

MEDEA CREEK MIDDLE SCHOOL - HOMEWORK GUIDELINES

In accordance with Board Policy 6154, Medea Creek Middle School provides homework guidelines to promote consistency in assignments among courses and grade levels. MCMS believes homework is an opportunity to support and enhance learning beyond, or in preparation for, the school day. Homework introduces, reinforces, or extends knowledge and skills learned within the classroom. It is reasonable to expect an increased level of homework through each grade level, 6th through 8th. In general, students may expect on average a total of about an hour to an hour and a half each evening. However, there are many factors that may impact this amount (see Specific Homework Factors below). Homework, like other aspects of school, is not “one size fits all”; it is recognized that while the guidelines are suggested, each individual student may have differing needs, abilities or interests which can impact the time on task for homework.

What is Homework?

Homework is study outside the classroom that engages students in valuable activities, either independently or collaboratively for group assignments, to prepare, practice, extend or apply knowledge and skills identified as the standards of a course.

Types of Homework

The Acronym PREP identifies the four types of homework: Preparatory, Reinforcement, Extension, Practice.

Preparation: Assignments provide opportunities for students to gain background information so that they are better prepared for future lessons. Examples include background reading (like a chapter that will be discussed in class the next day), collecting data (research), or watching a video prior to the next day's lesson. These assignments are short term.

Reinforcement: Assignments provide students with the opportunity to revisit challenging material and gain further understanding of concepts and skills. Examples are studying for a cumulative test or writing a reflective response to a class discussion.

Extension: Assignments encourage application of newly acquired skills or concepts. Examples include book reports, research papers, presentations and class projects. These assignments are often long-term, with teacher guidance and check-in points prior to the assignment due date.

Practice: Assignments provide opportunities to review and rehearse recently learned skills. Examples include math problems, vocabulary words, or practicing a musical instrument. These assignments are usually short-term, in limited amounts, and should not include new concepts. Practice may also be reviewing and studying for exams or quizzes.

Exhibit B – 6154 Homework Policy(b)

Homework Responsibilities

For homework to be effective, responsibility is shared amongst students, teachers, parents and administrators.

Student Responsibilities:

- Accurately record assignments in student planner, calendar, or assignment book.
- Make sure assignment instructions are understood. Seek clarification from the teacher if an instruction is not clear prior to leaving class.
- Students must do their own work for individual assignments. Receiving assistance, from a parent, tutor or classmate, may be acceptable to practice a concept, but just copying or plagiarising is considered cheating. “Practice for Performance”, if a student cheats on the assignment, their performance will be negatively impacted by their learning .
- Use time provided in class to complete classwork/start homework.
- Set a regular routine for completing written homework, reading and studying.
- Limit distractions while doing homework.
- Maintain quality of the assignment as well as the completion.
- Take home all necessary materials and have all resources organized.
- Submit the assignment when the assignment is due.
- Plan and work ahead of schedule when there are multiple assignments or tests.
- Be responsible for getting assignments when absent from school.
- For block classes, begin the homework the DAY it is assigned so questions can be asked/answered the following day.

Parent Responsibilities

- Schedule a consistent homework/study time each day.
- Establish a study area with minimal distractions and the necessary supplies and materials.
- Encourage and guide your child, but do not do the assignment for them.
- Encourage your child to communicate questions or concerns to their teacher.
- Communicate with the teacher directly if there is a continued concern or if a student is needing an excessive amount of time to complete assignments.
- Communicate with the school (teacher, counselor or administrator) if there are domestic stress factors that may impact the quality or completion of homework/studying.
- Check “Q” on a regular basis to monitor student progress.

Teacher Responsibilities

- Provide clear expectations for homework at the beginning of the course.
- Communicate clear expectations to students about nightly assignments.
- Provide a system of notifying students of all assignments and provide time for students to record in their agendas or other means.
- Review homework within a reasonable time.
- Ensure that resources and materials are easily obtainable for homework purposes.

Exhibit B – 6154 Homework Policy(c)

- Be available for parent communication or initiate communication with parents over concerns.
- Provide appropriate time for project completion.
- Be available to students to help with content clarification or homework assistance.
- Update Q regularly to facilitate monitoring of student progress (Board Policy mandates a minimum of grade updates every five-week Progress Grade or Report Card period.)
- Review homework assignments with grade level curricular teams to ensure the effectiveness and appropriate rigor towards the curriculum.

Administrator Responsibilities

- Ensure that homework practices at the school level are consistent with the district educational goals, guidelines and policy.
- Facilitate the communication process between the school and home as it relates to the district guidelines on homework.
- Communicate with parents the importance of homework and its effect on student achievement.

Specific Homework Impact for the Middle School

Block Schedule: In 7th and 8th grade, Math and Science classes meet in a rotational block every other day. This means that sometimes more homework is assigned due to the nature of meeting every other day. Students should do the homework on the day it is assigned and not “put it off” until the night before it is due.

Some courses, such as Algebra I, Geometry and Spanish I are high school level courses and often require a higher amount of homework and studying.

School sponsored activities such as History Day, Mock Trial, MathCounts and other clubs and teams are considered extra-curricular activities and may require work time beyond the homework guidelines.

Students are often given class time to start or complete work with work not completed becoming homework. Students are expected to utilize this time towards completing the work to reduce their homework time.