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HOMEWORK

Homework Regulation Overview:

Students, parents/caregivers and teachers each have a specific role and responsibility in adhering to the Homework Regulation for the Hopewell Valley Regional School District. HVRSD's main goal is to promote an educational experience for students that do the following: enhances student achievement; balances academics and extra-curricular activities; and helps children develop self-advocacy, time management skills and independence.

A. Elementary Level - Kindergarten through Grade 5

Elementary-level homework is used to reinforce classroom learning and help to develop skills. It should not be seen as a chore. The expectations are for student growth. Students should be able to complete homework by themselves. Communication between parents and teachers is essential with regard to homework. Homework will follow the tenets below:

- Amount – In kindergarten through grade 2, homework, other than the daily reading and math link, will not be assigned on a regular basis. Additional homework will gradually be introduced beginning in grade 3 and will not exceed 30 minutes per day (on-task working time). In grades 4 through 5, homework will be approximately 30 to 45 minutes per day.
- Breaks – Homework will not be assigned on weekends or school breaks 4 days or longer, with the exception of make-up work. Students will not be expected to complete homework and long-term assignments exclusively over a break.
- Content – When assigned, homework will reinforce classwork by practicing skills or gathering additional information or materials. Homework will be tailored to address individual student needs when necessary. Homework may include an extension of classwork, projects, assignments, essays, research, and daily independent reading in grades 3 through 5.
- Coordination – The district will provide teachers opportunities to discuss homework requirements across grade levels to ensure consistency. Homework will be coordinated among teachers and subject areas to avoid inconsistencies and unreasonable workloads for students.
- Special Circumstances- Accommodations may be made for students (or parents) who communicate with the teacher that a homework assignment will conflict with a personal event (e.g. religious observance or

family circumstances). When possible, advanced notice should be provided.

B. Middle and Secondary Level - Grades 6 through 12

At this level, most students should be independent learners. However, parents should be clear about the school's expectation for homework and should discuss issues and concerns with their child and/or teacher.

Beginning in middle school and expanding through their high school years, students are expected to develop their self-advocacy skills to discuss individual needs with their teachers. Care should be taken to ensure that undue pressure is not placed on students at this level, and that a balance is maintained among the demands of study, extra/co-curricular activities and personal pursuits. This can be achieved through good communication between the parent and teacher, organization and planning, and effective study habits.

1. Middle School – Grades 6 through 8

- Amount – Homework will average 45 to 60 minutes (on-task working time) per day in grade 6, 60 to 70 minutes in grade 7, and 70 to 80 minutes in grade 8. Advanced-level classes (honors and pre-algebra) may require an additional 10 minutes of homework per subject area, per day. Homework for electives (e.g., band, orchestra, and choir) will be in addition to these averages.
- Special Circumstances- Accommodations may be made for students (or parents) who communicate with the teacher that a homework assignment will conflict with a personal event (e.g. religious observance or family circumstances). When possible, advanced notice should be provided.
- Breaks – Homework will not be assigned over scheduled school breaks 4 days or longer, with the exception of summer assignments and make-up work. Students will not be expected to complete homework and long-term assignments exclusively over a break.
- Content – Homework assignments will be provided with approximate completion minutes for all assignments to help students plan. As a courtesy, homework will be electronically posted in all subject areas. However, as the primary method, students are responsible for using their assignment planners to record homework during the school day. Teachers must inform students in advance whether homework will be graded or assessed.
- Coordination – Effort will be made to coordinate homework assignments and assessments among teachers of core, world language, and elective subjects to avoid inconsistencies and unreasonable workloads for students. Each September, team teachers will establish homework norms and revisit quarterly. Teachers will discuss homework assignments and assessments during weekly team meetings.

2. High School - Grades 9 through 12

- Amount - It is difficult to quantify homework on the high-school level, given the number and types of classes students take. However, the following time guidelines should serve as approximations, with the understanding that each student has different needs and abilities that may change the amount of time dedicated solely to homework each night.

Course Type	Weekly	Daily (5)	Daily (7)
District-required for graduation	120	25	15-20
Honors	180	35	25-30
Advanced Placement	240	50	35

The guidelines are provided with the understanding that:

- On average, students take five (5) to six (6) district required courses at any given time.
- Students vary in their abilities and the time necessary to complete assignments.

- Courses vary in the amount of work necessary to ensure understanding.
- Homework varies across weeks due to the nature of assignments and testing.
- Elective classes may require homework in addition to the above guidelines.
- Honors and AP classes have an expectation of increased work.
- Specialized courses with additional homework requirements will list those in the course description.

Students should be aware of these guidelines, as well as any additional homework requirements listed in course descriptions, before making the decision to take a course. If a student is frequently taking significantly longer than the expected amount of time, a discussion with the teacher may identify whether there are issues that need to be addressed.

- Test preparation (unit, mid-term, finals, SAT, etc) is seen as an on-going process and as a result, is not part of the time guidelines list above.
- Special Circumstances- Accommodations may be made for students (or parents) who communicate with the teacher that a homework assignment will conflict with a personal event (e.g. religious observance or family circumstances). When possible, advanced notice should be provided.
- Breaks – Homework will not be assigned over scheduled school breaks 4 days or longer, with the exception of summer assignments, make-up work and AP course work. Students will not be expected to complete homework and long-term assignments exclusively over a break.
- Mid-term and Finals – No new homework will be assigned during A-D cycle prior to mid-terms and finals.
- Content – New concepts may be introduced through homework. However, they should not be graded other than for completion. Summer work should be related to the curriculum, limited, and evaluated. Students should assume that homework will be assessed for completion and quality unless otherwise noted by the teacher. Every attempt should be made to electronically post or provide hard copies for those who do not have access, a weekly outline of homework assignments.
- Coordination – Time will be provided to teachers in advanced-level classes to discuss their program requirements as they relate to homework with teachers in other disciplines. At the beginning of each school year, building administrators will review the Homework Policy and Regulation with staff, students, and parents.

C. General Homework Guidelines

1. Homework will be:

- a. appropriate to the students' skill level and age;
- b. interesting, challenging and, where appropriate, open ended;
- c. purposeful, meaningful and relevant to the curriculum; and
- d. assessed by teachers with feedback and support provided.

2. Examples of homework include:

- a. Practice exercises — providing students with opportunities to apply new knowledge or to review, revise and reinforce newly acquired skills, such as:
 - i. completing consolidation exercises for mathematics;
 - ii. practicing spelling words;
 - iii. practicing words or phrases in a language other than English;
 - iv. reading for pleasure;
 - v. writing essays and other creative tasks;
 - vi. practicing and playing musical instruments; and
 - vii. practicing physical education skills.
- b. Preparatory homework — providing opportunities for students to acquire background information so they are better prepared for future lessons, such as:
 - i. reading background material for history;
 - ii. reading texts for class discussion;
 - iii. researching topics for class work;

- iv. collecting news articles; and reference material;
- v. revising information about a current topic; and
- vi. completing preparatory drawings.

- c. Extension assignments — encouraging students to pursue knowledge individually and imaginatively, such as:
 - i. writing a book review;
 - ii. making or designing art work;
 - iii. completing science investigation exercises;
 - iv. researching local news;
 - v. finding material on the internet; and
 - vi. monitoring advertising in a newspaper.

D. Guidelines for Students, Parents and Teachers

1. Students - Students can better manage their homework assignments by:

- a. reading the district homework policy;
- b. making effective use of their homework journal;
- c. checking their teachers' websites (if available);
- d. plan their time accordingly for long-term assignments;
- e. communicating any difficulties with homework assignments to their teacher;
- f. noting completion times in their homework journal; and
- g. being aware that completion times are approximate.

2. Parents and Caregivers - Parents and caregivers can help their children by:

- a. encouraging their child to contact the teacher(s) if experiencing difficulties completing homework;
- b. contacting their child's teacher if he or she routinely exceeds the approximate completion times for homework;
- c. contacting their child's teacher to discuss any problems he or she is having with homework;
- d. encouraging their child to take increasing responsibility for learning and organization;
- e. encouraging their child to set aside a regular daily session to read and complete homework;
- f. encouraging their child to complete homework by discussing key questions or directing them to resources;
- g. encouraging children to complete homework themselves;
- h. reading texts assigned by teachers and discussing their child's response to the texts and requesting to see work he or she completes in relation to these texts;
- i. observing and acknowledging their child's success and asking how home and classwork are progressing;
- j. attending school events, displays or productions in which their children are involved;
- k. setting an example by reading themselves;
- l. helping their child to balance the amount of time spent completing school-based assignments versus outside work or activities;
- m. being aware of the potential distractions during homework time, e.g., texting or instant messaging;
- n. checking whether homework for upper-primary and secondary students has been assigned and ensuring their child keeps a homework journal; and
- o. discussing homework in the child's first language, where English is not the main language spoken at home, and linking it to his or her previous experiences.

3. Teachers - Teachers can help their students by:

- a. assigning regular homework to help students establish a home-study routine;
- b. assigning varied, challenging and meaningful homework that is related to classwork and appropriate to the students' learning needs;
- c. giving students enough time to complete homework, taking into account home obligations and extracurricular activities;
- d. assessing homework and providing timely and practical feedback and support;
- e. electronically posting homework assignment;
- f. electronically posting grades for homework assignments in a timely manner;
- g. making effective use of homework diaries for upper-elementary and secondary students;
- h. coordinating the allocation of homework among different teachers in secondary schools;
- i. helping students develop the organizational and time-management skills needed for them to be responsible for their own learning;

- j. ensuring that parents and caregivers are aware of the district's homework policy;
- k. developing strategies to support parents to become active partners in monitoring homework;and giving guidelines and;
- l. considering the range of recreational, family and cultural activities.

New Regulation Reviewed by Homework Committee, First Reading: 5/20/13, Second Reading and Adoption: June 17, 2013

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