



# Homework at St Brigid's School: Guide for Staff and Parents

(Developed 2017, Implemented 2018)

**Successful schools see education as a collaborative process between the student, parent and the school, and consider parents to be 'partners' in their children's education. Schools that assist parents in providing support to their children tend to have better educational outcomes. "Parliamentary Inquiry into the approaches to homework in Victorian schools" (2014)**

## Importance of Home/School Partnership

One of our key Strategic Plan (2017-2019) is to: *Increase parental engagement and partnership in education and the life of the school.* We recognise parents as the first educators and we support them in their role. Our goal in setting homework is to provide parents with educational guidance and support to guide the learning of their own children at home.

## Our Approach

There has been a great deal of commentary in the media surrounding the value of homework. Our researched informed approach at St Brigid's is aiming to reform our homework practices to maximise its educational impact on our students. **"Don't get rid of it- get it right."** John Hattie- Director of Education at Melbourne University (2016).

Most people know from personal experience that if one is trying to learn something well—be it a set of facts, concepts, skills, or procedures—a single exposure is usually inadequate for good long-term retention. At St Brigid's we believe that regular and spaced practice enhances memory, problem solving, and transfer of learning to new contexts- this is our goal for student learning. Distributed Practice Theory (regular and spaced practice) offers great potential for improving students' educational outcomes and this informs how we structure our homework.

### **Homework Should...**

- Prioritise the most important learning need to help a child improve- it may look different for different students.
- Reinforcing and revising current concepts and learning through repetitive learning and drill learning to deepen learning
- Engage parents and connect them to their child's learning
- Provide guidance and ideas for parents
- Develop study habits, time management and responsibility in senior students
- Include:
  1. Maths- improving proficiency with number, basic facts and tables (as appropriate)
  2. Spelling- developing knowledge and strategies that can be applied to unknown words
  3. Reading- Developing understanding, proficiency and ideally love for reading!
- Complement learning styles in the classroom and utilise technology (where appropriate) that provides instant feedback.

### **Homework Should Not...**

- Be worksheet based
- Require parents to teach new knowledge and concepts
- Be excessive and negatively impact on family time and the child's holistic development
- Look the same for students with differing needs
- Be focussed on set lengths of time but should be focussed on maximising deep learning for children

### **Our Aim- Support our Parents as Educators**

*Parents can maximise their impact on their child's future learning when they provide positive parental interactions and a positive home environment (Australian Council of Educational Leadership, 2017)*

Our aim is to actively involve parents and support parents as educators. Please refer to the End of Year Targets in Literacy and Numeracy provided for your child. Our aim is for our children to reach these targets and parents have an active role in supporting this at home. Parents are best placed to determine the length of time that your child should spend on learning at home, however the following may be used as a guide:

- K-PP
- Yr 1-3 20 mins on reading and spelling plus maths games and Apps/websites (3-4 times per week)
- Yr 4-5 30 mins on reading and spelling plus maths games and Apps/websites (3-4 times per week)
- Yr 6 45 mins plus maths games and Apps/websites (3-4 times per week)

Each child will be provided a homework folder containing:

- A Maths Pack-containing items required for maths games
- A Homework Book- Spelling words and tasks at the front and Maths games will be added to the rear as they are learned in class to be played at home

### **Providing support for your child in Kindergarten and Pre-Primary**

Research informs us that daily interaction and talking with child is crucial for developing skills to learn. The more time parents are actively engaged with their children- the better the outcome for the child (minimise screen time and maximise interaction)

- Take time to simply play with your child. Research states 10 minutes playing with your child each day has enormous benefits.
- Use opportunities such as driving, cooking, shopping, doing dishes etc to talk to your child
- Kindy and Pre-Primary will be provided each week with "Comprehension Readers" for shared reading and questioning between parents and child.
- Laminated name, number and letter tasks will be provided targeting;
  - Kindergarten:** fine motor, letter formation, sound identification
  - Pre-Primary:** CVCs (3 letter words) and sight words (words to be recognised by sight rather than sounding out)

### **Providing Support for your child in Literacy**

**Spelling** – At St Brigid's we use a systematic phonic instruction program (Diana Rigg), to teach letter sound relationships, this means sounds are taught in a specific sequence. Each week your child will be working on a spelling list at school and this list will also be sent home. A list of suggested spelling activities (appendix A) will be provided to parents to help students practise sound/spelling patterns that have been taught in class (included in HW book). These will not be collected by the teacher. The intent of the weekly list is to focus on specific sounds and letter patterns and improve the students overall spelling-not specifically the set words.

\*Year level phonic flash cards may be sent home to help support your child to remember the required sounds for their year (as appropriate)

**Reading** – Reading is a difficult skill to master and the reading process begins before children can read orally. To help support your child's reading development the school has a Reading Comprehension Program for students in Kindergarten to Year 1. Once children are ready, they will be sent home with a levelled home reader. Home readers are for reading practice, these books are designed to be 'easy' for your child to read so they can practise skills being taught in the classroom and children are encouraged to read each night.

\*Year level “sight words” may be sent home to help support your child automatic recognition of selected words (as appropriate)

### **Providing Support for your child in Numeracy**

Our intention is that our students become fluent in maths. Fluency refers to knowing key mathematical facts and methods and recalling these efficiently. To assist our student's fluency in maths, we use games as a vehicle for learning. Games allow repetition and practice in a meaningful and enjoyable way. Each child will be provided with a maths pack including the resources to play these games at home. The class teacher will provide suitable games and the instructions for each game that is also learned and played in class.

### **Educational Apps and Online Learning (optional)**

One of the significant advantages of websites and apps is that they often provide instantaneous feedback to students on their performance.

<b>School Subscriptions or Free</b>	
<b>Subscriptions</b>	<b>Free</b>
Reading Eggs	Typing Tournament
Mathletics	Study Ladder
Spellodrome	Skoolbo
Spelling City	Coolmaths4kids
Mathsonline.com.au	Khanacademy.org
Typing Tournament (P&F Funded school subscription) for Yr 2-6	Epic Reading (getepic.com)
	Learning Potential App (for parents)