

Homework Policy and Procedures

Values

The Small School values the development of the whole child. This should include opportunities to develop their creativity, imagination, compassion, self-knowledge, social skills, emotional health and physical skills.

The Small School values the participation of families in children's learning and it's critical role in student engagement.

Purpose

To guide and monitor school work being carried out at home and to promote the involvement of families with school work.

How the purpose is achieved

Teachers at The Small School do not include homework as a standard part of the children's learning program. However, teachers will support children and parents where homework is requested.

At The Small School we aim to develop the whole child. This requires the development of thinking skills, problem-solving strategies, skills for collaboration and co-operation and communication skills.

Learning opportunities for children should be rich in variety so children can explore many interests. This does not preclude children being supported to follow a particular talent or passion but it is important for all children to develop social, emotional and physical capacities in addition to intellectual ones.

The Small School embraces family-centred learning as one of its key guiding principles. As such, we value the learning that is occurring for children incidentally as part of their family life and recognise the importance of families as children's first teachers. Many of our school project tasks are intentionally designed to provide opportunities for families to have genuine engagement with their children's learning at school. We wish to encourage conversations about ideas to occur beyond the classroom.

It is essential for children to have the time to be involved in family and community life as well as activities which result in learning experiences outside of school. The time children spend playing with friends contributes to their social development. Training with a local sports team develops co-

ordination, co-operation, communication and social skills, as well as math concepts. Practising a musical instrument not only develops musical skills, but also patience and recognition for the need to persevere and practice to develop a talent.

Day to day tasks, such as washing up and hanging out the washing, all contribute enormously to the development of responsibility, independence and self-confidence.

Through providing children opportunities to learn through real-life experiences they approach tasks in the same way we all do everyday – through talking to others, thinking it through and sharing responsibilities.

Reading is always encouraged as a family activity at bedtime or anytime outside of school, particularly for young children when it can be shared and is experienced by children in relationship with a loved one, developing not only vocabulary but an experience of reading as enjoyable and rich in connection.

In consultation with parents, homework may be used as a means to assist a student in catching up if they have been unwell or unable to attend school for an extended amount of time.

Where a child requests to do homework, this will be welcomed where it is clear that they are responding to an inherent motivation to explore an interest. Teachers will discuss a child's intentions with his or her homework and ask the child to report back to them about what they have worked on at home. Teachers will also discuss the child's intentions with parents informally at drop-off or pick-up time.

In the event that a student is regularly doing large amounts of homework teachers may decide to meet with parents to discuss the child's interests and provide extra support either for extension for the child's learning or to explore the possibility of diversifying the child's interests to ensure they have the opportunity to explore a range of activities. This may include physical or social activities or simply being with family or helping around the home.

Children will often have term projects they can choose to work on at home. This is determined by the children and is structured to build a strong connection between home and school, by closely reflecting the practices at The Small School. This allows parents and siblings to better understand what happens each day and provides children with the opportunity to take skills developed within one setting into another. Such projects are also designed to allow children to incorporate their interests and learning style.

Where homework is used to provide extra practice in a particular area, for example handwriting, teachers will meet with parents to discuss the child's need and to ensure the parent and the teacher are using a consistent approach and that the parent/carer has time to commit to the activity. Rather than a stand-alone activity, teachers will discuss with parents ways they can integrate handwriting for their child in their daily life by asking their child to help write a shopping list or birthday card or write in the sand. Ultimately in this circumstance, the overriding consideration will be that the parent and child feel supported in carrying out the activity at home.