

Homework Policy

Philosophy

Our charter issues the following charge: “Renaissance Academy will be a center of academic excellence in World Language and classical education.” Subsequently, the charter indicates “that we will implement proven, research-based programs to ensure that each child leaves with a demonstrated capacity to excel in his/her academic and personal pursuits.” Accordingly, the document acknowledges students’ individuality and the inherent need for differentiation to accommodate those differences. Therefore, according to our charter, any policy on homework would require a research-based foundation and the flexibility for differentiation based on a number of factors including, but not limited to, student ability and preferred learning style.

Research on effective homework practices indicates:

1. No positive correlation can be established between the completion of homework and a student’s grades or academic performance in elementary grades (K-5).
2. The correlation in middle school (grades 6-9) is tenuous.
3. Students who struggle with homework at a young age lose confidence in their academic ability and develop a tendency to avoid learning opportunities.
4. Students who read (or are read to) regularly are more successful in school than those who don’t.
5. Child-directed playtime is linked to increased cognitive skills, physical health, self-regulation, language abilities and social skills.
6. Family time improves interpersonal skills, supports higher expectations and fosters a greater commitment to learning.
7. Healthy sleep habits improve academic performance with improved executive functioning.
8. When homework is assigned, it should follow a guideline of 10-min per grade level per day.

In addition to these research-based findings, Renaissance Academy values family choice and flexibility as we partner with parents on the education of their children. The following standards and expectations have been developed consistent with the available research on homework and the aforementioned school values.

Standards

Kindergarten

- Students are required to read with a parent 20 minutes per day. Children may read aloud or be read to by an adult.

Grades 1-3

- Students are required to read with a parent 20 minutes per day. Children may read aloud or be read to by an adult.
- Unfinished classwork may be sent home to be completed.
- Teachers will make optional study materials available to parents for student practice and/or enrichment.
- Parents may request additional homework from the teacher for their student as necessary.

Grades 4-5

- Students are required to read 20 minutes per day.
- Unfinished classwork may be sent home to be completed as homework.
- Teachers may coordinate with parents to assign optional homework in spelling, math, language arts and/or science to address a specific concept/skill deficiencies.
- Teachers will make optional home study materials available to parents for student enrichment.
- Total daily homework time should not exceed 40 minutes in 4th grade or 50 minutes in 5th grade (including reading time).
- Time should be allocated to assigned homework tasks in the following order: reading, unfinished classwork, optional assignments.

Grade 6

- Students are required to read 20 minutes per day.
- Math assignments not finished during class are to be completed as homework.
- Writing assignments not completed in class are to be completed as homework.
- Teachers will make optional home study materials available to parents for student enrichment.
- Total daily homework time should not exceed 60 minutes (including reading).

Middle School

- Students are required to read 20 minutes per day.
- Homework will not exceed the following daily time guidelines (excluding reading time)
 - 7th grade-70 minutes (excluding reading)
 - 8th grade-80 minutes (excluding reading)
 - 9th grade-90 minutes (excluding reading)
- Middle school faculty will be responsible for coordinating assignments to ensure daily assignments can be completed within policy guidelines.
- Homework will only be assigned for Math, Language Arts, Science and Social Studies.
- Assignments required to be completed outside of class time must:
 - Be specifically designed to facilitate mastery of a core standard
 - Be comprised of tasks that students can complete independently
 - Must be graded in accordance with the school's Grading Policy

***Please note** - From time to time the teacher or school may send home special enrichment projects to be completed at home as a family. These projects are highly encouraged, but optional; students will not be penalized if they do not complete them.

Chinese Immersion Program

In addition to reading (20 minutes per day) and other English homework assignments (4th-6th grade only), students in Chinese Immersion are required to complete some Chinese homework daily. These activities will aim to develop both students language and academic skills and will include activities such as vocabulary words and math practice. Chinese homework will not exceed the following daily time guidelines:

- 1st & 2nd grade- 10 minutes
- 3rd & 4th grade- 15 minutes
- 5th-9th grade- 20 minutes

Expectations

Teachers

- Will monitor student mastery of core content standards and coordinate optional homework assignments with individual families as necessary.
- Will make enrichment resources available to parents to extend learning beyond the classroom.
- Will provide parents with guidance on appropriate reading materials for their student.
- Will understand that parents may stop their students from completing all assigned homework tasks if the time taken by the student exceeds the recommended homework duration in that grade level.

Parents

- Take advantage of the reduced homework expectations to facilitate the following activities that have proven cognitive and academic benefits.
 - Playtime
 - Structured activities: extracurricular interests (sports, music, dance etc.)
 - Unstructured activities: child directed playtime
 - Downtime
 - Unstructured relaxation time (reading, taking a walk, listening to music etc.)
 - Family time: spend time together
 - Eat meals as a family
 - Taking a hike
 - Reinforcing family traditions
 - Movie/Game Night
 - Rooting on your favorite teams
 - Sleep: ensure that your student gets adequate sleep
 - For information on recommended sleep and bedtimes for preschool, elementary and middle school age students please see the following recommended sleep

times from The National Sleep Foundation.

<https://sleepfoundation.org/excessivesleepiness/content/how-much-sleep-do-babies-and-kids-need>

- Recommended sleep time
 - Preschoolers (3-5 yrs) - 10-13 hours per night
 - School age (6-13 yrs) - 9-11 hours per night
 - Teenagers (14-17 yrs) - 8-10 hours per night

Students

- Come to school rested and having eaten breakfast.
- Come to school prepared with the materials and mindset necessary to maximize learning time.
- Utilize after-school time in meaningful activities such as:
 - pursuing individual interests/talents
 - fostering your individual creativity
 - building healthy relationships with family and friends
 - exploring new ideas, places or things