



-  Throughout this document the word **parent** includes any **caregiver**.
-  Homework is sometimes abbreviated to HW.

1. Definition

Homework signifies any educational task that a student is expected to engage in outside school hours.

2. Purpose of Homework

2.1 Academic Purpose *(to create additional time for structured learning)*

- homework is an essential part of schooling.
- it allows for practising, extending and consolidating work done in class.
- it develops a range of skills in identifying and using information resources.
- it challenges and extends gifted and talented children.

2.2 Organisational purpose *(to encourage self-discipline and personal organisation)*

- establishes habits of study, concentration and self-discipline which will serve students for the rest of their lives.
- provides training for students in planning and organising time.

2.3 Contact between stakeholders *(bridges the gap between home and school)*

- strengthens home-school links.
- re-affirms the role of parents and caregivers as partners in education.
- provides parents with insights into what is being taught in the classroom and the progress of their children.

3 General Principles

Homework is most beneficial when:

- it reinforces classwork.
- it is challenging and purposeful, but not very demanding so that it does not have an adverse effect on student motivation.
- it is well co-ordinated and teacher expectations are well communicated.
- it is set on a regular basis and establishes a routine of home study.
- the amount is suitable and varied according to age, stage of schooling and capabilities of students.
- it takes into consideration the students' home responsibilities and extra-curricular activities such as sport, artistic or religious lessons, etc.
- it is marked promptly and accurately.

- feedback and follow-up are provided regularly to students.
- it develops and extends the core learning skills of inquiry and independent study.

4 Types of Homework

4.1 The three main types of homework are:

4.1.1 **Practice exercises** – providing students with the opportunities to apply new knowledge, or review, revise and reinforce newly acquired skills including

- consolidation exercises e.g. Maths
- practising for mastery e.g. spelling words
- revising information
- essay writing
- reading for pleasure

4.1.2 **Preparatory Homework** – providing students with the opportunity to gain background information on a unit of study so that they are better prepared for future lessons (background reading, researching topics, collecting items).

4.1.3 **Extension assignments** – encouraging students to pursue knowledge individually and imaginatively (writing a book review, designing a card, etc).

4.2 Whenever possible, HW should recognize the place of **technology** in today's world and the benefits of using tv, computers, internet for organising and accessing information. However, equity issues should be kept in mind, and students who do not have access to such technology should not be disadvantaged.

5 Good Practice throughout all year groups

5.1 Kindergarten 1 & 2

5.1.1 No formal homework is set in Kindergarten. However, all activities at home can assist children to develop a wide range of knowledge and skills including literacy, numeracy and problem solving.

5.1.2 Language and number concepts can be introduced and consolidated in many family activities, including shopping, food preparation, conversation, reading, family outings, etc. Parents should be guided on the various activities that should be engaged in at home to develop pre-reading, writing, math skills.

5.2 Early Primary years (Years 1&2)

5.2.1 At this age, consideration should be given to the setting of formal homework. The focus should be on the important skills of literacy and numeracy, as for example in completing simple computations, copying letters or words, or completing an activity sheet.

- 5.2.2 Regular reading at home, especially with parents, should be a must. Parents should be informed about the importance of paired reading and other exercises, and guided on how this should be carried out.
- 5.2.3 Preferably, in Year 1 giving Maltese and English homework on the same day should be avoided not to confuse languages, but ultimately this should be left at the discretion of the teacher concerned.

5.3 Primary Years 3 – 6

- 5.3.1 Although as students progress they can work more independently, it is important that teachers continue to provide guidance and assistance particularly in the development of study skills.
- 5.3.2 It is important that students have the opportunity to experience different types of homework and that the amount is realistic.
- 5.3.3 Exaggerated repetitions are useless e.g. a repetitive exercise with 25 similar sums!
- 5.3.4 They should be given tasks such as finding out and preparing information as well as traditional writing skills. This helps ease the transition to secondary schools.

5.4 Individual Educational Needs

- 5.4.1 LSAs have the task to adapt any homework for the special needs of individual pupils. They are expected to work hand in hand with the teacher, and according to the Individual Education Programme (IEP) of each particular student.
- 5.4.2 The teacher has the right and the obligation to adapt the homework for particular cases according to the difficulty encountered.
- 5.4.3 In the case of dyslexic students, if the need arises, they should be allowed to hand in their HW typewritten, so that their creative writing skills are encouraged.
- 5.4.4 In the case of pupils with Individual Educational Needs who encounter difficulties in copying, they can be given the opportunity to fill in the HW answers on their worksheets.

6 Homework duration

All students have the right for free time, leisure and physical activities outside school. The amount of homework should take this into consideration. HW should also depend on age and ability.

- 6.1 Though it is impossible to predict the time necessary for all students to complete their HW because of different learning rates and age levels the following may give some guidelines.
- 6.2 In Years 1 & 2 it is recommended that a maximum of 15-30 minutes work a day be allotted for reading, spelling, other literacy work and number work.
- 6.3 Years 3 & 4 should be given a maximum of 30 minutes a day and the work should be similar to that in the previous years plus occasional assignments in other subjects.

- 6.4 For Years 5 & 6, not more than 45 minutes per day on a regular weekly schedule with emphasis on literacy and numeracy, but ranging widely over the curriculum.
- 6.5 The daily minimum reading recommended is between 10 and 30 minutes a day.
- 6.6 This table sums up the average suggested times for HW and reading:

*Timing for HW per day is in accordance with the National HW Policy, March 2018, pg 7, paragraph 4.4

Year	Homework (mins/day)	Reading (minimum mins/day)
1,2	20	10
3,4	30	15-20
5,6	45	20-30

- 6.7 A reasonable amount of HW, varying from written to research work, from study to reading, should be given for holidays, definitely not exceeding the guidelines for school days (see 6.6).

7. Responsibilities of stakeholders

Teachers (and/or LSAs) can help by:

- providing quality HW activities related to classwork.
- setting a suitable amount of relevant HW according to the students' ability.
- ensuring that students are aware of what is expected of them.
- explaining well and giving clear instructions.
- assigning HW in a well-defined way & seeing that it is clearly written down.
- a Homework Diary is useful for this purpose.
- a School HW Diary should be introduced.
- teachers', facilitators' and parents' signatures may be needed.
- giving students sufficient time to complete their HW.
- marking HW promptly and appropriately, maintaining records and providing feedback to students and parents.
- alerting parents of any developing problems and suggesting strategies. This can be done verbally, using the contact notebook, HW diary, telephone calls, during parents' days or other meetings with parents.

Students can help by:

- writing all HW assigned on the homework diary.
- recording the directions for HW and asking questions beforehand if necessary.
- completing HW within the given time frame and in a neat, accurate and meaningful way.
- seeking assistance from teacher and parents when difficulties arise.
- organising their time to ensure that HW is given in within set deadlines.
- doing all corrections necessary.

Parents and caregivers can help by:

- taking an active interest in HW. Checking for HW assignment by referring to the HW diary. Be available if students have questions.
- ensuring that there is time set aside for HW.
- encouraging and supporting students to complete it.
- providing a dedicated place and desk for HW and study.
- encouraging children to read and take an interest in current events.
- assisting teachers to monitor HW by signing if requested and being aware of the amount of hw set.
- supporting, clarifying and motivating....BUT not doing the HW for them!

8. Abiding by these rules

Unless otherwise specified, HW is due the day after it is assigned. This should be the norm in core subjects, whilst in other subjects students should stick to the specified dates as indicated by the individual teacher.

When a student does not give in his HW without any particular serious reason, his parents are to be advised immediately in writing.

If this is repeated in a short period of time (say within a period of one week) both parents and the administration (assistant head in charge of year group) should be informed, and action is to be taken.

HW still needs to be completed and handed in. This should be done at a particular time, at school or at home, at the discretion of the teacher.

When a student is sick, the parent can collect the daily HW assigned, but no homework is to be accepted back.

Homework done while the child is sick can be corrected later, only at the teacher's discretion.