

Bigelow Middle School Homework Policy

PURPOSE OF POLICY

To help ensure teachers, students and families are aligned in understanding the reasons behind and the benefit of homework, the appropriate amount of time students should spend on homework, and the consequences of repeated non-completion of homework.

POLICY

Assigning Homework

Homework can be an effective way to help children learn the material they are responsible for in school. It can also prepare them to be lifelong learners by helping them develop the skills needed to study independently and by nurturing the core value of love of learning. As such, as a general rule teachers are expected to assign homework on a routine basis.

To make the homework effective, teachers are expected to:

- ensure that students understand the purpose of a particular homework assignment (e.g. to practice skills learned in class, independently reflect on a subject) and how it relates to the topic being studied. (See additional examples in Homework Resource Guide for teachers.)
- provide clear instructions about what needs to be done for the assignment to be completed successfully.
- Take into account differentiation as appropriate for students with differing abilities.

Completing Homework

In keeping with the school's core values, students are responsible for:

- Knowing what assignments are due, when they are due, and keeping an accurate assignment notebook.
- Completing assignments on time.
- Submitting homework that is legible and clearly identified.
- Letting the teacher know *before* an assignment is due if they do not understand it or will have difficulty completing it on time.
- Doing their own work.

If homework gets too hard, students should ask for help from a parent, sibling, or classmate/study buddy, but only after they have tried hard on their own.

Amount of Homework

The amount of homework that should be assigned will vary depending on both the nature of the material covered and the student. Different students will take more or less time to complete the same homework assignment. The following are the *maximum total* amounts of time students should generally spend on their homework for all their classes per night:

- Grade 6: No more than 60 minutes.
- Grade 7: No more than 75 minutes.
- Grade 8: No more than 90 minutes.

Independent Reading

Independent reading is critical to our core values and to student growth. In addition to the maximum times listed above for homework, all students should spend at least 20 minutes per night on independent reading.

Teachers are expected to assign homework in keeping with these totals, bearing in mind the homework assignments of other teachers. Coordination among teachers is critical. Long-term projects should be planned with intermediate steps and/or deadlines so that students stay within the above time limits if they complete the steps according to plan.

Students should consider all of their homework assignments for a single day and determine how much time should be spent on each individual subject so that they do not run out of time before they have worked on all homework assignments. Students should not regularly exceed the total amount of time appropriate to their grade level, even if they are unable to fully complete an assignment.

If a student regularly requires significantly more time than allotted to complete an assignment, he or she should stop work and a parent/guardian should write a note to the child's teacher indicating how much time the student spent on that work. As long as the parent communicates with the teacher that an assignment was not completed due to the student exceeding the time limits, the student will not be penalized for lack of completion.

If a student finishes all his or her homework before reaching the recommended amount of homework time, he or she may complete the time with additional independent reading.

If a student routinely cannot finish the majority of his or her homework in the allotted time, students and families should confer with teachers or their counselor regarding homework overload.

Homework on Weekends

Homework may be assigned during regular weekends, according to the maximum total amount for one night above. (E.g. Grade 6 will have no more than 60 minutes of homework for the entire weekend.) Long weekends and vacations are expected to be homework free. Students may use this time to make up missing work or get ahead on larger term projects.

Non-Completion of Homework

Completion of homework is paramount in order for students to achieve academic progress and develop strong habits and a positive mindset.

When a student is missing three or more homework assignments or a major project, parents will be notified by the teacher. If student continues to not turn in homework, the teacher (or a counselor) will notify the parents after every three additional assignments are missing.

Impact of Homework on Class Grade

Assessment of students' learning and academic progress includes variables such as projects, participation, tests, and quizzes. Homework quality and completion is an important component in a student's overall assessment. In calculating a term grade for a student, homework should count no more than 30% of the total.

Special Education

Modifications of this policy may be made for students with individualized education plans.

APPENDIX FOR PARENTS

How can I help my child succeed with homework?

Parents are an integral part of making homework a positive experience for their child. While parents' involvement will depend upon the age and ability of their child, making homework a top priority in the household helps parents show their child its importance.

Parents can also support children by:

- Helping their child schedule a regular time for completing homework assignments. Homework habits are more easily formed if the child works at the same time each day.
- Helping the child create a well-lit, comfortable, and quiet study location, free from distraction from electronic devices, social media, etc.
- Providing the child with necessary supplies, such as sharp pencils, pens, Colored pencils, Markers, Eraser, Scissors, Crayons, Ruler, Stapler, Three hole punch, Highlighters, Glue stick, Transparent tape, Notebook paper, Construction paper, Dictionary/Thesaurus.
- Periodically asking the child about what he/she is studying in school.
- Help the child to formulate a plan for completing homework.
- Encouraging the child to work on his/her own, but also letting him/her know that you are available for help. If the child asks for help, provide guidance, not answers. Be a resource and consultant for your child, but do not hover over him/her with constant advice.
- If your child becomes frustrated, encouraging him or her to put the assignment aside for a while.
- Being available to check work and check whether the assignment is complete.
- Praising the child for completing homework.
- Contacting the school if you notice a problem, and writing a note to the teacher if your child exceeds the recommended amount of time on homework, and has not completed it.
- Providing encouragement and support. Your attitude will influence your child's attitude.
- If too much homework is missing or if homework completion is a recurring issue, parents should contact the teacher or counselor to make an action plan.

It is not helpful for parents to attempt to teach different skills to complete homework than those being taught in the classroom or to complete the homework for the child. Please give your child the independence to do the work themselves and to make mistakes! Making mistakes is a vital part of learning.