



Home Learning Policy

<i>Policy designation</i>	<i>PO002EXE1120-24</i>	<i>Policy audience</i>	<i>Public Facing</i>
<i>Approval date</i>	<i>20/01/2021</i>	<i>Document owner</i>	<i>Dean of Teaching and Learning</i>
<i>Released to audience</i>	<i>20/01/2021</i>	<i>Version</i>	<i>2.0</i>
<i>Review date</i>	<i>17/11/2022</i>	<i>Approval authority</i>	<i>Executive</i>

'Home learning' is the term that Ron Ritchhart coined when referring to homework. It refers to any activity that the students do to supplement their learning in class.

At Strathcona we regard home learning as an integral and planned part of the academic program and school life. It allows the breadth and depth of courses to be greater than they normally would be. Learning skills and knowledge to a level of proficiency requires practice.

Students also need to develop independent working and time management skills. This will require considerable guidance for younger students and a deliberate learning program that progresses through school according to the demands on students, their maturity and their previous learning. This should include such things as students making some of their own decisions about what homework they need to do, learning to manage and prioritise their commitments and recognise the limits of what they can take on, and learning how to recover when they find they have overcommitted themselves.

Time is a precious commodity, so the amount of home learning tasks or activities set, also needs to take into account both the learning needs of the student in that subject, as well as any other needs that student may have. At Strathcona we emphasise quality rather than quantity – we want effective learning to be the goal rather than hours spent on tasks, or completion of tasks.

As such, learning completed at home, should enhance learning and:

- ✓ is not set without purpose
- ✓ is clearly related to class work
- ✓ is purposeful and relevant to students needs
- ✓ is appropriate to the phase of learning (early, middle, senior, or Junior School, Years 7-10, VCE)
- ✓ is varied and differentiated to individual learning needs
- ✓ develops students' independence as a learner



Home learning also serves the following functions:

- ✓ to develop deeper understandings through reflection or an applied task, including extension tasks for some students
- ✓ as revision and reflection to consolidate learning (practise for mastery)
- ✓ to store knowledge (particularly procedural) presented in class lessons, often in situations where repetition requires an effective approach
- ✓ to pursue knowledge through facilitating student-directed learning activities (including investigations, research, writing, designing, creating) which are best conducted as undisturbed individual work, including assignment tasks
- ✓ in applying knowledge and skills in new contexts (a topic of interest, an authentic local issue)
- ✓ to prepare for learning that will take place in the next scheduled class
- ✓ to revise in preparation for assessment
- ✓ to develop personal responsibility and organisation in students
- ✓ in facilitating parental interest in student learning, including one to one interaction which enhances student learning

Home learning may be completed daily or over a weekly or fortnightly period and can take many forms including but not limited to:

- ✓ handouts/textbook/computer- based activities
- ✓ assignment drafting
- ✓ writing essays or responses
- ✓ reading
- ✓ note taking, revising and studying
- ✓ completion and extension of class work, projects and research.



Responsibilities

Strathcona has a tripartite view of student learning and that it is the responsibility of students, teachers and parents:

Teachers

Teachers can help students establish a routine of regular, independent home learning by:

- ✓ ensuring the School's Home Learning Policy is implemented consistently across all year levels
- ✓ setting home learning tasks on a regular basis
- ✓ clearly communicating the purpose, expectations and benefits of all home-learning tasks
- ✓ checking home learning tasks regularly and providing positive recognition of the efforts of students
- ✓ providing timely and appropriate feedback about home-learning tasks
- ✓ selecting tasks that are varied, challenging and directly related to class work
- ✓ selecting tasks that are purposeful and appropriate to students' learning needs
- ✓ explicitly teaching strategies to develop organisational and time-management skills and providing opportunities for practice through home-learning activities
- ✓ discussing with parents and caregivers any issues concerning their child's home learning tasks and suggesting strategies to assist with home learning requirements
- ✓ providing assistance when difficulties arise

Students

Students can take responsibility for their own learning by:

- ✓ being aware of the school's expectations and guidelines for home learning
- ✓ discussing with their parents or guardians, expectations around home learning tasks
- ✓ accepting responsibility for the completion of tasks within set time frames
- ✓ following up on feedback provided by teachers



- ✓ seeking assistance when difficulties arise
- ✓ organising their time to manage the various activities they engage in
- ✓ recording homework in a planner (Year 5-12)

Parents

Parents and guardians can help their children by:

- ✓ encouraging them to organise their time
- ✓ encouraging them to take responsibility for their learning
- ✓ giving them appropriate assistance where required to complete tasks
- ✓ helping them to balance the amount of time spent completing home learning tasks, watching television, playing computer games, social media, playing sport and engaging in other recreational activities
- ✓ communicating with their student's teacher to discuss any concerns about the nature of home learning tasks or their student's approach to the learning

Recommended Home learning and organisational routine

Whether beginning in the Junior School or entering the School at Year 7, students experience a variety of different home learning and organisational expectations than at previous schools. It usually requires a significant transition due to:

- Higher expectations on the amount of home learning to be completed
- More rigorous and overt approaches to summative assessment
- Longer school day
- Increased travel times between school and home
- Increased levels of involvement in co-curricular activities

One important element of learning success is the development of an effective school day routine.



Junior School

In the Junior School, home learning reflects our belief that students need to have the opportunity to consolidate their classroom learning, as well as engage in a balanced lifestyle. Time to play and explore are critical elements to success at school and a balanced, happy childhood. Home learning should be varied, challenging and meaningful with tasks appropriate to students' learning needs.

Home Reading Record: The Importance of Regular Reading

All students from Prep to Year 6 are expected to engage in daily reading to, with or by parents and caregivers. Words are essential in building the thought connections in the brain. The more interactive language a child experiences through books and conversation with others (not passively from television), the more advantaged socially and educationally that child will be for the rest of her life. Development of language skills is linked positively to thinking skills and academic performance.

Opportunities to read at home:

- Listen to a book read aloud by an adult or older sibling.
- Read along with a parent or sibling.
- Read aloud to parent or older sibling
- Read silently then talk to an adult about the book
- Read silently with no adult interaction (suitable for Years 5 and 6)

In Prep to Year 4 home learning:

- ✓ enables the extension of class work by practising skills or gathering extra information or materials in an enjoyable way
- ✓ mainly consist of daily reading to, with, and by parents/caregivers or older siblings
- ✓ will not be set on weekends or during school holiday periods

In Years 5 and 6 home learning:

- ✓ includes daily independent reading
- ✓ Involves practising times tables and personal spelling words
- ✓ may include extension of class work, projects and assignments
- ✓ will not be set for school holidays
- ✓ Involves the Year 5 and 6 students using homework diaries to provide a means of communication between parents and the school



The following is the time commitment each night for specific home tasks:

Year 3	15 minutes
Year 4	20 minutes
Year 5	30 minutes
Year 6	30 minutes

Specialists are not required to set homework in the Junior School.

Senior School

Home Learning and study become increasingly self-directed throughout Senior School. Students need to develop their academic work but also to consider their wellbeing with sleep, nutrition, relaxation time and physical activity. These are critical elements to success at school and a balanced and happy adolescence.

As students move into Senior School, the time spent on home learning will vary with individual drive and circumstance. It will be appropriate for each student's age and ability and take into account students' other commitments. At times, a student might be advised to do more home learning such as to catch up on missed work or a student may be able to negotiate the type or timeframe of the task.

Students should plan their time, focusing on achieving the criteria set for the task. Teachers will guide students on how to plan and get the most from their home learning.

Year 7

In Year 7, there will be some reduction in the home learning schedule at the beginning of Term 1, as students make the transition to the Strathcona Senior School.

Term 1

Weeks 1 and 2	No home tasks will be set; however, reading is always encouraged.
Week 3	Introduction of Maths and LOTE tasks
Weeks 4 and 5	Introduction of English and Science tasks
Weeks 6 to 10	Humanities (History/Geography) and other subjects

The aim for Year 7 students is to aid them in building meaningful organisation, work and study habits for life. Therefore, there is a guided learning program to explicitly teach and foster in students the skills of managing their home learning tasks and workload. As such, small, discrete and manageable exercises with LOTE and Maths will be introduced in the third week and then built on with English and Science, through to the Humanities, until students have a tool box of strategies to enable them to balance their work schedule throughout each week.



Years 7 and 8

As a general rule, home learning should equate to between 70-90 minutes per weekday. This might increase at specific times, such as a result of revision for tests, or when assignments or projects are due. In these cases, the setting of other home learning tasks or activities will take these factors into account.

In addition, Years 7 and 8 will experience a greater variation amongst nights, requiring a greater level of planning and personal organisation. Some subjects like PE, Drama and Music may not have as much regular set home learning as other subjects such as Maths or LOTE.

Wide reading is also encouraged beyond each subject's requirements.

Time to complete home learning increases progressively over time and for each year level.

<i>Years</i>	<i>Average time per weekday</i>
7 & 8	70 – 90 minutes
9 & 10	1.5 – 2 hours
11 & 12	2-3 hours

NB. These are the suggested average guidelines for a weekday on tasks without distractions. For VCE students there will be more time required on weekends, during peak VCE assessment and Student Assessed Coursework (SAC) periods.

VCE (See also the Strathcona VCE Administrative Handbook)

Home learning is an integral aspect of academic success in the senior years to consolidate and extend key concepts taught in class. However, there is a difference between home learning and study.

Home learning: the work a teacher sets every student in the class to meet course requirements and to prepare them for assessment.

Study: what a student decides they need to do themselves to improve their understanding and skills. It is the extra work undertaken beyond home learning; the work that keeps skills sharp and hone a students' weaknesses to produce better results in SACs and examinations. Effective study involves having clear and specific goals and should not be measured by time passed but by the goals achieved after each study session.

Study =

- ✓ Understanding: what the student needs to know
- ✓ Skill: what the student needs to be able to do
- ✓ Recall: what the student needs to be able to remember



For Year 11 and 12 students, there is an expectation that they will manage their time for home learning, study and assessment completion.

Failure to submit home learning tasks, assignments or projects

The aim of home learning is, as for other components of the academic program, is for students to learn to take responsibility for its completion. Consequences for not completing home learning tasks are designed to support this organisational aspect by providing a level of intrinsic motivation.

The School recognises that the non-completion of home learning tasks, maybe due to circumstantial, motivational or organisational reasons. Any consequences are designed to enable the student to be assisted to develop as a learner, rather than be punitive. Monitoring is designed to help with student reflection and awareness.

Students who regularly do not complete assigned home learning tasks:

- ✓ will initially discuss any issues with their teacher
- ✓ will have an email sent home

If the situation continues, the teacher will:

- ✓ contact the student's Wellbeing Teacher (Years 7&8) or Senior Mentor (Years 10-12), the Head of Department, as well as the Head of House or Level Coordinator
- ✓ consult with the Learning Enhancement Department (where relevant) to provide more support for the student
- ✓ keep pastoral notes as a record

Late work – Any home learning work that has been set as an assessment task for submission may be subject to a consequence if submitted late. (See Years 7-10 Assessment Policy or the VCE Administrative Student Handbook).

Students or parents are required to contact the subject teacher in circumstances where the student cannot submit the work on the set date or will be absent on the date an assessment is due.

Unless a student is absent, and brings a note, or has obtained an extension, a half grade or *10% per day* is to be deducted for each day that work is late, *up to three days, after which no mark will be awarded*. So, if a piece of work is graded as A+ and it is one day late, the student will receive an A, if two days late, a B+ etc. A weekend is considered as one day. Feedback on the task will still be given to support the student's learning.



If the work is not submitted, a mark cannot be awarded, so Not Assessed (NA) will be recorded which may compromise a student meeting the requirements of the educational and assessment program in a subject. This may also affect the eligibility for academic awards.

Interim and academic report comments and parent conferences routinely include references to home learning where appropriate.

As with any difficulty at school, students exhibiting persistent difficulties with home learning tasks are referred to the Pastoral or House Mentor and then to the relevant Coordinator or Head of House for support and/or discussions with parents.

The Head of Learning Enhancement, VCE Coordinator or Dean of Learning Futures may also be involved to provide additional support and /or discussions around learning pathways.

Parent involvement in home tasks, assignments and projects

Assignments, projects, written responses, posters and the like, are designed as important aspects of student learning experiences. They also allow judgements to be made about student independence, organisation and performance.

Inappropriate parent involvement in student work has a tendency to negate these objectives, thereby depriving a student of important learning opportunities and personal growth.

Generally, parent assistance is appropriate if it involves:

- improving organisational skills
- encouraging motivation and effort
- supporting student self- reflection and metacognition
- proofreading (only after a students' own proofreading) but not detailed correction (ie. circle errors, indicate question marks or write questions etc)

Activities such as writing or typing corrections and formatting, note-taking, written paraphrasing, or changing vocabulary, would always be inappropriate for a parent to be involved in.

Another helpful pointer is if the assistance takes written rather opposed to merely verbal, it is likely to have exceeded an acceptable level.



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GIRLS GRAMMAR

Where possible assignments and projects, or key components of them are designed to be completed in class to authenticate student work through the process, and to observe student self- organisation and management, as well as to reduce counter-productive parental assistance to occur.