

Genesee Hill Elementary School

Homework Policy

Because we know . . .

- That homework can be a valuable way to extend, reinforce and refine learning;
- That reading is the best way to become a better reader;
- That writing supports reading and helps develop critical thinking skills;
- That knowing math facts at a level of automaticity (meaning, instant recall) provides a solid base for engaging in more complicated mathematics.

And we believe . . .

- That reading time strengthens family relationships while nurturing a love of reading and learning within your child. Reading can be fiction or non-fiction—full-length books, magazines, newspapers, learning websites, whatever is of interest and develops the child’s love of learning.
- That abundant research shows that attaching punishments to homework practices (like graded or corrected packets/worksheets which can result in lost privileges in school or at home) can cause significant stress for students and families and can negatively impact students’ perceptions of school and learning;
- That homework should not be graded (because there is no way to ensure who did the work);
- That correcting homework takes a lot of time (time that could be spent designing excellent lessons);
- That homework should not involve new learning, but should rather expand what students are learning during the school day;
- Students learn habits of mind that come from regular practice, self-assessment and independent learning;
- Homework can promote good home-school communication about what and how a child is learning.

We will . . .

- Ensure that every child has a book at his/her independent reading level to read each night. Of course, if a child has another book at home that they want to read . . . that works, too!
- Ensure that every child has access to notebooks, pencils, and other supplies to promote writing at home whenever they need it.
- Support families to assist students to finish class work at home as needed.
- Provide parents with guidance for supporting the development of math facts at home.
- Promote a home-school connection through occasional assignments such as:
 - Having students tell two people at home what they had learned about electricity (or another topic);
 - Having students use their home environment to make connections to school (draw a map of your neighborhood, find things that come in pairs, find various shapes in your environment);
 - Practicing problem solving using bar models;
 - Providing opportunities for extensions for interested learners, such as themed backpacks or supplies to bring home to extend school learning;
 - Providing organizational and planning tools such as logs, weekly calendars, and planners (grades 3-5);
- Finally, we will work with individual students and their families to make reasonable modifications for special circumstances.

Simply put, the homework policy at Genesee Hill is:

Read, Write, Practice Your Math.

We expect all students to read for a minimum of ten to thirty minutes (depending on grade level) outside of school at least five nights a week. This reading can be done independently, with an adult, or with another child. Sometimes, students in older grades may have assigned reading.

In addition, the following guidelines will be used by teachers for assigning additional skills practice:

Kindergarten through Third Grade: (5-15 minutes/nightly)

Sight word fluency practice

Math skills fluency practice

Global Passport geography fluency practice (grades 1-3)

Fourth and Fifth Grade: (30 minute maximum/nightly)

Math skills practice (i.e. related to daily lesson) (15 mins)

Writing, assigned reading, responding and reflecting (15 mins)

Global Passport geography fluency practice

Long-term projects

Planner use for weekly and long-term planning

We strongly recommend nightly routines of "homework," especially reading high-interest texts, and emphasizing:

- That regular practice is the best way to increase one's reading skills;
- That having the discipline to follow nightly routines promotes a range of character traits (grit, self-control, long-term planning, stamina);
- When families can read in the same room together on a regular basis, this helps to promote reading as a habit.

If your child needs additional practice in reading, writing and math fact fluency, [click here](#) for some resources you may find useful.

This policy was developed by the Genesee Hill Instructional Leadership Team and approved by a vote of the full staff on May 10, 2017. It is intended for full implementation with the 17-18 school year. Thank you to Sandburg Elementary School in Madison, Wisconsin, for the thoughtful template on which our policy is based.