

Amazing Grace Christian School Homework Policy Update 2010-2011

Important homework policies:

- Students that do not complete homework on time will encounter a variety of teacher-chosen consequences including such things as staying after school, missing computer or free time during the school day, missing fieldtrips or other “thank you” activities. Other arrangements may also need to be made with families to work toward this goal. Again, our belief system is to establish strong, positive work habits early on rather than try to undo poor habits at an older age.
- An assignment is late if it is not complete by the **beginning** of the school day.
- Late, temporarily missing, or temporarily incomplete work in grades 2-8 will be marked down 10% (one time) from the grade the child would otherwise receive.
- Work not completed within one week of its due date will not receive credit but must still be completed (but our hope is this never happens).
- Children who are absent because of excused illness will receive the same number of days to complete their missed work as the number of days they were absent (i.e. a student that was absent three days will have three days to catch up before the work would be considered late).
- Students that go on vacation or are absent for reasons other than illness during the school year will receive the work they missed when they return from the vacation or absence rather than in advance.

Homework

Homework should be an opportunity to carry learning from the classroom into the home. Homework should be grade-level appropriate and of reasonable length, generally no more than 30 minutes to 1 hour per evening. You should have a high level of confidence that the students can successfully complete the assignment independently. Students should clearly understand how to complete an assignment before it is assigned as homework.

All students should record homework according to individual teacher policies. Methods for recording homework may include paper and pencil, or electronically including homework management on Eduss, RenWeb, Discovery Education, and/or email. Teachers need to monitor the recording of the assignments.

Hold all students from preschool through 8th grade accountable for completing and turning homework in on time.

Each grade level should discuss the amount of homework required. If students might be receiving homework from more than one teacher, make sure the homework load has been coordinated so students are not accidentally overloaded. Grades 5 & 6 should set expectations that are similar. Grade 4 should build toward the upper-grade expectations over the course of the year. There shall be a consistent standard within each team.

Long range projects or unusual assignments need to be broken into bite-sized chunks. Interim due dates ensure a higher rate of success with larger projects. Provide parents with clear, written information outlining the *what* and the *when* for such projects.

Philosophy

We believe homework is a positive and necessary part of a student’s education. Homework reinforces classroom learning. It enriches the educational experience by helping children learn they must invest themselves in their education. Homework promotes sound, independent work habits and develops responsibility. Homework provides parents with a window to the classroom, helping tie the school to home.

We believe good work habits are most easily developed when a child is young. Developing sound work habits through homework is a key investment families make in the education of their children.

Guidelines for time devoted to homework

Children vary widely in their work speed, attentiveness, and use of classroom time. One student might be able to complete all of his or her assignments at school, while another child may need to spend considerably more

time working at home to stay caught up. If you have a concern about the amount of time that your child is spending on homework, work with your child's teacher to identify the reason and find a solution.

Our goal is to provide gradually increasing amounts of homework as a child progresses from kindergarten through sixth grade. For example, a first-grade student might have only five to ten minutes of homework a night. However, a sixth-grade student might need to invest sixty minutes in an evening to complete his or her work. Please be aware that these time guidelines cannot be more specific because of the significant differences between children.

We expect *all* teachers to assign homework on a regular basis Monday through Thursday. We will generally try to avoid assigning work to be completed over the weekend, but some special projects may be assigned during the year that will occupy weekend time.

Reading practice does improve reading skill and so we encourage families to read together every evening. Our PTA sponsors a wonderful reading incentive program we hope you will make part of your family learning time.

Family role

The family plays the key role in setting positive expectations and attitudes toward homework. Parents *are* the role models their children will imitate. We ask all parents to *look* at their child's assignment sheet *and* assignments *every* day. It will help keep you in touch with what your child is doing and send an important message.

Families should put into place a homework routine that matches the needs of their household. Some factors to consider are location, lighting, noise, and distractions. (Keeping the telephone and television off limits during homework time is very important.) It is helpful to adhere to a regularly scheduled time and place (worked out with the child).

Homework is the child's job, not the parent's. Parents need to become great *questioners* rather than *doers* when it comes time for homework. If the parents do the homework, the child gains nothing.

Occasionally, we will design special projects that require family participation. However, we will try to be very clear and tell you when it is OK for the parent(s) to actively help the child complete the work. Otherwise, help your child to learn through questioning and supervision.

If the need arises, consult with your child's teacher about your special situation. It is important to follow-up on the plans that you and the teacher make together.

Above all, make learning a priority. There is great power in *consistent actions* and *consistent expectations*.

Teacher's role

Teachers will:

- Assign homework Monday through Thursday, generally trying to avoid weekend work
- Require children in grades Preschool-primary grades to take homework to and from school in folders designated for homework
- Write the assignments on the board or elsewhere in the classroom so the children can always see what they are expected to do
- Evaluate and track all homework so the children know that the homework is important
- Keep parents informed when children are not keeping up with their homework so that we can all work together to keep them on track
- Space large projects out over the year and break them into smaller steps to maximize the opportunity for success
- Expect all assignments to be completed