

Background Information for Parents on the Homework Grid: Year 3 and 4 students

The Homework Grid

Based on the work of Ian Lillico

There is no doubt that children need to practice concepts learnt at school, within time constraints, but we need to *broaden* the definition of *Homework*. Any work that children do at home needs to be counted and parents and teachers should work together to ensure that children do some work at home, but not a lot of sedentary work.

The Homework Grid is a solution to this old question of getting kids to do something at home and not *opt out* of family life. It will enable parents to get children to do their share of work in the home including housework, shopping, physical activity such as sport training and family outings such as walking, fishing and exploring the world – activities which enhance family life. It also covers areas such as reading, being read to, playing a game with parents, researching on the computer, music practice and many others.

The Homework Grid philosophy emphasises diversity, family life and active pursuits. It gradually increases in time and complexity from Prep to Year 6.

The Role of Parents:

It is a good idea to spend two minutes each night with your child to help them organize their homework before they start it. Help them order the sequence of tasks and then set an amount of time to finish it. Students should not spend wasted hours each night stewing over difficult work as they begin to get a negative attitude to it as a result. If the homework is too difficult for your children, please speak to your teacher.

Give positive feedback and praise for good work completed. It is important to show an interest in your child's work as it makes them feel less isolated from the rest of the family.

Parents can assist by asking children questions prior to, during or after their reading – this directs their reading. It is also helpful for children to verbalize what they are about to write prior to writing. This can mean talking to you about the topic or explaining the main points. This process greatly aids fluency and volume and helps *cement* thoughts prior to writing.

Parents can find out more ways to assist their children at home by reading the Curriculum News section of the newsletter, attending information or curriculum nights or drawing on the expertise of your classroom teacher at a parent/teacher interview. Helping in the classroom also helps to give an insight into modern school life and the concepts being taught at school.

Years 3 and 4 Homework Grid Descriptions

Read or be read to

- Read and discuss home reading books. Share your favourite stories from the library together or listen to an ebook. Read both fiction and non-fiction texts.

Help at home

- Do a job at home to help your family. Some ideas may include: tidy your room, help to set the table for dinner, play with or feed your pet, brush your teeth without a reminder. When housework is done with parents and siblings, it becomes a bonding activity and can enhance family life. It teaches the values of responsibility and respect.

Investigate

- Find out something related to investigation/inquiry topic, this might include looking for information in books or using the internet.

Remember to bring

- Bring in materials for learning activities eg collecting paddle pop sticks, special clothes (swimmers, costumes etc), props for presentations.

Word Study

- Use the phonics focus sound and spelling rules to investigate words and identify patterns using strategies, rather than learning a list of words.

Mental Mathematics

- Practice times tables and mental mathematics, play dice games, listen to times tables songs or tapes.

Play a game with an adult

- This is a special time to develop communication, problem solving and skills that can be transferred from adult to child. It can also teach the child to win and lose graciously. This could include outdoor games as well as indoor pastimes such as crosswords, Scrabble and a plethora of board games which emphasise pictorial, verbal, linguistic, monetary and even social skills.

Teach your parents

- One of the best ways of consolidating what one has learnt is to teach the concept to another. This can be set for class work or happen spontaneously to enable students to brief parents about work covered, but go a step further and try to explain and teach particular topics learnt that day or that week.

Cultural/art/music

- This can be expanded to include artistic pursuits such as painting, drawing and sketching, sewing and general creative pursuits and hobbies. It might also include dancing, singing, listening to music or playing an instrument or practicing another language.

Physical activity

- This includes both formal sporting activities as well as activities with parents and siblings such as walking, riding a bicycle, bushwalking, fishing, walking the dog and a whole range of active pursuits both indoors and outdoors.

On the computer

- ICT plays an important role in our lives for both work and leisure. Teachers may suggest websites or apps to practise concepts taught at school, including Mathletics.

Shopping

- This is a fantastic opportunity to spend time together and provides a real life context to apply mathematical concepts and language including money, size, length and volume. For example, you could count numbers of items, find the cheapest item, calculate simple totals, point to the longest/shortest, heaviest/lightest item, find the best deal.

Teachers may also create new grid items relevant to their curriculum programs. Each grid item should take no more than 5 minutes. At times, different year levels may have "Special Homework" particular to their class or individuals. The same homework is given across the year level each week.