

## **HOMEWORK AND ASSIGNMENTS**

### **After School Activities, Commitments and Overall Student Well-being:**

In addition to providing a rigorous and accessible curriculum for all students, the Pleasanton Unified School District has defined goals to increase student, staff, and community understanding of student stress.

Stressors associated with academic success, and often the time commitments and pressures associated with extracurricular activities, can have a significant (negative) impact on a student's social, emotional, and physical health.

An important part of student health includes rest and "unscheduled" down time. A balance between school, extracurricular activities, family commitments, and other obligations should be monitored by parents on a regular basis. Parents are encouraged to play an active role in having students keep a healthy balance in their lives.

If parents, students or teachers experience concerns about the assigning of homework, they are encouraged to communicate directly with one another to address these concerns. If issues still remain, school administration should be consulted for assistance in addressing any remaining areas of concern.

### **Responsibilities:**

#### **Students are responsible for:**

1. asking for clarification on the specifics of the assignment or help with the academic content from the teacher when needed
2. completing homework in a timely manner, including making up missed homework assignments when absent from class
3. managing time by staying focused, on task, and planning effectively for projects and assignments
4. bringing home all necessary materials
5. putting forth their best effort to produce quality work
6. completing or making up assignments and tests when suspended from school if provided by the teacher (Ed Code 48913) (cf.5144.1 – Suspension and Expulsion/Due Process)
7. taking responsibility for ethical practices in completing homework assignments
8. seeking a study buddy/partner or group for each class if needed
9. understanding that the selection of Honors and AP courses, which are higher-level and college-level classes respectively, often requires an additional workload and more homework (depending on subject and ability level)

**Parents/guardians are responsible for:**

1. encouraging the child to advocate for himself/herself, and when needed, advocate for their child
2. encouraging reading at all grade levels
3. providing an appropriate environment for homework to be done including monitoring and limiting television viewing and computer/telephone usage and social networking
4. providing a healthy balance between homework, extra and co-curricular activities, and family commitments
5. contacting the teacher (prior to contacting administration) if their child is consistently unable to do the homework by himself/herself within the time guidelines, or if challenges or questions arise
6. guiding their child as they choose classes and schedule activities, keeping in mind the homework load and time commitment for each program
7. discussing that Honors and AP classes will require additional study time and homework

**Teachers are responsible for:**

1. ensuring that all homework assigned is directly related to the classroom instruction and consists of clear, purposeful, and relevant activities
2. sharing expectations for homework with students and parents early in the school year and on an ongoing basis -- opportunities to share this information include Back to School Night, teacher websites and newsletters
3. communicating individual homework assignments in a consistent and timely manner
4. designing homework assignments that clearly articulate their objectives, purpose and expected outcome, allowing for student questions and planning
5. returning graded/marked homework in a timely manner to assist students with their studies
6. assigning homework that is appropriate and differentiated as needed, based on the needs of students who struggle with assignments, as well as the needs of high-achieving students who demonstrate mastery of concepts
7. teaching the skills necessary for the students to complete the homework and become successful independent learners
8. encouraging/assisting students in finding a study partner or group
9. developing a partnership with students and their families that promotes timely communication and supports families in the homework process
10. coordinating test days and major projects with the use of a master projects and tests calendar that includes other major site events
11. limiting mandatory assignments over long weekends and school vacations, including summer vacation; long term projects should not be due immediately following vacation periods
12. working with students, parents and administrators to modify assignments as needed
13. meet annually with grade level/department team to review quality and quantity of homework assignments

**Site administrators are responsible for:**

1. implementing and enforcing district policy and regulations
2. supporting professional dialogue
3. coordinating teacher collaboration within and across departments and grade levels for tests, projects and major assignments
4. monitoring homework quality and quantity
5. communicating homework expectations with parents
6. facilitating interventions and support programs
7. communicating with coaches and leaders of extracurricular activities that daily workouts/practices should be limited to help students ensure that academic success and health are not compromised

**District is responsible for:**

1. supporting teachers and administrators in implementation of the policy
2. providing staff development about homework for teachers and parents
3. exploring technological tools to streamline collaboration among teachers

**Makeup Work**

Students who miss schoolwork because of an excused absence shall be given the opportunity to complete all assignments and tests that can be reasonably provided. As determined by the teacher, the assignments and tests shall be reasonably equivalent to, but not necessarily identical to, the assignments and tests missed during the absence. Students shall receive full credit for work satisfactorily completed within a reasonable (equal to the number of days of the absence) period of time. Parents are encouraged to contact their student's teachers if their child experiences difficulty completing assignments following an illness. (cf.5113 – Absences and Excuses)

Students who miss schoolwork because of unexcused absences may be given the opportunity to make up missed work for full or reduced credit. Teachers shall assign such makeup work as necessary to ensure academic progress and not as a punitive measure.

When students miss schoolwork because of suspensions, teachers may, but are not required to, give students the opportunity to make up missed work. Teachers shall assign such makeup work as necessary to ensure academic progress and not as a punitive measure.

Extended absences from school, including vacations are discouraged. When these absences are necessary, all work that is assigned must be completed and turned in on the first day back to class.

48205 Absences for personal reasons

48913 Completion of work by suspended student

48980 Parent notifications

58700-58702 Tutoring and homework assistance program; summer school apportionment credit

BOARD POLICY

BP and AR 5113 – Absences and excuses

## Instruction

### Homework

Homework can be an integral component of education that deepens student learning and understanding. K-12 students will be given homework that is meaningful, purposeful, and appropriate.

### Guidelines For Time Spent On Homework

1. The grade level guidelines of this policy are intended to apply to the needs of all students, but time allocations are targeted toward the average student. The amount of homework assigned to students should be different in elementary, middle, and high school. The amount of time a student spends on assigned homework depends on many factors such as the student's needs, learning ability, achievement levels, subject, school schedule, testing schedule and assigned homework due dates. Time spent on homework should be balanced with the importance of personal and family well-being and the wide array of family obligations.
2. Parents and teachers should make students aware that learning occurs at home, in school, and in the world around them.
3. Homework should be the result of collaborative efforts with the intent to improve student learning. There are times, particularly in middle and high school, when students will need to study beyond the assigned number of minutes. Students, working with teachers and parents, will need to determine these needs.
4. Departments and grade level teams should work together and across departments/grade levels to ensure consistency of length and difficulty, and timing of major projects and tests as needed and examine the quality of homework on an ongoing basis.
5. Homework should be purposeful and meaningful to students. The objectives of the assignment shall be clearly communicated to and understood by students. Legitimate purposes for homework include 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, reading materials ahead of time to prepare for instruction, and providing opportunities for students to explore topics of their own interest. Time spent on homework needs to be focused and on task without the distractions of social networking and other media.
6. Reading is an integral part of learning and is a regular part of homework.
7. Homework will reflect the accommodations and modifications of curriculum that are stated in a student's IEP or 504 plan. Modifications should also be considered for English learners as appropriate.
8. Assigning homework over long weekends, holidays and vacations is strongly discouraged.
9. Assigning homework is optional and at the discretion of teachers.

## Grade Level Guidelines

### Elementary School

1. In the primary grades (K-3), homework consists primarily of reading and a limited number of independent exercises to reinforce previously taught basic skills.
2. At the upper grades (4-5), homework consists of completing, practicing, preparing, or extending core academic skills and is designed to build independent study habits. The practice of skills should be assigned to students who need the practice.
3. Guidelines:
  - K-1 10-20 minutes of homework per night, on average
  - 2-3 20-30 minutes of homework per night, on average
  - 4-5 40-50 minutes of homework per night, on average

There may be times when reading assignments may extend beyond the minutes listed above.

4. Except for reading, homework at the elementary level should not be assigned over weekends, holidays, or extended school breaks. This means that the above guidelines are for evenings Monday-Thursday.
5. Project-based and long-term assignments should primarily be undertaken and completed in the classroom. Some portions of projects may be assigned as homework; however, these tasks should not require group participation, significant assistance from parents or costly materials. These assignments should include clear checkpoints and be reinforced by the teacher to monitor progress toward completion.

### Middle School

1. As a guideline, homework should be assigned during the school week on a regular basis. Total homework assignments should have an estimated completion time of 15 minutes per period per night. Long-term projects should be included in this time frame. Advanced courses and electives may require additional study/practice time.
2. Guidelines:
  - 6-8 – no more than 15 minutes per class period Monday-Friday, on average

Because 8<sup>th</sup> grade English has 46 minutes of instruction compared with 92 minutes for 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade block, 8<sup>th</sup> grade English may require more than 15 minutes per night of homework.

There may be times when reading assignments may extend beyond the minutes listed above.

3. In order to coordinate due dates and balance the workload, teachers should meet on a regular basis to collaborate and be aware of homework, projects, assignments, and testing schedules in all curricular subject areas.

4. Long-term assignments at the middle grades should be limited in number and duration. These assignments should include clear checkpoints to monitor progress toward completion.
5. When assigning group projects, teachers should allow in-class collaboration time with specific tasks to be completed independently; however, these tasks should not require assistance from parents or costly materials.
6. Though homework on long weekends, vacations, and holidays is discouraged, students should be encouraged to use this time for review, voluntary work, or completion of makeup assignments.
7. Some elective classes such as, but not limited to, drama, speech and debate, music and athletics, may require additional practice opportunities.

## High School

1. As a guideline, total homework assignments should have an estimated completion time of 20 minutes or less of on-task homework per school night, per class, five nights per week. Long-term projects should be included in this time frame.
2. Guidelines:  
9-12 - no more than 20 minutes per class period Monday-Friday on average

There may be times when reading assignments extend beyond the minutes assigned for some classes.

3. Some elective classes such as, but not limited to, drama, speech and debate, music and athletics, may require additional practice opportunities.
4. In order to coordinate due dates and balance the workload, teachers should meet on a regular basis to collaborate and be aware of homework, projects, assignments, and testing schedules in all curricular subject areas.
5. When assigning group projects, teachers should allow in-class collaboration time with specific tasks to be completed independently; however, these tasks should not require assistance from parents or costly materials. If group projects are assigned for completion outside of the regular school day, an alternative assignment may be provided. If a student can demonstrate substantive reasons why participation in group projects assigned outside of the school day will present a hardship to the student or family, the parent may request an alternative individual assignment. Such requests must be made when the group project is initially assigned. Late requests for alternative assignments may not be honored.
6. Though weekend homework is discouraged, students should be encouraged to use this time for review, voluntary work, or completion of makeup assignments.
7. AP and Honors courses will require additional study time and homework. Homework expectations for these courses will be made available during the registration process and must be considered by parents and students when students sign up for these courses.
8. The homework needs of alternative education will be site-based due to the unique nature of their respective programs.

**Excused Absences**

Students who miss schoolwork because of an excused absence shall be given the opportunity to complete all assignments and tests, which can be reasonably provided. As determined by the teacher, the assignments and test shall be reasonably equivalent to, but not necessarily identical to, the assignments and tests missed during the absence. Students shall receive full credit for work satisfactorily completed within a reasonable period of time.

**Unexcused Absences and Suspensions**

Teachers may, but are not required to, provide make-up work or allow students to take tests missed because of absences which have designated "unexcused" or suspensions.

**Notification of Progress**

Teachers will give students timely feedback concerning homework which has been returned to the teacher. Teacher shall notify parents/guardians when students are not meeting requirements.

ADOPTED: 6-21-11  
REVIEWED: 11-9-10, 4-26-11

BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
PLEASANTON UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT  
PLEASANTON, CALIFORNIA