

## Instruction

### Homework/Make-up Work

#### Homework

The responsibility of the school district to educate the student is carried out by the teachers through effective classroom instruction and the careful delegation of independent study. It is important for the student to be taught the concepts related to the subject area and how to study in school before he/she is given work to do at home. There is, therefore, a steady increase in the amount of homework expected of students from the elementary grades through senior high school.

#### Homework Policy

It is the belief of the Norwalk Public Schools that students will be provided with:

- meaningful opportunities to practice and transfer their learning.
- homework that is developmentally and instructionally appropriate.
- differentiated instruction and assignments for English language learners, as well as an honoring of the objectives of Individual Education Plans (IEP) and/or 504 Plans where appropriate.
- a model on how to do each homework assignment and the expected outcome for each assignment before the students leave the class. It should be clear and articulated, with a specific and significant goal.
- long term projects that are broken up across clearly identified phases and separate grades (Individual sections, i.e. planning, outlines, first draft, etc.)
- Homework should never be assigned as a punishment nor should it be removed as a reward.

When assigned, homework should be a three-way partnership among students, parents and teachers. Parents need to provide students with a time and place to carry out their assignments either at home or at a designated study-related facility. Teachers should ensure that the time students spend doing homework is beneficial to their learning and development. Students should feel that homework is a form of self-improvement and gain intrinsic satisfaction from it.

Policy adopted: 2/4/08

Elementary Level**I. Purpose**

A. The purpose of homework should be to:

- deepen understanding
- prepare for future learning
- extend class work
- practice skills
- reinforce new content learning
- help develop reasoning skills
- enhance student desire to learn through purposeful work

B. Homework should be:

- well designed practice
- differentiated to meet individualized student needs
- completed within a reasonable amount of time  
(See “**Guideline for Parents/Guardians**” page 4)

C. Homework should not be:

- used as punishment
- used for busy work
- done entirely in class
- skills practice for skills that are not understood (to avoid incorrect learning)

**II. Time**

In order to promote consistency in homework practices and time expectations at the elementary levels across the Norwalk Public School district, the following recommendations for homework are as follows:

- Grade K: not to exceed a total of 25 minutes, including a minimum of 15 minutes of reading daily
- Grade 1: not to exceed a total of 25 minutes including a minimum of 15 minutes of reading daily
- Grade 2: not to exceed a total of **40** minutes including a minimum of **20** minutes of **independent** reading daily
- Grade 3: not to exceed a total of **60** minutes including a minimum of 30 minutes of **independent** reading daily
- Grade 4: not to exceed a total of **70** minutes including a minimum of 30 minutes of **independent** reading daily
- Grade 5: not to exceed a total of **90** minutes including a minimum of **40** minutes of **independent** reading daily

1. Independent reading is required **as a daily expectation, including during vacations and on holidays and weekends.**
2. Homework, **other than daily independent reading**, should not be assigned on Fridays or during weekends and holidays. *While students may work on long-term projects during vacations, projects should not be due on the day immediately following vacations.*
3. Special Education and ELL: Homework assignments (for students in special education programs) should reflect the special needs of these children, in keeping with their IEP goals. Differentiated instruction and assignments for ELL students will be provided as appropriate.
4. While guidelines are provided to establish expectations, the actual time required to complete assignments will vary with each student's study habits, academic skills, and selected course load.

### **III. Assessment of Homework**

The completion and quality of homework are rated by the effort rubrics on the Elementary Progress Report. Formal homework is assessed at the end of each marking period. Homework assignments hold more meaning when they are shared among students the next day. Teachers should vary the approaches to providing feedback. When homework is **only graded and without feedback**, it communicates to students that the real reason for doing the homework is evaluation, not learning the concepts. Teachers should make every effort to explain the purpose of homework and offer timely and appropriate feedback. Student achievement can vary based on the kind of feedback provided by the teacher. Homework in which a teacher has embedded instructive comments has the greatest effect on learning.

In addition, the following guidelines for elementary school teachers, students and parents/guardians are suggested:

### **IV. Guidelines**

A. Guidelines for Teachers: The teacher is expected to:

(Homework should never be assigned as a punishment. Conversely, being excused from homework should not be provided as a reward.)

1. clearly explain the purpose of any given assignment.
2. clearly give directions for the method of accomplishing the assignment.
3. make sure students understand how they are being assessed (e.g. rubrics).
4. ensure availability of all necessary resources to carry out the assignment.
5. make it clear that deadlines are understood and followed.
6. acknowledge receipt of homework and provide feedback it in a timely fashion.
7. provide constructive feedback to the student and use student work to plan for future learning.

8. return homework in a timely manner.
9. review homework and/or provide students additional time and opportunity to complete assignments if they are absent or did not complete it. An effort rubric on the elementary progress reports is used to document lack of homework.

**B. Guidelines for Students:** The student is expected to:

1. ask the teacher questions if in doubt about the purpose, requirements or directions of the assignment.
2. meet the deadlines for homework and projects by budgeting time realistically to complete homework.
3. speak with their teacher(s) or parents/guardians when the cumulative amount of homework on a given day may exceed reasonable limits.
4. be responsible for making up work missed when absent from the classroom.

**C. Guidelines for Parents/Guardians:** The parent/guardian is expected to:

1. understand and support the philosophy and guidelines of the Board of Education concerning homework.
2. provide students with a time and place to complete their assignments.
3. encourage integrity and never give so much help that the value of the homework will be destroyed; be supportive without doing the work for the child.
4. contact the teacher in the event of questions and concerns, particularly if their child is frustrated by the assignment or is taking an inordinate amount of time to complete it.
5. understand that jobs and other after school activities are not acceptable excuses for not completing a homework assignment.
6. ensure that students and/or parents pick up assignments missed when it appears (the) **excused** absence will be prolonged (**in excess of four days**). A minimum of 48 hours notice should be given the teacher to prepare assignments.

**A parent should be aware of the following explanation of an excused absence. An excused absence from school is generally because of illness, death in the family or other emergency, medical/dental treatment or religious observance. Absences from school for such reasons as a vacation or a visit to a native country are not excused absences.**

*Connecticut General Statute 10-184*

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