



PALISADES

CHARTER HIGH SCHOOL

PCHS Homework Policy

Purpose of Homework

The purpose of homework and its weight toward a student's academic grade in a standards-based system is to be used as a formative tool for practice toward mastery. Homework is not punitive or a compliance driven tool. (Vatterott, 2009). Due to the various degrees of academic support for students at home, homework should not penalize nor inflate student's grades. Homework shall not constitute more than ___% of a student's overall academic grade (O' Connor, 2009). OR The percentage of homework that counts toward the overall grade is to be determined by the PLC.

The purpose of homework is fourfold:

1. It is meant to be an opportunity for independent practice, to reinforce learning and to help students master specific skills.
2. It can be used to be a preparation by introducing material to be presented in future lessons.
3. It is an opportunity for students to extend their current skills into new situations.
4. It is a means by which students may integrate many different skills to a larger task, such as book reports, projects, or other creative avenues (Vatterott, 2009).

Homework must be assigned with explanation during class time.

No new material/information that has not previously been discussed in class for the assignment shall be added on Schoology/LMS. Professional development for Schoology/LMS will be provided as needed. Depending on the course, AP or otherwise, there may be a mandatory summer assignment. However, there shall be flexible submission windows determined by the PLCs. Additionally, for homework assigned over an extended period, regular checks on progress shall be made by the teacher. Parents/Guardians/Families shall be notified of long-term assignments and projects, especially if they overlap part of a vacation period. Notification includes posting on Schoology/LMS. Summer assignments will be posted on the school's website by department and grade level/PLC.

Homework assignments shall be posted on Schoology/LMS in the calendar section. In addition to posting on Schoology/LMS, homework assignments shall be clearly displayed in the classroom for students to make note of. Teachers shall post homework assignments on Schoology/LMS by the end of their contractual work day the day the homework was assigned.



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Failure to Comply

Failure to adhere to this policy may result in grounds for a Grade Appeal and/or disciplinary action.

OLD HOMEWORK POLICY IDEAS AND RESEARCH:

Definition of Homework

Homework is typically defined as any tasks “assigned to students by school teachers that are meant to be carried out during non-school hours” (Cooper, 1989a, p. 7).

Time Spent on Homework

Homework must be realistic in length and difficulty given the students' abilities to work independently. Research has found the optimum amount of homework might lie between 1.5 and 2.5 hours per night.

Recommendation for teachers: direct students to indicate how much time they spent on their assigned homework to quickly gather feedback to gauge the class' range of time spent.

Homework Fatigue

Cooper, Robinson, and Patall (2006) issued a strong warning about too much homework: Even for these oldest students, too much homework may diminish its effectiveness or even become counterproductive. (p. 53)

Assigning Homework

Homework must be assigned to students during class time. Homework assignments can be resourced on virtual school platforms; however, the assigning of homework must be done during class.

Summer Assignment

The Grading of Homework

Homework Guidelines

Research provides strong evidence that, when used appropriately, homework benefits student achievement. To make sure that homework is appropriate, teachers should follow these guidelines:



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1. Assign purposeful homework. Legitimate purposes for homework include introducing new content, practicing a skill or process that students can do independently but not fluently, elaborating on information that has been addressed in class to deepen students' knowledge, and providing opportunities for students to explore topics of their own interest.
2. Design homework to maximize the chances that students will complete it. For example, ensure that homework is at the appropriate level of difficulty. Students should be able to complete homework assignments independently with relatively high success rates, but they should still find the assignments challenging enough to be interesting.
3. Involve parents in appropriate ways (for example, as a sounding board to help students summarize what they learned from the homework) without requiring parents to act as teachers or to police students' homework completion.
4. Carefully monitor the amount of homework assigned so that it is appropriate to students' age levels and does not take too much time away from other home activities.
5. Homework can include alternative assignments
6. Homework need not be formally evaluated but used to locate problems in student progress and to individualize instruction
7. Topics will appear in lessons before and after assigned homework
8. Homework will not be used to teach complex skills. It will generally focus on simple skills and material or on the integration of skills already possessed by the student.
9. Teachers should collect homework, check it for completeness and give intermittent instructional feedback. This procedure shows that the teacher takes homework seriously and that it is purposeful.

The Grading of Homework: need something here that incorporates completion grades, quality of grades, teacher feedback

Homework should be checked for accuracy and feedback provided to promote positive learning.

Teacher Assignment of Homework

1. All homework must be assigned and explained within a classroom setting.
2. A teacher will not assign homework after the end of the class period.
3. After the homework has been assigned, the homework is encouraged to be posted on digital platforms (Infinite Campus, Schoology, etc.) However, this is in addition to the classroom assignment.



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For PCHS Employee Handbook:

Homework Guidelines

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In her book, *Rethinking Homework, Best Practices that Support Diverse Needs*, Cathy A. Vatterott states, "Historically, the homework debate has continued to repeat itself. But the flawed belief that homework is grounded on has yet to be adequately challenged. What complicates today's debate is the diversity of attitudes about the value of homework. The mass hysteria and balance movements illustrate the breadth of those attitudes. As a country, the United States is so diverse economically, culturally, and in parenting styles, it is not surprising that not all would agree on a practice that bridges both school and family life. This diversity of attitudes requires not only a critical examination of homework practices but also a rethinking of the school-family relationship."



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Additional Homework Strategies and Classroom Policies for teachers to consider:

- Homework can be assigned with other intentions besides practice in mind. Some of the best types of homework assignments are those that help the students apply what they are learning, or challenge them within the range of their actual abilities and resources.
- Keep drill work to a minimum. If doing five problems will adequately strengthen and reinforce a particular skill, why assign 20?
- Keep tabs on how students are doing with a particular skill. To whatever degree possible, match assignments to student needs and abilities. If I can't do long division problems in class, how successful am I likely to be doing a page of them after school?
- Offer students choices to engage their autonomy and individual learning preferences. Allow students to pick a certain number of problems on a particular page, for example, or to choose between the problems on two different pages. Some students will be perfectly happy writing spelling words a certain number of times each; others will learn better by using the same words in a story or puzzle.
- Because students can indeed have a bad night, rather than relying on excuses, build some flexibility into your classroom policy, right up front. You might want to run your idea by an administrator or department chair, and ask parents to sign off as well (and parents will appreciate not having to write excuses).

Here are some of the policies other teachers have shared. Try using these strategies to build flexibility into your homework policies and avoid having to ask for (or deal with) excuses:

- Requesting that a certain percentage of assignments be turned in on time: "You are responsible for 37 out of 40 of the assignments you'll be getting this semester."
- Giving some token for one free "excuse" which does not need any explanation for its use: "Here is a 'Get Out of Jail Free' card, which you can use if you forget your homework any time during the semester."
- Giving kids a break after a certain number of assignments are completed: "If you turn in completed homework 5 classes in a row, you can have the next night off."
- Having a specific date for assignments to be turned in. (Similar to deadlines used in many college classes, this strategy may work best for specific assignments or projects, or with advanced-level classes and self-managing kids.) "As long as you get your homework in two weeks before the end of the grading period, you'll get credit for it."
- Not counting one or more missed assignments, or the lowest score on a series of assignments or quizzes—for example: "You can drop your lowest grade each semester."
- Avoiding the "Attack of the Zeros" by assigning a certain percentage to an F grade or a "Did not turn in day."
- Extending daily deadlines beyond the end of class, giving kids until the end of the following day to turn in work: "You have until the 3:30 bell tomorrow to turn in this assignment."
- Getting away from using punishments, penalties, or other negative consequences for not doing homework and offering positive outcomes instead. One school saw a change in students' attitudes about homework—and a big shift in the amount of work being turned



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- in—by simply shifting from giving a “minus” when the work wasn’t done to giving a “plus” when it was.
- Have students create a homework portfolio to show ten of the students’ best assignments.
- Not requiring homework at all but instead, giving optional assignments for work that is turned in.

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