

## Grade Three Homework Policy

Revised 10/2012

The Grade Three homework policy begins with the principles stated in the school handbook:

***Homework is a part of St. Thomas's educational policy. In the lower grades (1-3) homework is a means to develop an appreciation for reading as well as a time to pursue special projects and interests. In these grades homework can also take the form of short structured assignments in Language Arts/Reading and Mathematics to reinforce academic skills.***

Third Grade is a transitional year. Entering eight-year-olds emerge at the end of the school year as rising Fourth Graders, as prepared as possible to experience the rigors, and the opportunities, of the Upper School. A paramount responsibility is the facilitation of a successful transition for each student.

Implicit in this process is the understanding that **THIRD GRADE IS NOT THE UPPER SCHOOL**. Eight and nine-year olds are not developmentally ready for the academic rigors of the Upper School, and this homework policy reflects that fact.

With that in mind, these are the highlights of the third grade homework policy:

1. Students are expected to read for at least 30 minutes every school night, after a break-in period in September when the nightly expectation is 20 minutes. "School night" is defined Sunday through Thursday nights on a usual school week. Students' reading choices will be made from the classroom library in consultation with the head teacher or assistant.

Students are further expected to keep an accurate and current record of their homework reading in their home-school folder until the book is finished. The record is then filed in the classroom.

Each student is expected to take this reading assignment seriously, and reading sheets are checked daily by the head or assistant teacher. Infrequent excuses are cheerfully accepted. When more frequent, students may be asked to reclaim the lost reading time during recess, or to read for a longer period of time on the following night.

2. On Monday-Thursday nights, language arts or math sheets may be sent home, if in the teachers' discretion, such work will serve to increase students' grasp of previous instruction, or if such work will allow the teachers an opportunity to gauge students' level of understanding,
3. On occasion throughout the year, special projects—book reports, Social Studies activities, etc., may contain home-based components. When these occur, a special note home detailing the assignment will be distributed far in advance of the due date.

## **Notes:**

1. Homework is not assigned solely so parents may know what is being taught in school, or simply to occupy students' time at home. Homework is assigned in order that lessons learned in class might be reinforced by practice at home. If, in the teacher's judgment, such work is not necessary, homework will not be assigned that evening. In the beginning of September, while the homework reading program is being launched, additional homework is kept to a minimum.

2. Students may feel uncomfortable returning homework to school which has not been "checked" by an adult beforehand. While that reality is respected, it is not preferred. Homework should be done by the student and returned in its raw form, that the teachers may better gauge the level of each student's understanding. Homework returned with 100% accuracy, if that work is not the student's own, frustrates the learning process. If parents do find themselves needing to participate, they are asked to initial the homework sheet, near the students name, so that the teachers can be aware of that participation.

3. Students are made aware that they are welcome to call the head teacher at home to discuss questions they may have with their homework. When appropriate, a maximum time for an assignment is announced, beyond which they are told to return the page(s) and their work will be considered complete. Once again, it is understood that there are some students who do not feel comfortable returning an incomplete paper. If this becomes a source of stress at home, parents are advised to discuss this with the head teacher, in order that appropriate stress-reducing accommodations can be made.

4. Parents are encouraged, inasmuch as possible, not to intervene between the student and the teachers when there is a homework problem. If there is a call to be made, or a note to be written, the students are to be encouraged, when they can, to do that work. Part of the developmental agenda for this age is the establishment of an identity beyond the family boundary; this process is facilitated when students take direct responsibility in contexts such as their homework. The teachers will do their utmost to reassure whilst they problem-solve.

Prepared by: James D. Peters (Third Grade Head Teacher)