

AVON MAITLAND DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE

NO. 206

SUBJECT: **HOMework**

Legal References: *Education Act: Section 265 (1) (g) Duties of Principal—Co-operation; Section 264 Duties of Teachers—Teach, Learning, Co-operation; Effective Instruction, Report Cards, EQAO Tests; The Kindergarten Years Support Manual; The Ontario Curriculum Grades 1-12; Guide to the Provincial Report Card Grades 1-12; Grades 1-8 & Grades 9-12 Subject Specific Exemplars; Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting Principles and Procedures for Teachers of Kindergarten to Grade 12, 2005*

Related References: *Administrative Procedure 353 Student Suspension; AP 354 Student Expulsion; AP 370 Ontario Student Record; AP 377 Assessment, Evaluation, and Reporting; AMDSB Bookmark Homework Guidelines for Teachers; AMDSB Brochure Working Together for Student Success: A Guide to Homework; AMDSB Homework Poster; Education for All: The Report of the Expert Panel on Literacy and Numeracy Instruction for Students with Special Education Needs, Kindergarten to Grade 6, 2005.*

School-wide homework practices should be reviewed and discussed by staff each year. Administrators should consider a central planning device to ensure students' workload is balanced.

1.0 Objective

To establish the Board's belief that homework is an engaging and relevant learning activity. To establish the Board's commitment to the assignment of homework in a purposefully planned manner that is directly connected to a student's school program and learning expectations of the Ontario Curriculum.

2.0 Definitions

Homework is an out-of-classroom learning experience assigned by a teacher to enhance student learning. Homework should be reviewed by teachers so that they know where students are now and how to better direct them towards their learning goals.

There are four types of commonly assigned homework, each having a different intended outcome as shown below.

Type	Definition	Intended Outcome	Application
Completion	Any work assigned during the school day not completed in class	Helps students keep up to date with the classroom program	The classroom program should be differentiated if a student consistently has homework as a result of incomplete work
Practice	Any work that reviews and reinforces skills and concepts taught in class	Helps students practice newly acquired skills to develop subject fluency	To be effective, practice homework requires students to already be able to independently perform the skills required
Preparation	Any work that prepares students for upcoming lessons or classes	Encourages students to acquire background information or to bring their prior knowledge and experiences to upcoming	Preparation homework can effectively be used to differentiate the classroom program for individual student learning needs.
Extension	Any work that explores and refines learning in new contexts or integrates and expands on classroom learning	Encourages students to problem solve, think creatively and think critically	To be effective, extension homework should not require a student to learn curriculum content independently. Instead, students deepen understanding and relate learning to the real world.

3.0 Procedure

3.1 Effective Homework Assignments

Homework assignments shall be clearly articulated and carefully planned, and involve consultation among core, rotary and subject teachers, where appropriate. Also where appropriate, homework assignments shall be differentiated to reflect the unique needs of every student.

The purpose of all types of homework is to ensure that they are effective in promoting high quality student learning and achievement and also that they nurture a desire for students to keep learning. Effective homework assignments:

- a) are curriculum based and meet the developmental and individual needs of the student through differentiation and modification
- b) should be commented on to provide feedback for future learning
- c) are designed to require no additional teaching outside the classroom and are engaging and relevant to student learning. Students understand what is expected of them before leaving school
- d) do not require resources or technology to which students may not have access
- e) may be designed to involve parents/caregivers in supporting their student's learning but should not require them to teach new concepts.

3.2 Consequences for Incomplete Homework Assignments

To support student success, there may be progressive consequences for incomplete homework where appropriate. Consequences may include mandatory homework clubs, communication with home and/or possible referral to the Extended Team. Consequences such as mark reductions are not appropriate as they provide powerful disincentives.

Homework completion is reported on only in the Learning Skills Section of the Elementary Provincial Report Card as a part of Independent Work and Homework Completion and on the Secondary Report Card as part of the Works Independently and Work Habits/Homework. Homework completion should **not** be reflected in the subject mark.

3.3 Timing, Scheduling and Quantity of Homework

Time spent on homework should be balanced with the importance of personal and family wellness and the wide array of family obligations experienced in our society today. The amount of homework assigned to students should be different from kindergarten, 1-6, 7-8 and 9-12. The amount of time a student spends on assigned homework depends on such factors as: the student's needs, learning ability, subject, school schedule, proximity to tests, examinations and assigned homework due dates.

3.4 Kindergarten

Homework should not be assigned to Kindergarten students. There is a strong connection between parental involvement and student achievement. As a result, families are encouraged to engage in early learning activities such as playing, talking and reading together in English and/or in the family's first language. Teachers may provide resources to support home-based early learning activities.

3.5 Grades 1 to 6

There is a strong connection between student success and reading to/with elementary children every day in English and/or in one's first language. As a result, homework assigned in the early grades should often take the form of reading, playing a variety of games, having discussions and interactive activities such as building and cooking with the family. In the late Primary and Junior grades, effective homework may begin to take the form of independent work. In both cases, homework assigned for completion, practice, preparation or extension should be clearly articulated and differentiated to reflect the unique needs of the child.

3.6 Grades 7 to 8

Homework assignments for completion, practice, preparation or extension for students in grades 7 and 8 shall be clearly articulated and carefully planned, in partnership among core and rotary teachers. The purpose of this homework should be communicated to parents and students.

3.7 Grades 9 to 12

Homework assignments for students in grades 9 to 12 shall be clearly articulated and carefully planned in partnership among subject teachers to ensure a reasonable student workload.

3.8 General Guidelines

3.8.1 Parents/caregivers who have concerns with homework expectations for their child shall be encouraged to contact their child's teacher or the school principal to discuss the situation.

3.8.2 Scheduled holidays as outlined in the school year calendar or days of significance should be considered when planning homework.

- 3.8.3 Wherever possible, homework assignments shall be assigned using blocks of time and communicated to families in advance. This will best support homework completion by balancing the time required to complete homework with extra curricular activities scheduled outside of the school day and activities that support personal and family wellness.
- 3.8.4 During the time of final assessments, a moratorium period of four (4) days will occur prior to the scheduled final exam days. There shall be no:
- excursions
 - regularly scheduled assemblies (except in extenuating circumstances, e.g. violent incident, bereavement)
 - conferences or meetings that remove teachers from their schools
 - interschool activities, including practices, and rehearsals
 - projects or assignments assigned to students writing an examination
 - culminating activities, requiring work outside of class, for students writing an examination
 - homework, other than preparation for the examination itself
- 3.9 Homework During Extended Absences
- 3.9.1 Teachers shall not be expected to provide detailed classroom work and homework assignments for students who are away for extended periods of time as a result of family or parent initiated absences. For absences due to extended illness, parents may contact the school principal to discuss available options.
- 3.9.2 When a student is removed from class due to long term suspension/expulsion, see Administrative Procedure 358.
- 3.10 Roles and Responsibilities
- 3.10.1 An open school-home partnership in the homework process will have a positive impact on student success.
- 3.10.2 The student is responsible for:
- a) ensuring that he/she clearly understands the homework assigned, i.e. assignments, criteria, and timelines, and asks for clarification or assistance from the teacher when homework assignments or the expectations are not clear
 - b) recording assignments in his/her agenda or student planner, and communicating timing conflict and workload concerns to the teacher
 - c) regularly completing assigned homework in a timely manner to the best of his/her ability
 - d) managing time and materials, e.g. by bringing home necessary materials
- 3.10.3 The family is responsible for:
- a) reading a variety of texts in English, French (French Immersion) and/or the family's first language throughout their children's education
 - b) providing an environment, i.e. workplace, block of uninterrupted time, usually in the home or in an alternative setting such as a library for homework to be done
 - c) providing encouragement and an appropriate level of support without doing the homework for their child
 - d) providing a healthy balance between homework, co-curricular activities and family commitments
 - e) contacting the classroom teacher or school if the student is consistently unable to do the homework by him/herself, if challenges/questions arise, or if the student is overwhelmed by the homework

3.10.4 The teachers are responsible for:

- a) encouraging a partnership with family and students that promotes timely and regular communication and supports families in the homework process through strategies such as class newsletters, course outlines, and teacher webpages
- b) designing homework assignments that clearly articulate their purpose and expected outcome
- c) sharing expectations for homework with students and parents/caregivers early in the school year including school contact information
- d) ensuring any homework assigned is directly related to classroom instruction and consists of clear, purposeful and engaging activities
- e) assigning homework that is appropriate to the student's age, developmental level, learning style, skills, individual and special needs
- f) teaching the skills necessary for the student to complete the homework and become successful independent learners
- g) articulating and carefully planning homework in partnership with core and rotary teachers
- h) monitoring homework and providing timely, regular feedback

3.10.5 The principal is responsible for:

- a) reviewing school homework guidelines with staff early in the school year and communicating those guidelines for use by teachers, parents/caregivers and students
- b) coordinating school wide resources and practices that support homework, e.g. use of agenda, library facilities, academic support programs, ensuring effective communication between rotary teachers so that a reasonable amount of homework is being assigned
- c) providing information to parents/caregivers on the purpose of effective homework and sharing practices that will help families support their students (e.g., newsletters, open houses, and websites)