

Policy Manual of the Public Schools of Brookline

I 3 b. Homework Guidelines

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(Voted 6/18/73, #73-147; 9/23/80, #80-346; 5/7/87, #87-189, 190; 2/28/89, #89-89)

Homework is any assigned activity done outside of school which relates to any phase of learning. It should be an enrichment, a refinement, and a reinforcement of learning activities. It should be a positive experience. It should not be used to teach something new, to fulfill a time requirement, or to punish.

In accordance with this policy, the staff shall promulgate Homework Guidelines, listed below, which will be made available to staff, parents, and students, through such mechanisms as PTO Handbooks, the BHS Student Handbook, and other appropriate communication channels.

HOMework GUIDELINES

What is Homework?

Homework is any assigned activity done outside of school which relates to any phase of learning. It should be an enrichment, a refinement, and a reinforcement of learning activities. It should be a positive experience. It should not be used to teach something new, to fulfill a time requirement, or to punish.

Purposes of Homework

Homework fulfills many purposes, both academic and non-academic. It should meet the needs of the individual student and the discipline involved. It provides an opportunity for interrelating home and school experiences by:

1. Supplementing and reinforcing skills and work done in class;
2. Enriching the totality of the student's school experience;
3. Improving research skills and student awareness of out of school learning resources (library, museum, townspeople, etc.);
4. Providing opportunities to use knowledge and skills learned in schools in creative ways outside of school;
5. Promoting individual responsibility, initiative and motivation;
6. Teaching the ability to recognize and establish priorities, to budget time accordingly and to organize one's materials.
7. Creating opportunities for independent study;
8. Developing leisure interests in learning that will enhance later experiences in life.

Some examples of possible homework assignments might be: a reinforcement of skills learned in class, and a review of these skills; long-term projects; a sharing of outside experiences; the participation in family experiences (trips, outings, etc.); the viewing of various media (TV, movies, plays, etc.); the use of a variety of resources such as human resources or community resources (museums, aquariums, zoos, symphonies, governmental processes, etc.).

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Participating Roles

Teacher, parent and child should work together to meet common goals and to ensure a successful educational experience. For a homework policy to be successful, all participants must understand each other's roles.

Student

- a. To be sure s/he understands a specific assignment before leaving school;
- b. To plan when she will complete the assignment. S/he should confer with the teacher if other obligations prevent her/him from doing the work;
- c. To know that s/he, alone, is responsible for the completion of assignments.
- d. To confer with parents and/or teachers if assignments are consistently too difficult or lengthy.

Teacher

At the beginning of each year, the classroom teacher will correspond with parents outlining his/her intention regarding homework, and in that correspondence, set up a mechanism to ensure communication with the parents regarding completion of assignments. Additionally, it is the teacher's role:

- a. To encourage the child to pursue classroom-related activities outside of school;
- b. To assign specific homework appropriate to the individual capabilities of each child. The purpose of each assignment must be stated clearly. The teacher must make clear the need for and relevance of an assignment;
- c. To evaluate the results of the homework;
- d. To ascertain why a child does not complete an assignment and, where necessary, to confer with both child and parent to solve problems;
- e. To vary types of assignments so as to hold the child's interests and to meet differing needs;
- f. Where appropriate, to confer with parents about the student's needs and about how parents can help;
- g. To take into consideration the student's out-of-school responsibilities when making assignments.

Parent (or Guardian)

- a. To encourage the child to accept the responsibility for completing home assignments;
- b. To provide a quiet study environment, free from distraction;
- c. To assist the child when the teacher and parent have conferred and agreed that this assistance would be helpful;
- d. To keep aware of the time spent on homework and to confer with the teacher if the amount of time appears to be excessive or too little;
- e. To confer with the teacher if assignments appear consistently to be too difficult or unclear;
- f. To notify the teacher if an unforeseen occurrence prevents the child from completing an assignment.

Supervisor

- a. To understand and interpret this policy;
- b. To confer individually with teachers;
- c. To help teachers to vary their assignments;
- d. To help the faculty to apply the principles enunciated herein.

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Time and Frequency

We accept the belief that school children at all grade levels will profit from some time on home study. Homework should be assigned depending on the grade level and the teacher's judgment of the academic needs, the ability and the interests of the student. This policy rejects the idea of specific time allotments by credit or by subject. This policy is intended to allow the teacher flexibility without limiting or discouraging individual student interest.

Supervision

In the elementary schools, supervision of these policies is the responsibility of the building principals for grades K-6, and the joint responsibility of building principals and coordinators for grades 7 and 8. At the High School, it shall be the responsibility of the Department Chairpersons, or the Directors functioning as Department Chairpersons, to see that these policies are followed. Home study should be assigned from grades K-12. The amount and type of such assignments are the responsibility of the supervisors working with teachers under their direction. If a parent feels that his/her child's home assignments are not in keeping with these policies, s/he should feel free to contact the child's teacher.

Assignments over Vacations, Low Attendance Holidays, and Holy Days of Religious Observance

If a homework assignment requiring a substantial amount of reading or writing is made over a vacation period, adequate time must be provided to the student, either before or after the vacation to complete the assignment. Exceptions to this policy may be made at the discretion of a teacher, as long as the assignment is not extensive, or is an unanticipated result of classroom work immediately prior to a vacation period. Students at Brookline High School who feel that the spirit of this rule has been violated are urged to take their grievances to the Fairness Committee.

No homework shall be assigned on the last day of school before a low attendance holiday that is not immediately preceded or followed by a weekend.

Any student who is unable to complete a homework assignment due to religious observances shall inform the teacher, who will arrange with the student an alternative time for completion of the work, without loss of credit.