

TRINITY SCHOOL

Homework Guidelines for Teachers and Parents

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Trinity School's mission is "to create a community of learners in a diverse and distinctly elementary-only environment, in which each child develops the knowledge, skills, and character to achieve his or her unique potential as a responsible, productive, and compassionate member of the School and greater community."

Homework should be used thoughtfully to support this mission.

Statement on Homework

Trinity seeks to provide outstanding daily challenge, creativity, and care for each of its students at all grade levels. We also provide excellent preparation for the future. As a school that focuses on the whole child, we know that children also need time to reflect, to play, to read, to engage in after-school activities, and to enjoy their families.

Intelligent problem solving, sophisticated decision making, productive teamwork, and critical and creative thinking are most inspired by active engagement with teachers and peers during the school day.

Homework at Trinity should be age-appropriate and purposeful, enriching learning without being an undue burden. Learning that occurs during the school day outweighs the quantity of work done at home. Children need precious time with family and friends.

Preparing for the next grade or next school occurs best when children are challenged and engaged in ways that are responsive to their development. Research does not support the notion that homework at the elementary level increases achievement or responsibility; in fact, excessive homework can diminish students' love of learning. Formal learning that occurs during the day is extremely important; so is the informal learning that takes place within the family and through constructive and balanced activities. Teachers always monitor student learning and progress; limiting homework will not decrease student success.

Definition of Homework

Homework is work assigned to be done outside the school day: practice and drill sheets, review of classroom work, reading, math fact practice, preparation for tests or quizzes, individual or collaborative projects, and other assignments not done during the day.

Guidelines

These guidelines on homework are based on Trinity's educational mission, our commitment to both appropriate hard work and the joy of learning, and on the understanding that children have valuable lives outside the school day. We hope that parents will value the School's belief that the best preparation for the future is excellent child-centered education today. Over-scheduling after school would work against that belief.

The following are not to be interpreted as rigid rules, but thoughtful guidelines that provide direction, instruction, and decision making about learning – and that also place "the child at the center."

- Reading – and reflecting on and talking to others about reading – should be the top priority for work done outside the school day.
- Work done at home should enhance learning at a deeper level.
- Homework should have a specific purpose and be given intermittently, when truly needed, at grades Three through Six. Grade Two can give math fact games to be played at home to develop the student’s automaticity in this area.
- Teachers and administrators will help clarify to parents their responsibility when a child’s work is done at home. Parents are encouraged to be parents and not be expected to play the role of teacher. Homework should not lead to tears.
- Homework should not be assigned to be completed over a weekend or school holiday. Long-term projects or test preparation can be done over a weekend, if necessary, and as long as students have had other sufficient time to complete it.
- Worksheets and photocopied pages should be given sparingly.
- If “knowledge, skills, and character” are important, their teaching should occur during the school day. Exceptions include outside tutoring that the School recommends to strengthen a child’s understanding, as well as review of such matters as math facts.
- Organizational skills, time management, and responsibility for one’s work can be learned well during the day. Major assignments made over time that require work at home, made judiciously, can also help teach such skills at the older grade levels.
- Teachers need to coordinate homework, tests, quizzes, and projects at their grade in grades Three through Six. Homework in specials classes should be rare, and if given, always coordinated through the base teachers.

Homework Policy By Grade Level

- Homework is not assigned in the **Early Elementary Division**, with the exception of reading and preparation for such special activities as dressing as book characters, etc. Occasionally, teachers will ask parents to review and reinforce skills learned in the classroom.
- **Second Graders’** homework is limited to reading, playing math fact games, and preparing for special activities to aid in transition to the Upper Elementary Division.
- **Third Graders** may, in addition to reading and preparation for special activities, practice math facts at home and have other limited homework assignments on occasion.
- **Fourth Graders** begin receiving letter grades in language arts and math, and these subjects may include appropriate homework, along with reading and special activities.
- **Fifth Graders** may experience an increase in the amount and type of homework assigned. These assignments should still be reasonable, appropriate, and well coordinated.
- **Sixth Graders** can expect a further increase in the amount and type of homework. Assignments should be coordinated and put in the context of other challenging activities in this grade, including the admissions process.