

THAT HOMEWORK QUESTION

Is homework justified? This question has been debated for over 100 years in Western education circles. It has recently been the subject of a Victorian government inquiry, a book by two Australian education researchers, and numerous education blogs and forums online. There are arguments on both sides, as there have been for generations.



When something is discussed so widely, and yet without agreement by the experts, Rehoboth's position is to listen to the debate and then **ensure that our practice includes and supports all the best reasons for using homework** as an educational tool, and **avoids the pitfalls** identified by the critics.

Some of the **issues recently identified surrounding the homework debate** include

- Feedback on homework is a crucial step in the learning process and without timely feedback some of the learning benefits of homework may be reduced;
- Measuring homework by the time spent doing it is an imprecise and inadequate measure that does not take into account the quality of the work or the ability of the student or, increasingly importantly, student access to technology;
- Homework can have the effect of helping a parent to understand the progress the child is making or otherwise and can therefore help make parent-teacher interviews more meaningful;
- Successful schools see education as a collaborative process between the student, parent and the school, and consider parents to be 'partners' in their children's education;
- Homework's value is largely as a tool to develop the capacity of students, even when it has no mark or grade attached;
- Homework may need to be adapted for children with learning disabilities to ensure they obtain the same benefit from homework as their peers.



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In the secondary years at Rehoboth Christian College **our policy incorporates these principles:**

- Our fundamental reason for homework is to extend learning time and prompt students to practice skills. This principle is based on the same foundation as the use of practice regimes in other fields such as sports or music.
- There will be an expectation that children will attempt all homework tasks.
- Parents will be free to communicate with their child’s teacher about genuine difficulties the child is experiencing with homework.
- There will be a published time limit for students in each Year cohort, coupled with recognition that a span of time in itself is not a good measure of the effective benefits of homework.
- It is recognized that homework expectations may need to be varied for students with specific learning needs.
- No homework tasks will be scheduled to be done in holiday breaks which are due when students return. (This is different from revision or study which may be needed in Years 11 & 12).



As a guide, and recognizing that time spent will vary among students and at different times of the school year, students at Rehoboth should expect to spend the **following minimum amounts of time on homework**, including study and associated reading, **five times each week** of the school term:

Year	Amount of Time	Year	Amount of Time
7	1 hour	10	2 to 2½ hours
8	1 hour	11 & 12	3+ hours
9	1½ to 2 hours		

The issue of homework is **regularly reviewed in the light of maintaining a best-practice environment** to promote effective student learning. We believe that this approach will give our students the **most effective educational outcomes**. We accept that children’s individual needs do vary, but it is important that parents understand Rehoboth’s emphasis on effective learning strategies when they consider all the factors in choosing the right school for their child.