

## ISLAMIC EDUCATIONAL CENTRE

### POLICY ON HOMEWORK

#### 1. PREAMBLE

The homework policy is founded on the basic tenets of the Vision 2020 of the Islamic Educational Centre and submits to relevant legislation as prescribed in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 108 of 1996, the National Education Policy Act, 27 of 1996 and the South African Schools Act, 84 of 1996.

#### 2. OBJECTIVES

The primary objective of the homework policy is to:

- Ensure that parents and guardians understand what their child/ward is expected to do as part of their homework task or assignment;
- Ensure consistency of approach in the implementation of the homework policy throughout the school;
- To use homework as a mechanism to help to raise standards of academic attainment and achievement;
- Improve the quality of the teaching and learning experience offered to learners and to extend it beyond the classroom environment;
- Provide opportunities for parents, children and the school to work together in partnership in relation to children's learning;
- Encourage learners and their parents to share and enjoy learning experiences as outlined by the Department of Basic Education;
- Reinforce work covered in class by providing further learning opportunities for the individual learner;
- To practise or consolidate basic skills and knowledge in all learning areas;
- Encourage learners to develop the responsibility, confidence and self-discipline needed to study independently;
- Provide training for learners in planning, organising time and developing a range of skills in identifying and using information sources as well as establishing habits of study, concentration and self-discipline.

#### 3. BENEFITS OF HOMEWORK

Homework is most beneficial when:

- it reinforces and extends classwork and consolidates basic skills and knowledge;
- it is challenging and purposeful, but not so demanding that it has adverse effects on the learner's motivation;
- learners take responsibility for their homework and supported by their parents;
- it is well co-ordinated and educator expectations are well communicated;
- it is set on a regular basis and establishes a routine of home study;
- educators set suitable quantities of homework which are varied and at an appropriate level considering the age, stage of schooling and capabilities of learners;
- it takes into account learners' home responsibilities and extracurricular activities such as recreation time, sport and family time;
- it is marked promptly and accurately;
- feedback and follow-up are provided regularly to learners; and,
- it develops and extends the core learning skills of inquiry and independent study.

#### 4. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Three types of homework can be identified:

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

1. consolidation exercise e.g. Mathematics, including memorisation of number tables;
2. practising for mastery e.g. spelling words and vocabulary enrichment;
3. revising information about a current topic;
4. practising words or phrases learnt in language lessons;
5. reading for pleasure; and
6. essay writing.

4.2 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:

1. background reading of relevant topics in all learning areas;
2. reading e.g. English text for class discussion or group analysis;
3. researching topics for a class unit of work; and
4. collecting resources for learning in the classroom or learning laboratories.

4.3 Extension assignments - encouraging students to pursue knowledge individually or as a member of a group, in research and analysis including:

1. writing e.g. a book review in English, Afrikaans or Arabic;
2. making or designing something e.g. in technology or arts and culture;
3. investigations e.g. in natural science, social science or life orientation;
4. researching e.g. in history;
5. information and retrieval skills e.g. using a reference book, encyclopaedia, home computer to find material on the Internet, and
6. monitoring e.g. advertising in particular newspapers.

## 5. EXPECTATIONS

There are three components or role-players in the homework cycle:

### **Learners can help by:**

- being aware of the importance of homework;
- keeping the school homework diary up-to-date;
- being aware of the school's homework policy;
- completing homework within the given time frame;
- alerting parents to homework expectations;
- seeking assistance from educators and parents when difficulties arise showing their homework to their parents or guardians;
- ensuring homework is of a high standard, and
- organising their time to ensure that sufficient time is devoted to quality homework.
- Parents and guardians can help by:
- taking an active interest in homework and asking to be shown the required tasks;
- ensuring that learners record their homework in their school diaries;
- ensuring that there is time set aside for homework;
- encouraging and supporting their child/ward to complete homework tasks;
- encouraging their child/ward to read and take an interest in current event;
- assisting educators to monitor homework by signing completed work if requested and being aware of the amount of homework set;
- communicating with educators any concerns about homework and their child's approach to the homework set; and
- alerting the school to any domestic or extracurricular activities which may need to be taken into consideration regarding the allocation of homework.

### **Teachers can help by:**

- explaining to learners and their parents or guardians the purpose and benefits of homework;
- ensuring learners and parents or guardians are aware of the school's homework policy;

- providing quality homework activities related to work done in class;
- setting a suitable amount of relevant homework which is appropriate to the ability of each learner;
- ensuring that learners are aware of what is expected of them, and how their work will be assessed
- giving learners sufficient time to complete their homework, taking into account, as far as possible, competing home obligations and extracurricular activities and homework set by other educators;
- checking and assessing homework promptly and appropriately, maintaining homework records and providing feedback to learners and parents or guardians; Setting homework tasks which are not dependent on inaccessible resources;
- Explaining to learners in advance all that is involved in projects or homework tasks;
- Giving clear due dates;
- alerting parents or guardians of any developing problems concerning their children's homework and suggesting strategies that they can use to assist their children with their homework; and
- Including interactive homework tasks involving all family members.

## **6. ALLOCATION OF PROJECTS**

1. Projects/assignments are defined as homework tasks that involve multiple skills/instructions and are assigned over an extended period of several days or weeks;
2. Instructions must be given in writing and the assessment rubric must be supplied at the outset;
3. In the case of major projects, manageable intermediate goals can be suggested/required for learners, for example:

- Week 1 - Discussion of brief
- Week 2 - Planning
- Week 3 - Accumulate resources
- Week 4 - Research
- Week 5 - Draft
- Week 6 - Final submission

Intermediate goals can be incorporated into the assessment rubric and monitored and acknowledged over the full length of time.

## **7. RECOMMENDED TIME ALLOCATIONS**

Homework should never be too onerous nor should it ever create stress within the learner's family. If parents have any concerns, they should not hesitate to contact the school. Normally, more than one day will be allowed for the completion of a homework task, except where daily practice is to be encouraged e.g. reading, spelling/vocabulary extension and number tables.

The following recommendations should be agreed as appropriate time allocations for homework activities (two learning areas per day) from Monday to Thursday:

- Foundation Phase – 20 minutes per day
- Intermediate Phase – 30 minutes per day
- Senior Phase – 60 minutes per day

## **8. THE DAYS THAT HOMEWORK IS NOT GIVEN**

1. Educators to provide a list of activities that a parent can do when there are no formal tasks. This includes having their children reading books, newspapers or magazines aloud to the whole family, playing educational games, indulging in number games

and tables, discussing special projects or even writing letters to family members/relatives or even friends.

2. Helping children by starting their own library centres at home. Educators can assist by providing appropriate level reading lists to parents and encourage them to buy books for their charges.

3. Parents can take their children to new and exciting places and educators can provide a list of museums, historical sites, and nature habitats with focused guidelines that would enhance learning.

4. Parents can establish reading-buddy-buddy programme and encourage grandparents and other relatives to join in reading for pleasure.

## **9. CONCLUSION**

The school acknowledges the importance of the family and respects the need for the parents to spend time with their children outside of homework or school activities. Teachers should exercise appropriate wisdom in the amount of homework assigned as well as the spread of the homework load over specified periods of time to prevent excessive requirements on some days followed by other days when homework assignments require negligible time to complete. In addition, homework is essential for consolidation and practice of the learning outcomes taught in the class.

The school will implement age-appropriate increments in homework requirements from one grade to the next with the dual aim of equipping learners with a sound work ethic, and preparing learners for their Grade 12 schooling year with a sense of confidence.

Parents should be encouraged to monitor and facilitate completion of homework by their children but should equally be encouraged to refrain from completing their children's homework themselves or providing assistance in tasks which children are expected to action on their own.

Lastly, homework provides opportunities for learners to learn study skills, time management, independence, confidence and most importantly, self-discipline.