



# HOMEWORK POLICY

## INTRODUCTION

To be successful at secondary school students must undertake work at home in addition to their contact time in lessons. "Homework" is essentially about developing in students a good work ethic. Success at study generally requires hard work and commitment – but most of all it takes a time commitment and good study habits at home. It is important for students to develop these habits early. Blocking time (ie. setting aside regular time at home eg. 1.5 hrs a night) is an important study habit to get into. We encourage ALL students to block their study time at home on a regular basis. The blocking of study time ensures that students can balance such temptations as "hanging out" with friends, texting, surfing the net, chat rooms, TV, ipods, DVDs, sport, home chores and family commitments to ensure that their school work does not suffer. Success at school through achieving your maximum potential provides students with better life and career opportunities. Homework provides students with opportunities to consolidate their classroom learning, pattern behaviour for lifelong learning beyond the classroom and involve family members in their learning. The setting of homework takes into account the need for students to have a balanced lifestyle. This includes sufficient time for family, recreation, cultural and employment where appropriate.

At Marsden State High School we believe homework that enhances student learning:

- is purposeful and relevant to students needs (students see the connection)
- is appropriate to the phase of learning (Yr 8 vs Yr 12)
- is appropriate to the capability of the student
- develops the student's independence as a learner
- is varied, challenging and clearly related to class work
- allows for student commitment to recreational, employment, family and cultural activities.

## WHAT IS HOMEWORK?

Research tells us that different students work at different rates, so at Marsden State High School we work on setting homework with this in mind. Some students need more, some will simply finish classwork. We are encouraging students to set work for themselves, as they move through the year levels and become more independent in their learning.

Generally there are three types of homework –

- (a) set by the teacher,
- (b) longer term assignment work and;
- (c) where students set their own tasks.

Obviously a balance of these is desirable. Certain courses or combinations of subjects also require extra work at home due to increased formal assessment requirements. Certain periods of the semester also require extra work to be completed at home in order for students to be successful (eg. exams, assignment deadline). Many subjects also require rehearsal or practice to be undertaken at home in addition to theory aspects of the course (eg. music practice, drama practice). Some subjects also require preparation to be undertaken at home to ensure that students are ready for learning in class (eg. buying food items for Home Ec cooking, bringing sports uniform for HPE lessons). It is important that students are aware of their timetable and individual subject requirements so that they can plan ahead and be prepared for learning. To assist students the school provides the following support:

- **Study Planner** - Students are issued with a planner at the start of every year to help them maintain effective time and study management. This also contains vital information about school policies such as uniform and assessment requirements.
- **Assessment Outline** - An assessment outline is published at the start of each semester and our school assessment policy is clearly articulated and communicated to students.

- **Course Outline** – all students receive a course outline for each subject at the start of the semester, which provides an overview of the key topics to be studied.
- **SET Plans** – All students in Year 10 complete a personal Student Education & Training Plan (SETP) and are tracked throughout their senior years of schooling. They also complete the Career Voyage software program in Year 10, 11 and 12 to assist them to set career and personal goals.
- **Resource Centre** – the school's library is open before/after school and at lunch times to assist students and provide computer/internet access.
- **Deans** - assist in the management of students and to provide an avenue of communication between the school and home.

## YEAR 8 & 9 HOMEWORK GUIDELINES

Compared to upper primary school, students in Year 8 and Year 9 are given more responsibility for their own learning. They can be required to engage in independent learning to complement work undertaken in class.

**As a guide homework in Year 8 and Year 9 should generally involve a minimum of 8 hours per week.**

## YEAR 10, 11 & 12 HOMEWORK GUIDELINES

In the Senior Phase (Years 10, 11 and 12) the amount of time devoted to homework and independent study will vary according to the student's learning needs and individual program of learning, determined through their Senior Education and Training (SET) Plan. While teachers may provide students with additional work relevant to their learning which the student may undertake at home, young people during this phase should generally be independent learners exercising their own judgement as to the out-of-hours time they devote to their studies.

Of course, care should be taken to ensure that a balance is maintained between the various demands of study, sporting, recreational, cultural or part-time employment activities.

Part-time employment commitments are a growing issue for many young people. **However, school work should be the priority at this time in their lives and if students do need to work we recommended a maximum of 10hrs a week. During exam periods or peak assessment times it is important that**

**students plan ahead to ensure that their shifts do not interfere with assessment preparation.**

**As a guide homework in the senior phase should generally involve a minimum of:**

**10 hours for Year 10 students per week**

**and a minimum of:**

**12 hours for Year 11 and 12 students per week.**

## BALANCING RESPONSIBILITY

Experience tells us that BALANCE is the key. However, there is no substitute for hard work and students who are successful at their course of study need to devote extra study and revision time at home. At Marsden State High School teachers, students and parents can work together to ensure that homework is both productive and positive:

**Teachers** at Marsden State High School help students establish a routine of regular, independent study by:

- setting homework on a regular basis
- clearly communicating the purpose, benefits and expectations of all homework
- checking homework regularly and providing timely and productive feedback
- using homework that is varied, challenging and directly related to class work and appropriate to students' learning needs
- explicitly teaching strategies to develop organisational and time-management skills and providing opportunities to practice these strategies through homework
- giving consideration to other academic and personal development activities (school based or other) that students could be engaged in when setting homework
- discussing with parents and caregivers any developing problems concerning their child's homework and suggesting strategies to assist with their homework.

Teachers employ a range of strategies to ensure that homework is both positive and productive. However, there are times when teachers will need to employ a range of strategies to ensure that students complete the set work. These

strategies range from lunchtime detentions, contact with parents through to 30 min after school detentions.

**Students** can take responsibility for their own learning by:

- being aware of the school's homework policy
- discussing with their parents or caregivers homework expectations
- accepting responsibility for the completion of homework tasks within set time frames
- following up on comments made by teachers
- seeking assistance when difficulties arise
- organising their time to manage home obligations, participation in physical activity and sports, recreational and cultural activities and part-time employment.

**Parents and caregivers** can help their children by:

- reading to them, talking with them and involving them in tasks at home including shopping, playing games and physical activity
- helping them to complete tasks by discussing key questions or directing them to resources
- encouraging them to organise their time and take responsibility for their learning
- encouraging them to read and to take an interest in and discuss current local, national and international events
- helping them to balance the amount of time spent completing homework, watching television, playing computer games, playing sport and engaging in other recreational activities
- contacting the relevant teacher to discuss any concerns about the nature of homework and their children's approach to the homework.

## HELPFUL TIPS

### *How to stay focused and motivated at school*

FROM Dr Michael Carr-Gregg PhD MAPS

The latest research reveals some surprising findings about how parents can help their kids study better:

- **Sleep** - research reveals that this is the most important study tool going around. All students need at least 9.25 hours as long-term memory is consolidated during stage 4 sleep and the master molecule of mood (serotonin) is replenished which is why when you don't get enough sleep you wake grumpy.
- **Eating Breakfast** - research from the University of Ulster found that students who had nothing to eat for breakfast performed very poorly on test of memory and concentration when arriving at school. Just eating toast boosted their scores. The biggest boost to cognitive powers was from eating toast and baked beans!
- **Studying at the same time and the same place each day** - the research shows that if students can get in a consistent pattern of study their bodies acclimatise
- **Use a kitchen timer** - to regulate study time. Study periods should be no more than 50 minute segments and followed by at least a 15 minute break in which students should relax. This study period should be repeated twice.
- **Sipping water** - the brain is 80% water and students who sip water at least every 20 minutes while studying hydrate their brain, improving their ability to focus concentrate and stay motivated when it comes to homework.
- **Part-time work** - Research from the USA found that students who have up to 10 hours of part-time work a week, perform better at school than those without a job.
- **Exercise** - research has found that students who do 3 lots of aerobic exercise a week perform much better than those who do nothing.
- **Eat brain food** - during the school year, students should eat fish at least three times a week, along with eggs, yoghurt and blueberries all of which have been shown to improve brain function.

More information is available at: [www.michaelcarr-gregg.com.au](http://www.michaelcarr-gregg.com.au)