



Stonegate Elementary School Homework Policy 2014-2015

Philosophy

We affirm the Montgomery County Board of Education's belief that homework complements classroom learning and is beneficial and important in a student's overall educational program. Research confirms that the amount of time devoted to learning is related to achievement in a subject. Further, homework provides an opportunity for students to develop personal responsibility and study skills, including good organization, self-reliance, and time management. Finally, homework is an important tool for informing parents about current areas of study and student working levels.

The Purposes of Homework

The purpose of our homework policy is to ensure that each student has the opportunity to practice, reinforce, and/or extend the skills and concepts taught during the instructional day. At Stonegate, we believe the purpose of the homework may be to:

- Provide background for upcoming lessons and units of study (previewing)
- Provide opportunities for concept and skill development (practice)
- Extend and reinforce classroom instruction (application)
- Stimulate and further interests (enrichment)
- Provide opportunities to identify and to use resources, such as the library, the Internet, reference books, and other community resources
- Develop initiative, responsibility, self-direction and organizational skills

Guidelines

Homework assignments will be carefully planned in accordance with the following guiding principles:

- The purpose of the assignment and its relation to what has been learned in the classroom must be clearly understood by the student.
- Homework assignments, procedures for accomplishing, consequences of not doing, and due dates should be clear to the students.
- Homework should grow from classroom tasks, projects and concerns. Types of homework assignments may include practice or reinforcement of skills learned, long-term projects, **unfinished classwork assignments**, and enrichment activities.
- Assignments should be varied, and should require the use of a number of skills.

- Teachers will encourage students to have an assignment notebook in which to fully record daily and long-term assignments (as appropriate).
- When a student is absent for one or two days, make-up work will be assigned to the student upon his/her return to school after the student confers with the teacher to determine his/her needs.
- For three or more days excused absence, maintenance-type materials which provide the student with activities to maintain acquired skills may be provided, **but new work will not be sent home as homework. Work missed during an unexcused absence will be provided when the child returns to school, or at the teacher's discretion. Family vacations are considered unexcused absences.**
- **If a student is unable to complete an assignment due to lack of understanding of the work, the parent is encouraged to write a note to the teacher explaining why the assignment was not completed. The teacher will explain further, after which the student can be expected to complete the assignment.**

Evaluation/Grading, In Accordance with the 2006 Grading and Reporting Policy

- Completed homework assignments will be reviewed and feedback will be provided to students. This feedback may include self-evaluation and/or tracking of progress, peer feedback, or teacher comments.
- Homework will not be a factor in determining academic grades. Homework completion will be used, however, for learning skills feedback. When stated in advance, homework will be used to assess students' learning after they have had ample practice and feedback on identified skills or concepts. In these cases, homework may be used in determining both learning skills and academic grades.

Parents are permitted and encouraged to assist their child with homework. If a child's homework is consistently too difficult or exceeding recommended time allotment, the child's teacher should be notified.

Communication Plan

Teacher's individual plan will be communicated verbally by the teacher to students at the beginning of the school year. The plan will be explained to parents at the Back-to-School PTA meeting in September.

Time Allotments

The MCPS regulation on homework states that homework should be assigned three to five times a week, and that the teacher can best determine the nature and length of homework assignments. We do believe that elementary school children also need time to spend on recreational activities and to explore personal interests. The following is a list of *approximate* daily time allotments (may vary according to the child):

Grades K-1: Up to 20 minutes per night, plus 15 minutes of reading and 5 minutes of basic math fact practice

Grades 2-3: Up to 35 minutes per night, plus 20 minutes of reading and 10 minutes of basic math fact practice

Grade 4-5: Up to 65 minutes per night, plus 20 minutes of reading and 10 minutes of basic math fact practice

- As a rule, no homework is assigned on Fridays or over holidays. The exception is when a student has not completed assigned work during the week, or there in the case of a long-term project.
- **When enough time has been allowed in school for classwork, and that work has not been completed, it may be assigned as homework, thereby exceeding the recommended daily time allotted to homework.**
- **The times are approximate. Individual student's pace may need to be taken into consideration. We request that problems/concerns be communicated to the teacher.**

What Students Can Do

- Be aware of assignments and seek further explanation if needed.
- Write down homework assignments.
- Organize his/her time to work on assignments.
- Turn assignments in on time.
- Turn in assignments reflecting high standards of quality and completeness.

What Parents Can Do

While the student should assume the major responsibility for completing homework assignments, parents are encouraged to take an active interest in the student's homework by:

- Providing a study area that is quiet, comfortable and free from major disturbances.
- Providing a definite time for study or other activities.
- Making available, if possible, such resource materials as reference books, magazines, newspapers and dictionary.
- Assisting students with drill.
- Checking the student's work for neatness and legibility. (Primary children should use pencils for written work.)
- Arranging with the teacher for limited homework assignments when the child's physical condition necessitates it.
- Providing the child with an assignment book in which he/she can fully record daily and long-range assignments.
- Arranging with the school to secure assignments during a period of absence.

A carefully planned program for homework assignments may be a very effective means of increasing the student's learning. A well-planned program of homework activities provides another opportunity for the home and school to work together.