

POLICY TITLE: Home Learning Policy

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1. School Context

Opened in 1960, Red Hill caters to a diverse student clientele in the inner south of Canberra, drawing families from our local community as well as diplomatic, government, defence force, university and other backgrounds. As an International Baccalaureate (IB) World School, Red Hill provides an inclusive, international education for students in preschool to year 6.

Red Hill School aims to help prepare children and young people for high school and life, and create partnerships with parents and the community that assist students to be active, compassionate, lifelong learners and internationally minded global citizens.

2. Beliefs that support and underpin our Home Learning Policy

We believe that learning takes place both within and beyond school. A young person's education is a collaborative partnership between student, parent and school. Home learning can assist in this education, extending learning beyond the school day and developing the capacity of young people, personally and academically.

2.1 As an International Baccalaureate (IB) world school we aim to create a positive inquiry-based learning culture that encompasses all aspects of teaching and learning (at school and at home), meets the needs of all learners and is driven by evidence-based practice.

2.2 To prepare students for the increasingly complex life and work environments they will experience in their future, we need to incorporate the fundamental skills of creativity, critical thinking, communication and collaboration. We believe that home learning should be a social and cultural experience, that is interactive and fosters these skills.

2.3 Young children develop other important life skills outside school, through "recreational and artistic activities and social interaction" (Walker and Horsley, cited in Earp, 2014). Home learning should enrich a young child's personal development without hindering the time available "to pursue other activities and interests which may have equal or greater long-term benefit" (Earp, 2014).

2.4 Home learning provides parents with the opportunity to engage in their child's education as partners in the learning process. It also helps parents to understand their child's progress and areas of development and become familiar with curriculum content being covered in the classroom.

2.5 Home learning plays an important role in assisting young people to develop life skills including time management and setting and completing tasks (Horsley and Walker, 2013). It also plays an important transitional role in preparing students for secondary and tertiary education.

2.6 Home learning can also be an avenue to support children with alternative and flexible learning opportunities that better match their individual learning styles such as: auditory, visual, kinaesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, linguistic and logical-mathematical.

2.7 Home learning enhances student outcomes when students practise a skill or process that has been introduced in class to develop fluency; or when new content is introduced prior to a lesson (“flipped teaching”).

2.8 Parents can best engage in home learning by supporting their child's autonomy, providing the child with guidance and assistance.

2.9 Home learning should improve student outcomes. Therefore, the quality of the home learning that is set, and its relevance to the school curriculum, is more important than the quantity.

3. Home Learning Overview

Teachers will collaboratively plan and deliver a well-considered home learning curriculum that focuses on improving students’ academic, social and well-being outcomes for each year level. The amount of assigned home learning will be carefully designed to ensure it is appropriate to students' age levels and does not take too much time away from other valuable home activities.

3.1 Early Childhood Years K-3

The primary purpose of home learning in the early childhood years is to:

- develop students’ life skills and good study habits
- foster a positive attitude towards learning
- communicate that learning takes place at school and at home
- enable parent engagement, and
- reinforce early literacy and numeracy skills that have been introduced in the classroom. (Cooper, 2007)

Daily shared reading is highly recommended for home learning in the early childhood years. It is also recommended that students spend no more than one hour per week on home learning tasks.

3.2 Middle and Upper Primary Years (4-6)

In the middle and upper primary years, the purpose of home learning is to:

- develop students’ life skills and good study habits
- foster a positive attitude towards learning
- communicate that learning takes place at school and at home
- enable parent engagement, and
- reinforce skills and understandings that have been introduced in the classroom to improve student achievement, particularly for mathematics. (Cooper, 2007)

In the upper primary years, the purpose of home learning is also to prepare students for the expectations of high school.

Daily reading for pleasure and/or information is highly recommended for home learning in the middle and upper primary years. It is also recommended that students spend no more than three hours per week on assigned home learning tasks.

Home learning tasks will not be provided for holiday periods or family trips.

3.2 Teachers will design home learning tasks when planning units of inquiry.

3.3 Teachers will set homework that is purposeful, connected to classroom learning (including general well-being) and appropriate for the home environment; for example, conducting an experiment in the kitchen, cooking, doing a crossword puzzle with the family, viewing and discussing a quality television program, practising mindfulness or shared reading. (Kohn, 2006, p. 166)

- 3.4** Home learning tasks will include opportunities for social interaction and collaboration.
- Students may be asked to share and discuss class work with their parents. Parents may then question students to help them clarify what they have learned (Good and Brophy, 2003).
 - Students may interview parents and extended family members to deepen understanding in relation to a unit of inquiry.
 - Students may explore a topic of their own interest.
- 3.5** Home learning tasks will be accompanied by clear learning intentions and success criteria when appropriate.
- 3.6** Home learning tasks will be assigned at appropriate levels of difficulty and challenge for students' ages.
- 3.7** Feedback is an important step in the learning process and can take many forms. Students will receive targeted feedback on home learning tasks which is dependent on the nature of the task. This may include teacher or peer feedback, provided in oral or written form, or online feedback such as provided by adaptive learning programs.
- 3.8** "Flipped learning" will be utilised when appropriate to engage students in home learning and maximise classroom teaching time.
- 3.9** The school will sometimes offer extra-curricular opportunities to enrich students' learning e.g. Tournament of Minds, Australian Maths Trust Challenge, Limelight and ACT Science Fair. Whilst participating in these programs or events it is recommended that families consider their children not completing other home learning tasks.

4. Equity of Learning

Students have individual learning needs and may experience different levels of support and access to technology at home. The school commits to supporting all students to ensure they obtain the same benefit from home learning as their peers.

- 4.1** The school will adapt home learning tasks for students with disabilities and/or learning difficulties when required.
- 4.2** The school will offer opportunities for students who experience economic or other disadvantage to complete tasks at school e.g. establishing junior and senior lunchtime/after school 'home learning clubs.
- 4.3** The school will enable parents and carers to engage in the learning process by:
- providing opportunities to build their understanding of how to support their children
 - providing clear guidelines regarding their role
 - not expecting parents to teach content or "police" task completion
 - making home learning tasks accessible on digital platforms e.g. SeeSaw and Google Classroom, and
 - providing information sessions and workshops on different topics, for example early literacy development, autonomous learning, mathematics.

5. Appendix A

The following resources are recommended to support and encourage your child to read at home.

5.1 Each year all students can participate in the Chief Ministers Reading Challenge, by reading 15 books of their own choice. Information can be found online at

https://www.education.act.gov.au/teaching_and_learning/chief_ministers_reading_challenge.

Tips for participating in the Challenge are also available at

https://www.education.act.gov.au/teaching_and_learning/chief_ministers_reading_challenge/reading-tips.

5.2 [The Story Box](#) – a monthly subscription resource curated by a speech-language pathologist, delivering two quality, age appropriate books and parent guide each month by mail to your home.

[Storylines](#) – a free online resource providing “an opportunity for all Australians to engage in Aboriginal histories and culture, promote conversations that build understanding and respect for Aboriginal people, and enable local communities to share stories from the past and present to inspire the future”.

5.3 Oliver in the Digital Backpack on our [Red Hill School](#) website is accessible to all students using their school login details. Oliver provides free e-books and also permits students to search for and reserve books in our school library.

6. Appendix B

The following resources are recommended to build your child’s mathematical understanding and fluency.

6.1 [Mathletics](#) is an online resource available to all students and funded by the school’s P&C. Login details are available upon request from the Deputy (Student Welfare). ‘Mathletics’ contains targeted, adaptive content aligned to achievement standards. Questions, interactive games and rich open-ended tasks adapt to the student’s learning pace and ability and are accompanied by animated tutorials and audio support. “Mathletics” provides immediate feedback to students, teachers and parents and allows individual progress to be tracked.

6.2 [Khan Academy](#) provides free online mathematics tutorials. These resources can be used for “flip teaching’ to introduce new content or to support student understanding of content that has already been covered in class.

[Khan Academy Kids](#) is a free, downloadable educational app for students aged 2 to six years old.

6.3 [IXL Maths](#) is a subscription based online resource where students of all ages can practise maths skills and build fluency.

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