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HOMEWORK

A major goal of the instructional program is to assist students in becoming committed to the process of learning. Learning is not restricted to the classroom, but is a continuous process. Homework is defined as out-of-class tasks assigned to students as an extension or elaboration of classroom work. There are three types of homework: practice, preparation, and extension. The basic objectives of homework are to reinforce the application of previously taught concepts, principles, and skills; extend student learning; and promote creative thinking and independent research.

Practice assignments reinforce newly acquired skills and previously introduced skills that students may need to review. For example, students who have just learned a new method of solving a mathematical problem should be given sample problems to complete on their own. Preparation assignments help students get ready for activities that will occur in the classroom. Homework assignments may also prepare students for the introduction of new information and may include reading assignments and book reports. Students may, for example, be required to do background research on a topic to be discussed later in class. Extension assignments are frequently long-term continuing projects that parallel classwork. Students must apply previous learning to complete these assignments, which include science fair projects and term papers.

Assigning homework serves various educational needs. It serves as an intellectual discipline, establishes study habits, eases time constraints on the amount of curricular material that can be covered in class, and supplements and reinforces work done in school. In addition, it fosters student initiative, independence, and responsibility and brings home and school closer together.

Homework provides an essential communication link between the school and the home. One measure of a program or course is the quality of the work done at home by the student. A strong home-school partnership may be enhanced by a sound program of homework. In addition, homework should be a tool in developing independent thought, self-direction, and self-discipline. It may assist the student in developing good work habits and in the wise use of time.

Guidelines for homework include:

1. Homework should be assigned after an introduction and thorough explanation of the skills necessary to complete the assignment successfully.

2. Homework should be assigned in such a manner that it will be clearly understood by all students.

3. Homework should serve a valid purpose and be closely related to current classroom activities.

4. A student's access to resource materials should be considered when making homework assignments.

5. Homework should be evaluated promptly and returned to the student. Appropriate recognition should be given to those students who successfully complete assigned work. Effort and competency should be recognized.

6. Teachers should seek to determine the causes if a student regularly fails to do assigned work. Teachers should not avoid giving homework because they believe students will not do the work.

7. Excessive homework and the absence of homework should be avoided.

8. Homework should not be used for disciplinary purposes.

9. Principal and teachers should take appropriate steps to communicate with parents regarding the school's homework policy and solicit their support.

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Legal References: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, § 22.1-78.

Cross Reference: IB Academic Freedom
IGBC Parental Involvement
IKA Parental Assistance with Instruction