

STA Homework Policy and Procedures (Revised July, 2010)

A. Preamble - Given the growing amount of research on the effectiveness of homework in the learning process and input from various school stakeholders regarding the need for increased clarity and consistency in homework practices at STA, there was a need to revise our policy on homework.

At STA we approach homework from a perspective that recognizes that there needs to be a balance between: 1) Purposely planned homework that has an important place in some disciplines to enhance student learning; and 2) Family time that honours the bonds between school, family and parish. As a community, we recognize that the stronger these bonds, the more effectively our students are able to learn and to develop the unique talents and gifts with which they are blessed.

B. Definition of Homework – is a learning experience assigned by a teacher, for completion outside of class-time that supports and enriches the learning and development of each student.

C. Characteristics of Effective Homework - When homework is assigned, however, it must be directly related to classroom instruction and learning outcomes (P.L.O's) and has the following characteristics:

- Homework is an engaging, meaningful and relevant learning activity that can be independently completed by the student
- Homework is purposefully planned to avoid student overload;
- Homework is clearly articulated by the teacher and understood by students;
- Homework is differentiated, as appropriate, to meet student learning needs;
- Homework is inclusive of meaningful and timely teacher feedback
- Homework is sensitive to scheduled holidays and days of significance.

Homework is not necessarily limited to pencil and paper tasks. It may include other tasks such as practicing, observing, rehearsing, interviewing, researching and studying, for example. STA does not require that homework be assigned daily in all areas. However it would be extremely rare that a student does not have homework for a few days. No extra homework shall be assigned immediately before a holiday that is due immediately following holidays, significant faith days, or lengthier school breaks (December or March Break).

D. Types of Commonly Assigned Homework - The following types of homework may occur:

a) Completion Homework is any work assigned following instruction that is begun in class and completed at home. The intended outcome is to help students to keep up to date with the instructional program.

b) Practice Homework is any work that reviews and reinforces skills and concepts learned in class. The intended outcome is to help students to develop newly acquired skills and consolidate new concepts.

c) Preparation Homework is any work that prepares students for new learning or for upcoming summative assessments/evaluations. The intended outcome requires students to gather information or artifacts in preparation for learning or requires students to prepare for tests, presentations and performances, etc.

d) Extension/Projects/Major Assignments is any work that explores learning in new contexts or integrates/expands on classroom learning. The intended purpose is to encourages students to problem solve, think creatively and think critically.

E. Specific Procedures/Expectations

Grade 8 *Research indicates that homework for students in the intermediate grades can contribute to improved achievement.* Homework shall be purposefully planned to avoid overload. As a guideline, daily homework for all subjects shall be limited to **60 minutes on average**, in total per day. This time may vary for individual students depending on student pace of work.

Grade 9 and 10: *While research indicates that the benefits associated with homework are greatest in the secondary grades, evidence also suggests that homework-related stress is particularly prevalent among this group of students.* Homework shall be purposefully planned to avoid overload. As a guideline, homework

shall be limited to **20 minutes on average** per day per course. This time may vary for individual students depending on student pace of work.

Grade 11 and 12: *While research indicates that the benefits associated with homework are greatest in the secondary grades, evidence also suggests that homework-related stress is particularly prevalent among this group of students.* Homework shall be purposefully planned to avoid overload. As a guideline, homework shall be limited to **30 minutes on average** per day per course. This may vary widely depending on course load and other factors.

F. Roles and Responsibilities

School staff, teachers, students, and family all have mutually supportive roles and responsibilities. Mutual support will have a positive impact on student success in the homework process. Homework is designed to encourage parent/guardian involvement, where appropriate, in supporting their children's learning but does not require additional teaching outside of the classroom. In instances of group work, sufficient time shall be provided within the instructional day(s) for students to meet the required learning outcomes. In some cases, students may require additional time beyond the instructional day to complete their individual portion of the group work.

1. Role of the Student Regarding Homework - Students have a responsibility to take advantage of practice and homework opportunities, since failure to practice may result in a reduced skill levels when outcomes are assessed in the classroom. High school students should take increasing responsibility for completing their homework as they grow and mature. In most cases, school and home intervention should decrease and student ownership and responsibility should increase as students move from Grades 8 to 12.

2. Role of the Teacher Regarding Homework- Teachers have a responsibility to maximize instruction during school hours by using strategies such as differentiated assessment and instruction. When teachers design homework they will make every effort to differentiate assignments, so that homework continues to be engaging and meaningful to the student. Students will be given appropriate time in class to complete group work/projects to eliminate transportation issues for families. Recognizing that many high school students have jobs or are involved in other extracurricular activities teachers will make every effort to design homework to be meaningful and to reflect the students' realities.

3. Role of the Parent(s)/Guardian(s) Regarding Homework - Parents are the primary educators of their children, and as such have important responsibilities regarding the personal and educational growth of their children. It is recognized that homework is one of the options parents have for inclusion in their child's personal and family time. Parents have a role to play by supporting and encouraging their child, especially in the early years. The following tips may help parents/guardians in supporting your child with homework:

- Set aside a specific time after school each day for your child to do homework.
- Supervise and take an interest in your child's education as they practice skills at home
- Be available to help your child without doing the work for him or her.
- Demonstrate interest in your child's learning by talking about his or her school day.
- Limit television and other "technology time", especially if your child is having difficulty completing school work. **Do not let your child go to bed with a cellular telephone or other electronic communication device.**
- Supervise, limit and monitor your child's internet use.
- Parents who have concerns with homework expectations for their child are encouraged to contact their child's teacher.

G. Extended Absences and Homework – Teachers shall not be expected to provide detailed classroom work and homework assignments for students who are away for extended periods of time as a result of family or parent-initiated (unexcused) absences. Students on extended absences would be missing the necessary direct instruction and learning required to complete the classroom work and homework. For absences due to extended illness, parents / guardians may contact the Grade-Level Academic Advisor to discuss available options.