



The Launceston Preparatory School

Homework Policy

At The Launceston Preparatory School we have always had a policy on homework that is consistent with the Paideia philosophy.

Too frequently, homework is perceived to be “something you do for your teacher” or “something you do to avoid trouble”. Yet homework’s intrinsic value lies in what it can do to foster the skills and discipline of the individual. In other words, homework should be “something you do to improve yourself”.

We commence training children in this skill from the moment they enter our school. In the early years it is more informal, with children being encouraged to read every night, talk with their families about the day’s activities, investigate materials and information relevant to that week’s discussions etc. As children grow older, the amount of homework they do should increase.

For the older children some homework will be teacher-directed – finishing off a piece of work not completed in the allocated time at school, extra practice required in a specific skill etc. As an **approximate** guide:

4-6	year olds should be spending 10-15 minutes per night
7-9	year olds should be spending 20-40 minutes per night
10-12	year olds should be spending 45-60 minutes per night

However, unless a considerable proportion of homework is **self-directed**, children will never have the interest, motivation or discipline necessary to cope with the inevitably increasing load as they progress through secondary and tertiary education. It is our belief that loading primary school aged children with a great deal of homework that is not tailored to individual needs serves no worthwhile purpose and indeed will probably make children’s attitudes to homework so negative that they actively resist doing it in later years!

This should not be interpreted to mean that children don’t have to do homework. In fact, the opposite is true – children should be doing homework **every** night, ascertaining their **own** needs in every curriculum area and practising skills appropriately. These should include a **combination** of the following:

- reading fiction and non-fiction every night
- drawing, sketching

- writing shopping lists, playing “shops” assisting with actual shopping
- cutting and pasting
- jigsaw puzzles
- pursuing research in reference materials
- inventing (games, new worlds, machines etc.)
- reading newspapers, viewing/listening to the news and discussing with family
- taking photographs, labelling and captioning them
- practising tables
- writing/acting plays; writing poems, letters, stories
- practising spelling errors from the day’s work
- playing cards, board games
- practising handwriting
- drawing/investigating maps; knowing where the family is going on holidays etc.
- drawing/writing cartoons
- playing ball games individually or in teams
- skipping, playing with hoops, quoits
- swimming gardening
- making collections (of anything – within reason)
- playing an instrument, singing, composing songs
- knitting and any other craftwork
- cooking (including peeling vegetables, washing and drying-up, reading and writing recipes etc.), setting the table
- tying shoelaces, bows, working with buttons
- making puppets, threading shells, pasta etc.

A varied combination of such activities is important. Maximum benefit is gained from practice in areas where the individual’s skills need development. Practising something you are good at is great fun and entirely permissible but children should be encouraged to vary their homework.

(Our theme could be used as inspiration for any of these activities, or they may not be related at all!)