

**Deer Park Elementary  
Homework Policy and Guidelines  
August 2008**

**Why do we assign homework?**

- In **kindergarten**, it is to involve parents in skills being taught in school.
- In the **primary grades**, it is to develop good habits, solicit an appropriate level of parent involvement, and reinforce the learning of skills introduced in class.
- In the **upper grades**, it is used to provide practice to foster improved student achievement.

**What kind of feedback should I expect my child to receive for their homework assignments?**

Your child's teacher will share the grade level's policy regarding how feedback will be given for homework assignments. Homework is included in your child's effort grades for particular subjects, as well as in their citizenship marks. Select assignments and special projects may be included in your child's achievement grades as well. Your child will be told if an assignment will count for part of their achievement grade.

**How much time should I expect my child to spend on their homework assignments?**

We follow the guidelines provided by Fairfax County Public Schools when assigning homework. Per these guidelines:

- **Kindergarten:** Will have no more than 30 minutes per week, once a week. Additional time should also be provided to read with or by your child. Parent support is expected at this level.
- **First and Second Grade:** No more than 30 minutes per day, three or four times per week. This time should include any time needed to work on special projects. Additional time should also be provided to read with or by your child. Some parent support is expected at this level.
- **Third through Fifth Grade:** No more than one hour daily. This should include most of the time needed for special projects. Additional time should also be provided to read with or by your child. Minimal parent support is expected, except for some projects, as per teacher directions.
- **Sixth Grade:** As part of the middle school model, sixth grade students will spend approximately an hour a night

on homework. This should require little to no parental support. Sixth graders will have reading and math practice daily with science, social studies and special projects as needed.

**What will happen if my child is missing a homework assignment?**

In **grades K-5**, your child's teacher will inform you at the beginning of the year what method will be used to alert you. Notification may include a pink slip attached to the assignment or a note in or a slip attached to the agenda/assignment notebook/home folder depending what your child's grade level uses. Please sign the pink slip or agenda and return with the assignment by the next day.

**Sixth grade** students work with four different teachers during the school day. Missing assignments will be documented on the students' point cards by the appropriate teacher. Late work will be accepted, by the following Monday.

If your child is missing homework assignments on a regular or frequent basis (once a week or more) you will be notified by the child's teacher through a phone call or email. Your child will have the opportunity to make up these assignments within a reasonable amount of time. Your child may also be asked to work on the assignments during his or her recess time, using no more than half the recess time allotted on a particular day. Your child's teacher will also conference with your child to determine why a pattern of missing assignments is forming and how to correct the problem. The teacher may also consult with the guidance counselor to follow up with your child on organization and study skills.

**What happens if my child is struggling with an assignment or is spending more than the expected time on homework?**

We have provided you with a couple of copies of a "Homework Hiccups Ticket". This form can also be found on our website: <http://www.fcps.edu/DeerParkES/> under "Resources". Please complete this form and attach to your child's homework assignment or assignment notebook/agenda. If you continue to have concerns about homework, request a conference with your child's teacher to discuss your concerns. We want homework to be a positive experience that helps your child grow academically and establish good habits. Working together we can make sure it is meaningful and purposeful for your child.

### **What do I do if the homework is consistently too easy for my child?**

The homework assigned in most cases, should be reviewed and shouldn't be too difficult for your child to complete independently. If you feel that the assignments are too difficult or if your child is ready for more of a challenge, please contact your child's teacher. Many times there are simple adjustments that can be made to make these assignments more purposeful for your child.

### **Resources for Parents**

Please refer to the attached guidelines. Our guidance counselors also have additional resources to support you based on your individual family needs. You may call the school office 703-802-5000 to request to speak to one of them. There is also a parent resource library in the front office that has a number of print resources on a variety of topics that you are welcome to check out.

### **How was this policy developed?**

A group of teachers, parents, and administrators from Deer Park formed a task force to examine current homework practices, current research, the FCPS regulation regarding homework (Reg. 3205), and feedback from teachers. As the group completed different pieces of the policy, it was reviewed by the teachers collectively. Prior to final approval and publication, it was voted upon favorably by the majority of the staff and was also shared for feedback at a PTA meeting.

***This policy will be reviewed annually at a Faculty Advisory Council Meeting. Any changes will be shared with an opportunity for feedback at a PTA Meeting.***