

# Homework Policy

The International Academy- Amman

**September, 2010**

# **IAA Homework Policy**

(to be read in conjunction with the IAA Homework Guidelines)

## **Philosophy**

Learning outside of class time is an essential part of good education and leadership skills. Regular homework is important, since it provides students with the opportunity to practice the tasks done during class time at home, which ultimately results in the student's improving both vital educational and life skills. Homework provides continuity for good study habits; fosters independence, responsibility and self direction; and deepens skills and knowledge. It also helps children to become confident and independent in their learning, which will help throughout their time at school, and in adult life.

## **Definition**

Homework is defined as any work planned or approved by the teacher to be completed by the student outside regular class time in order to practice, reinforce or apply newly-acquired skills and knowledge and to learn necessary skills of independent study.

## **Quantity**

Homework will be set according to the guidelines established by the respective Schools with the amount of homework set dependent on grade level of students and the time of year.

## **Responsibilities**

Students, teachers and parents all have a responsibility for ensuring that homework is completed on time and to a required standard. Students are responsible for ensuring quality and timely completion of homework; teachers for setting educationally appropriate and relevant homework; and parents for ensuring their child completes the homework.

'IAA Homework Guidelines' outlines the specific responsibilities of each group.

## **Homework Timetable**

Principals will be responsible for the planning and publication of any homework timetables. Homework timetables will be designed taking into consideration the ages and grades of students.

## **Failure to hand in homework and/or lateness**

Primary and Secondary have guidelines in place for failure to hand in homework and lateness (see 'IAA Homework Guidelines' and 'IAA Assessment Guidelines'). Summative homework not of the required standard will be redone and commented on but the original grade will not change.

Failure to hand in homework due to illness must be accompanied by a medical certificate (see 'IAA Homework Guidelines' for details).

# IAA Homework Guidelines

## **a. Introduction**

IAA has a commitment to an effective homework programme.

The nature and extent of homework will vary with subjects and age groups. Whilst it is difficult to exactly quantify the amount of homework to be expected by a student in a particular grade or the time required to complete the assigned task, it is accepted that some guidelines must be offered to students and parents. It must, however, also be accepted that there will be peaks and troughs in homework due to a variety of factors such as time of session, religious holidays or recognition of other demands on students.

## **b. Definition**

Homework is defined as any work planned or approved by the teacher to be completed by the student outside regular class time in order to practice, reinforce or apply newly-acquired skills and knowledge and to learn necessary skills of independent study.

## **c. Philosophy**

Learning outside of class time is an essential part of good education and leadership skills. Regular homework is important, since it provides students with the opportunity to practice the tasks done during class time at home, which ultimately results in the student's improving both vital educational and life skills. Homework provides continuity for good study habits; fosters independence, responsibility and self direction and deepen skills and knowledge. It also helps children to become confident and independent in their learning, which will help throughout their time at school, and in adult life.

## **d. Purpose of homework**

To:

- Help students make more rapid gains in the learning process.
- Provide an extension or re-enforcement of class work or a preparation for future class work.
- Encourage skills and confidence in working independently.
- Encourage the discipline and responsibility of private study and working to deadlines - the training of students in planning and organising their own time.
- Allow assessment of student's progress and mastery of work.
- Foster interest and enquiry in students.
- Allow parents the opportunity for direct involvement in their child's work for mutual benefit.
- Provide additional time needed to complete an assignment given during the school day.
- Enable teachers to focus on other activities that require their physical presence during class time.

- Establish a framework for future higher educational studies ( for Secondary)

**e. Nature of Homework**

**The four main types of homework are:**

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

- Consolidation exercise e.g. maths, including memorisation of tables
- Practising for mastery e.g. spelling words
- Revising information about a current topic
- Practising words or phrases learnt in languages
- Reading for pleasure
- Essay writing

**Preparatory homework** - providing opportunities for students to gain background information on a unit of study so that they are better prepared for future lessons, including:

- Background reading
- Reading e.g. English text for class discussion
- Researching topics for a class unit of work
- Collecting items e.g. geometric shapes.

**Extension assignments** - encouraging students to pursue knowledge individually and imaginatively, including:

- Writing e.g. a book review
- Making or designing something e.g. an art work
- Investigations e.g. science, social science
- Researching e.g. history, local news
- Information and retrieval skills e.g. using a home computer to find material on the Internet
- Monitoring e.g. advertising in particular newspapers
- Optional assignments (for Secondary)

**Learning through Activity-** many after school activities and games also promote 'learning through fun'. This is especially so for Primary students.

- Appropriate internet games
- Board games
- Crafts
- Puzzles
- Projects

The use of projects and technology is encouraged but teachers must also, however, recognize that not all student's have access to all technological software.

## **f. Quantity**

The amount of homework set will depend on Grade level of students and the time of year. For Secondary, it is expected that during lead up to exams and tests that homework will be revision in nature and focus on practice exercises and that new work will not be mandated. Students will be informed of what is needed to be revised.

Every day during the week, students will be expected to devote some time to homework- either set or not. Depending on Grade level, days where there is no homework set, students will be expected to read either in Arabic and/or English, revise their Maths, review the day's lessons and/or revise for any upcoming lessons.

For Secondary (Grades 6-8), teachers should consult the homework calendar to ensure that students are not overloaded with homework. There should be no more than 3 subjects' homework set on a night. Grade 9-12 do not have a set homework calendar.

## **g. Guideline Responsibilities**

### **i. Student Responsibilities**

All students are to:

- Do their very best on all assignments/tasks
- Seek help from the teacher who assigned the task if difficulty is experienced.
- Complete assignments in a timely fashion as requested by the teacher.
- Complete work as assigned by the teacher when a pre-authorized absence is requested.
- Do their own work at all times ie independent of each other, tutors and/or other help
- Reflect on their learning

In addition, Secondary students are expected to:

- Inform the teacher well before a task is due if they are experiencing any difficulties- this is not given to mean the night before.
- Contact teachers immediately upon return from absences to find out about any make up arrangements (if allowed)
- If sick and unable to complete set homework, to provide the teacher with a note from their parent
- Enter the homework into their planner before leaving the classroom

### **ii. School and Staff Responsibilities**

The assignment of the amount and type of homework should be the professional responsibility of the teacher based upon the needs of the child and the subject matter. No teacher should fail to assign needed homework when, in their judgment, homework is required to accomplish academic goals and objectives. Homework should not be 'busy work'

but an educational need. Teachers are to ensure that homework has been entered into their planners before the student leaves the classroom/lesson.

Based on the above, homework assignments/tasks will be:

- Coordinated between subject area departments so that students do not receive an overload of homework one day and very little the next or conflict with school sponsored afternoon/evening events.
- A meaningful extension of classroom learning and lessons.
- Attainable, ensuring that all students are capable of successful completion of assignments/tasks.
- Marked/graded (if applicable) commented on. In Secondary, all summative homework will receive a grade and a comment indicating attainment according to the criteria and areas for improvement. Formative homework will have comments and/or corrections made. Comments should be constructive and professional.
- Explained to students when being set. This means that homework is not something that is referred to at the end of lesson but is explained fully so that students understand what they must do as well as the required quality needed
- For Secondary, placed on any electronic homework calendar and will include: date set, date due, copy of any relevant criteria and descriptors for grading purposes, outline of task and any accompanying resources, indication if the homework is summative or formative.
- Uploaded to 'Moodle' (Secondary)
- Co ordinate by the Grade Leader (Primary)

For Primary, Reception 1 and 2, homework will be put into the student's Home School Record. For Grades 1-5 into the Student Organiser.

Teachers are available during break and/or lunch if students need additional help with homework. Students need to negotiate with the teacher a suitable time for additional help. Students and parents, especially for Secondary, need to be reminded that students have a responsibility to ask for help and be reasonable in the request for help.

### **iii. Parents and Home Tutor Responsibilities**

Homework is intended to be a learning activity for students; the opportunity to take responsibility for their own learning and to think creatively and reflectively. Parents and home tutors, should refrain from 'teaching' the student or giving the student answers to questions. Rather they should, ask the student to explain and to work through their homework through questioning.

Secondary teachers will upload homework onto the electronic homework calendar daily. Parents should both check their child's diary and the electronic homework calendar before contacting school regarding non setting of homework.

Home tutors, in order to ensure that they do not create confusion in the student or give inaccurate and misleading information as regards content and assignment/task

expectations, should contact the class teacher and make an appointment to discuss the programme, its requirements and expectations. The class teacher is the expert in the school's programme/s and is therefore the best person to discuss course requirements and homework needs. Home Tutors should focus on developing student inquiry skills and not create dependency on them.

#### **h. Timetable**

A Homework Schedule is in place for Reception-Grade 8. Grades 9 -12 do not have allocated homework times and are therefore, required to plan their time accordingly.

For Primary students, homework is allocated on a daily basis, Sunday to Wednesday. Allocated weekend homework should be completed either Thursday after school or over the weekend.

Teachers in Grades 2- 5 will devise a homework timetable specifying when each area of the curriculum will be covered. Reading can include a written comprehension; spelling can include spelling sentences etc. Other homework may include the three Core subjects of Literacy (English), Numeracy (Mathematics) and Arabic/Social Studies plus Religion and an Integrated Studies subject e.g. Science, Humanities (Geography and History).

In general and as a guide, it is expected that students will devote, the following amount of time to homework per night (including weekends).

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Amount of Time</b>	<b>Additional requirements</b>
<b>Reception 1</b>	10 minutes: Reading 8 mins/ Spelling 2 mins	Play
<b>Reception 2</b>	10 minutes: Reading 8 mins/ Spelling 2 mins	Play
<b>Grade 1</b>	15 minutes: Tables 2mins/ Other 13 mins	Play plus reading for 15 mins
<b>Grade 2</b>	20 minutes: Tables 3 mins/Other 17 mins	Play plus reading for 20 mins
<b>Grade 3</b>	20 minutes: Tables 3 mins/Other 17 mins	Play plus reading for 20 mins
<b>Grade 4</b>	30 minutes: Tables 5 Mins/Other 25 mins	Play plus reading for 20 mins
<b>Grade 5</b>	30 minutes: 30 minutes: Tables 5 Mins/Other 25 mins	Play plus reading for 20 mins
<b>Grades 6-7</b>	1.5 hours per night	Reading in either Arabic and/or English
<b>Grades 8-9</b>	2 hours per night	Reading in either Arabic and/or English
<b>Grade 10</b>	as required	Reading in either Arabic and/or English
<b>Grades 11-12</b>	as required	Reading in either Arabic and/or English

Homework timetables, if applicable to the Grade, which outline subject areas for homework are published by the respective schools.

Teachers will give ideas to parents for supplementary homework activities, including educational websites.

## **i. Absences**

Staff and Parents should refer to the 'IAA Assessment Guidelines' for more detailed information on assessments/tasks and absences.

**Authorised Absences- including, but not limited to: sickness accompanied by a registered Doctor's note and/or long term absence due to emergency family circumstances (as determined by Principals of School)**

### **Secondary**

For known authorized upcoming absences, parents should request homework to be set. If an authorized absence is less than five days, students are expected to catch up on the work upon return to school. The exception is for IB DP students who must contact the school if the anticipated absence is more than three days.

Work will only be set if the absence is long term (over one week) and authorized. In such cases, parents must inform the school, in writing, 48 hours in advance. They should indicate the length of anticipated absence, the nature of any illness (if this is the cause of the absence). For some situations, sending work home will not be appropriate. This will need to be discussed with the parent concerned. For long term absences, the Home Room Tutor will organize for the work from the class teachers. In some cases, work may be emailed to either the parent and/or student.

For Secondary students who are absent for short term periods, it is the responsibility of the student to find out about any work missed, including assessments/tasks, tests and assignments. All work missed must be made up (see 'Assessment Guidelines' for further information).

### **Primary**

For Primary students who have an authorized absence, the Class Teacher will collate the work ready for it to be collected upon their return to school. For authorized absences supported by a medical certificate, teacher/s will collate work to be collected for the student and parents will need to collect this work from the class teacher before the student's return to school.

**Unauthorised Absences- including, but not limited to: travel during school term; non calendar holidays during school terms; medical appointments during the school day; medical and/or sickness not accompanied by a registered Doctor's note and absences taken without school permission.**

### **Secondary and Primary**

For unauthorised absences, no work is provided and students are expected to make up any lost homework as best they can.

#### **j. Failure to hand in Homework and/or Lateness**

Students are obliged to catch up and submit missed homework on a due date issued by the teacher. Each school has its own consequences for homework not handed in and not handed in on time.

For Primary, in general, failure to complete homework will not attract any penalties; however, parents are informed.

For Secondary, in general, students who have not completed homework will be required to complete it during a lunch time. A note should be put in the student's diary by the teacher and followed up on if parents do not respond either in writing or by phone.

Failure to complete homework twice will result in the student staying behind afterschool to complete it. In all cases, the Home Room Tutor and parents will be informed. Home Room Tutors will keep track of any disciplinary action for non completion of homework.

For students who have had two or more referrals by teachers, the Grade Leader and Counsellor will be informed. The Grade Leader or Counsellor will inform parents who will be required to attend a meeting to discuss the issue.

In addition students may be required to complete homework during break and/or lunch time with the teacher allowing time for snack and/or lunch.

#### **k. Quality of Work**

Teachers when setting homework will outline the homework requirements in terms of length, quality and presentation. Students who fail to follow the requirements, may be requested to redo the homework assignment; however, the original grade (if applicable) will stand (see also 'IAA Assessment Guidelines')

#### **l. Cancellation or amendment of homework schedules**

No person may cancel/change or amend designated homework schedules other than the Principals.

**Review Date:** May 28<sup>th</sup> 2011.