction and that these updated practices further strengthen the educational experiences of your child at The Bush School. As always, you are welcome to contact me for further clarification.

Sincerely,



**Tom Moth**  
**Principal**  
**Wahroonga Public School**

3 September 2015



**Education**



# Homework

## K-6

September 2015

Homework is a valuable part of schooling. It allows for practising, extending and consolidating work done in class. Homework provides training for students in planning and organising time and develops a range of skills in identifying and using information resources. Additionally, it establishes habits of study, concentration and self-discipline. There is, however, little consensus in the literature as to whether homework raises student achievement. Most researchers, however, conclude that for primary students, there is no evidence that homework lifts academic performance.

### OBJECTIVES

- Schools, in consultation with their communities, are required to develop a school homework policy relevant to the needs of their students.
- School homework policies must be communicated to staff, students, parents and caregivers, particularly at the time of student enrolment.
- Homework will meet the realistic expectations of students, teachers, parents and caregivers.

### RESPONSIBILITIES

Students	Staff members	Parents/caregivers
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Attempting homework tasks.</li><li>2. Maintaining a well-presented record of homework.</li><li>3. Discussing homework practices with parents.</li><li>4. Seeking teacher support or clarification when required.</li><li>5. Submitting homework on time.</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Implementing the school's Homework Policy.</li><li>2. Communicating the purpose, benefits and expectations of homework to students and parents/caregivers.</li><li>3. Acknowledging student effort in completing homework and providing timely and relevant feedback on achievement.</li><li>4. Supporting students having difficulties with homework.</li><li>5. Discussing with students and parents/caregivers any developing issues regarding a student's homework.</li><li>6. Discussing homework practices with colleagues.</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Supporting and encouraging students in the process of learning at home.</li><li>2. Communicating difficulties with homework tasks directly to teachers.</li></ol>

## GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Like all areas of schooling, when discussing homework the emphasis is on **quality**.

Quality homework:

- Reinforces skills or content learned at school or elicits pre-conceptions about an area of study.
- Is planned, meaningful, has a clear purpose and relates to the class program.
- Is flexible and allows for student choice.
- Allows students to demonstrate achievement at different levels.
- Can be completed independently by students.
- Combines pen and paper and technology-based learning.

## IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURES

Weekly homework is structured in the manner outlined below. Core tasks are recommended by teachers for all students to complete and will be similar across classes for each grade. Students seeking an additional challenge may attempt optional tasks. Optional tasks recognise teacher individuality.

	Indicative Weekly Time	Example Core Tasks	Example Optional Tasks
<b>K</b>	4 x 15 minutes 60 minutes total	Home reading Preparing news	
<b>1/2</b>	4 x 15 minutes 60 minutes total	Home reading* Preparing news Numeracy (Mathletics or equivalent) Spelling tasks Reading Eggs	Topic related tasks Inquiry tasks Language tasks Hands-on tasks Google Classroom tasks (various subject areas) Flipped classroom investigations
<b>3</b>	4 x 20 minutes 80 minutes total	Home reading* Numeracy (Mathletics or equivalent) Spelling tasks Multiplication tables Language tasks Google Classroom tasks (various subject areas)	Inquiry tasks Google Classroom tasks (various subject areas) Flipped classroom investigations Negotiated group work Behind the News Quizzes General activities
<b>4</b>	4 x 20 minutes 80 minutes total		
<b>5</b>	4 x 30 minutes 120 minutes total		
<b>6</b>	4 x 30 minutes 120 minutes total		

\*Home reading in Years 3-6 is not counted in daily time guide.

Teachers **will**:

- Provided written advice about homework at regular intervals, e.g. a weekly/termly homework sheet.
- Indicate whether tasks are core or optional.
- Establish clear guidelines for the distribution and return of homework and communicate this to students and parents.
- Provide timely and relevant feedback on achievement.
- Discuss class homework structures and expectations at information sessions at the beginning of the school year.

Teachers **will not**:

- Provide notification when homework is not completed. Teachers will assume that parents are aware of their child's participation in homework.
- Be required to mark homework that is submitted late.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES**

Information and communication technologies are an integral component of teaching and learning, and therefore it is sometimes appropriate to set homework tasks which require the use of various ICTs.

## **ADDITIONAL IMPLEMENTATION PRINCIPLES**

The following points are to be noted in relation to the implementation guidelines above:

- The ICT lab will be open during play times to allow students access to technologies.
- It is the responsibility of parents to set and apply expectations on their children. Students will not be punished for non-completion of homework.



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**Tom Moth**  
**Principal**

3 September 2015



Support Document

# Google Classroom

September 2015

## WHAT IS GOOGLE CLASSROOM?

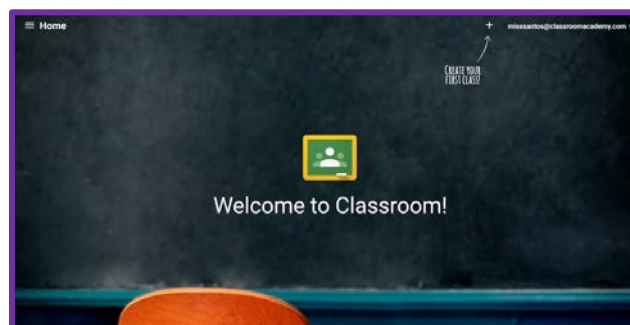
Google Classroom is an online collaboration tool which allows students and teachers to work together on tasks, or simply to share information with each other. It is a safe environment as students can only join a classroom if the teacher explicitly shares a specific code. Students are likely to be members of several classrooms created by teachers for different tasks.

## ACCESSING GOOGLE CLASSROOM AT HOME

1. The best web browser that supports Google Classroom is Chrome, a free web browser from Google. Downloading Chrome is easily done for all types of computers at [www.google.com/chrome](http://www.google.com/chrome).
2. Open up Chrome and type [classroom.google.com](http://classroom.google.com) in the address bar.
3. Enter your school email address [user.name@education.nsw.gov.au](mailto:user.name@education.nsw.gov.au) as the username and your school password as the password. You may have to enter your user.name and password on the next page too.

## WHAT IS GOOGLE APPS?

Students and staff at Wahroonga Public are using many of the excellent online tools provided by Google, known collectively as **Google Apps for Education**. Many teachers are setting parts of their homework using Google Classroom, and students are actively creating and collaborating on shared documents, presentations and posters using Google Docs, Slides and Drawings. Surveys are being created using Google Forms, and students are also using their free cloud storage space provided by Google Drive to store and share all sorts of files.



[Click the image to view a brief demonstration video.](#)



# Flipped Classroom

September 2015

## WHAT IS A 'FLIPPED CLASSROOM'?

A flipped classroom flips what would traditionally occur during the day with what would traditionally occur during the night in the learning/homework process.

	Day Time	Night Time
Traditional Classroom	Pupils learn from teacher	Pupils practise new skills
Flipped Classroom	Pupils practise new skills Ask teacher questions Some interactive tasks with team mates Practise new skills and use new knowledge Evaluate learning	Pupils learn from teacher Watch a video Complete some interactive tasks online through Google Classroom Answer some reflective questions

Flipped classrooms allow for more practice of new skills and knowledge in the classroom. It also supports the **Australian Curriculum focus on Creative & Critical Thinking**. Teachers can analyse pre-task thoughts/perceptions on a given topic and compare these with new learning evidenced by post-flip-classroom responses. Forms are created and information gathered and analysed with ease.

Teachers are starting to use **misconceptions** in order to teach Creative & Critical Thinking. Teaching is continuously a process of discovering what students already know (or think they know) about a topic and then providing meaningful experiential activities to reach new understandings. Beginning with a misconception, students are then asked to find evidence to support or contradict their current understanding. Google Classroom is a facility that allows students to

- a) Communicate their prior knowledge
- b) Articulate their misconceptions
- c) Engage in research which can be chosen and linked by the teacher or found by the student
- d) Reflect on their new learning
- e) Collaborate with others

With regular practice, students develop a habit of considering alternative explanations rather than simply accepting that a given explanation is true. Thus, using the flipped classroom pedagogy, students:

1. Acquire a broader, deeper understanding of the concepts.
2. Develop a new, more rigorous methodology for problem-solving consolidated through habit and practice.
3. Generalise this methodology and apply it to solve new and novel problems beyond flipped classroom and homework situations to all learning opportunities.