

Bellbird Park State School

Homework Policy



In Queensland State Schools, the purpose of a Homework Policy is to communicate homework expectations and support to students and their families, as well as to ensure that homework:

- is effective in supporting learning.
- allows sufficient time for family, recreation and community.
- does not disadvantage students due to a lack of access to resources.

Available meta-studies – research that combines and analyses the findings of a number of studies – suggest that traditional formats of homework have [little or no positive benefit](#) for the academic achievement of children of [primary school age](#). In their book *Reforming Homework*, Horsley and Walker report that “homework has no achievement benefits for students up to grade 3 (and) negligible benefits for students in grades 4-6”. A central reason for this seems to be that many children require the support provided by teachers and the school to successfully complete tasks of rigour. Some [research has suggested](#) that it is not developmentally appropriate to expect primary students [to have the independent study skills to stay focused on the work](#). What’s more, homework may actually have a negative effect if unrealistic expectations, applied pressure or methods that are counter to those used at school are used.

Our approach to homework encompasses our school motto through the culmination of learning through the presentation of a **PASSION PROJECT** at a **FLOURISH FAIR** at the end of each term. Importantly, it supports our values of **AIMing** high, where students are explicitly taught how to be **Achievers**, show **Integrity** and be **Mindful**.

John Spencer, a former teacher and now professor, as well as a best-selling author, is a believer in empowering students (and teachers) to own their learning through the power of creativity. You can learn more about John Spencer here <https://spencerauthor.com/>. His work is centred around ‘What happens when students own their learning?’ and is the inspiration for our Homework Policy. In their book, *Empower*, John Spencer and A.J. Julian outline the benefits of students having agency around their learning.

How do we define a PASSION PROJECT as part of our Homework Policy?

We share a belief that, at our school, as part of our homework policy, a PASSION PROJECT is a way for a child to **capture** and **share**:

- a new learning of interest
- an extended learning about something they are passionate about
- an innovation / design for something new.
- increased agency and engagement in their education

Our Homework Policy allows time for students to be athletes, musicians, active and caring community members, creative, entrepreneurs, creators, problem solvers, curious and importantly ‘children’! PASSION PROJECTs provide an opportunity for children to engage in a hobby or new activity, document their learning or journey however they chose, and then present their project to an audience.

What does this mean for students and their families each term?

Each term, we will send home with students an update about their termly PASSION PROJECT. The PASSION PROJECTs will be celebrated at the FLOURISH FAIR in Week 10 of the term. This gives students and their families freedom and flexibility to dedicate time when it is suitable to them. We know that some weeks are very busy and others are not. This extended timeline helps students plan, monitor progress and prepare for an end of term event. It also allows time for family, friends, sport, culture, religion, hobbies, pets, play and fun after school and on weekends.

How will we support your child's PASSION PROJECT for homework?

We will offer one session a week where students can attend 'The PASSION PROJECT Club'. If they have questions, need guidance or simply would benefit from some routine and dedicated time to assist with their time management, they can attend this club. Class teachers will also monitor how they are travelling with their project throughout the term. We will also offer a; 'Hints, Tips and Ideas' information brochure that may be a stimulus for your child's own creative thinking, problem solving and to spark their curiosity.

How can you support your child's PASSION PROJECT for homework?

You can help your child:

- through the gift of time - time for them to ask questions, seek clarity, ask for help
- by checking in with them about their idea for their PASSION PROJECT and assist if they need any materials (encourage recycled materials if possible)
- by asking your child's teacher for advice if your child is struggling, stuck or confused.

How will we monitor this homework throughout the term?

Teachers will have check in points with students to discuss their plan, progress and preparation for the end of term celebration and sharing due date. Teachers will communicate with parents and carers if they have concerns.

How will students share their PASSION PROJECT at the end of term?

Each term, we will communicate with the community about how and when we will share students and staff PASSION PROJECTS at the FLOURISH FAIR. (Yes! Our staff are also going to complete PASSION PROJECTS if they choose). Parents and carers will be very welcome to come along and share in the celebration of learning at the FLOURISH FAIR.

Does a PASSION PROJECT need to be related to what a child is learning at school at the time?

The short answer is no. PASSION PROJECTS allow for freedom in thinking and creation. The content of the PASSION PROJECT does not need to be related to what a child is learning in class at the time, however it could be, if the child is passionate about the topic and looking to extend their learning. Skills being learnt in the use of technology may be used as part of the sharing and presentation of the PASSION PROJECT, however, is not mandatory. PASSION PROJECTS do not form any part of assessment.

Is a PASSION PROJECT compulsory?

While there are no punitive consequences given if a student does not complete a PASSION PROJECT, participation is greatly encouraged. The sharing and celebration during our FLOURISH FAIRS will become an important part of our school culture and calendar, and is one way for our students to demonstrate they are Achievers. Planning, time management and meeting deadlines/due dates are important skills to learn to assist with learning now, and into the future. Your student's teacher may contact you if they have concerns around your child's engagement and initiative.

Where does my child start?

Start by looking at the Passion Project planner with your child. You might like to also explore <https://www.wonderopolis.org/> or encourage them to read some of our books in the Curiosity Centre that set the scene for PASSION PROJECTS. 'Mystery Doug' has a YouTube Channel exploring inquiry-based questions that might spark some curiosity for your child too. Your child can also talk with their teacher or attend *The PASSION PROJECT Club* for ideas and support.

Homework at our school will not include:

- worksheets or tasks due on Fridays
- home readers, high frequency word lists, spelling lists or times tables practice.

Families who value this style of homework are welcome to arrange this themselves through the purchase or subscription of commercial resources/products.

All students are encouraged to engage in reading for pleasure on a regular basis and are able to borrow books from the school library, council library or their own home library for this purpose.