



## PARA HILLS HIGH SCHOOL

Your vision **Your future**

# Homework Policy

## Rationale

Homework is a valuable part of schooling as it allows for practising, extending and consolidating work done in class. "Homework" provides training for students in planning and organising time (**RESPONSIBILITY**); establishes habits of study, concentration and self-discipline (**RIGOUR**) which will serve students for the rest of their lives; can strengthen home-school links (**RESPECT**); reaffirms the role of parents and caregivers as partners in education; provides parents and caregivers with insights into what is being taught in the classroom and the progress of their children; and challenges and extends gifted and talented children.

To be successful at secondary school students must undertake work at home in addition to their contact time in lessons. Success at study generally requires hard work and commitment – but most of all it takes a time commitment and good study habits at home, and it is important for students to develop these habits early.

Blocking time (i.e. setting aside regular time at home e.g. 1 hour 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 demands such as hanging out with friends, texting, skating, games, TV, 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 Para Hills High School we believe homework that enhances student learning:

- is purposeful and relevant to students needs so that students see the connection between class and homework
- 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 Para Hills High School we work on setting homework with this in mind. Some students need more, some will simply finish classwork. We also encourage 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 (e.g. exams, assignment deadlines). Many subjects require rehearsal or practice to be undertaken at home in addition to theory aspects of the course (e.g. music practice, drama practice). It is important that students plan ahead and be prepared for learning.

To assist students the school provides the following support:

- **Diary** - Students are issued with a Diary 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; goal setting and study skill support.
- **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, and the assessments to be undertaken.
- **Homework Club** – three nights a week staff provide supervision and support in the resource centre for students between 3:00 and 4:00.
- **School Staff** – Staff at Para Hills High school are able to offer support to students and provide an avenue of communication between the school and home. In addition to subject specific staff, there are Learning Area Coordinators, Care-group teachers and school leadership staff who can offer support to both students and parents/careers.

## Year 8 & 9 Homework Guidelines

Compared to 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 5 hours per week.**

## Year 10, 11 & 12 Homework Guidelines

In Years 10—12 the amount of time devoted to homework and independent study will vary according to the student's program of learning. 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. 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. **As a guide homework should involve a min of 6 hours for Yr. 10 & 11 students and a min of 10 hours for Yr. 12 students per week.**

**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.

## 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 Para Hills High School teachers, students and parents can work together to ensure that homework is both productive and positive:

**Teachers** at Para Hills 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 useful 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.

**Students can take responsibility 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.
- accessing DayMap, and/or OneNote to get work
- liaising with friends regarding deadlines
- Managing the number of hours of part- time employment.

**Parents and caregivers can help by:**

- Assisting students to complete tasks by discussing key questions
- Encouraging students to read and to take an interest in and discuss current local, national and international events
- Helping students to balance the amount of time spent completing homework and engaging in other recreational activities
- Contacting the teacher to discuss any concerns about the nature of homework and their children's approach to the homework
- Assisting with final editing of work
- Encouraging students to be critical thinkers and analysers of the "mass" of information available to them.
- Being interested and having discussions about school.
- Contacting the school early if there are issues so that they can be dealt with quickly, waiting until the reports come out is too late.
- Checking the diary and DayMap and asking those critical questions such as: "What homework do you have tonight? When is this assignment due? How come you have waited so long to start this assignment?"