

# Lexington Public Schools

## Homework Policy Implementation Guidelines

### **Introduction**

As outlined in the Homework Policy approved by the School Committee on June 29, 2017, Lexington Public Schools defines homework as work that supports and enhances the learning of the curriculum. Educators use their professional judgement to ensure that homework assigned is meaningful, manageable, and developmentally appropriate. Educators recognize the variety of student learning styles and working pace, and take this into consideration when designing and assigning work. Within and across classrooms at a given grade, homework assignments may appear to be different in order to address individual student need.

Cumulative demands of homework, especially for students at middle school and high school who regularly have homework assigned by multiple educators (who are not always able to coordinate with each other) can create unmanageable situations for even diligent learners. Changes to our district homework policy were informed by feedback from all stakeholders, and a general concern around student wellness.

**Homework is not required, but when assigned, educators, students, and parents will follow this guide to ensure that the homework policy is effectively implemented.**

### **Definitions of Types of Homework <sub>1</sub>**

Homework may take a variety of forms. The descriptions below are examples of the types of homework your child may be assigned during the year. Please note that the list below is not an exhaustive one, and that homework assignments often encompass multiple types and a variety of purposes.

- **Reading:** There is vast, conclusive research that reports a direct correlation between the amount of time students spend reading and their growth as learners. Although reading may be assigned as homework, it is also an essential life-long habit that helps students develop their vocabulary, improve fluency and comprehension, increase background knowledge, and expand the content to which they are exposed. Beyond reading for homework, we recognize the importance of reading for enjoyment and encourage all students and families to read for pleasure.
- **Completion:** This is work that helps students keep up with the classwork by allowing students the opportunity to finish work outside of the school day.

- **Practice:** This is work that reviews and reinforces skills and concepts taught in class. It helps students practice newly acquired skills to develop proficiency and confidence.
  - **Preparation:** This is work that helps students develop confidence, encourages the acquisition of background information, supports executive functioning skills, and prepares students to more fully participate in upcoming lessons, projects, or assessments.
  - **Extension:** This is work that helps students take what they learn in class and connect it with real life. It requires students to transfer specific skills and concepts to new situations.
  - **Creative:** This is work that helps students integrate multiple concepts and promotes the development of critical thinking and problem solving skills. This work gives students opportunities to “investigate and respond to an authentic, engaging, and complex question, problem, or challenge” (source: Buck Institute, [www.bie.org](http://www.bie.org)).
1. *Portions of the above definitions have been excerpted from the following sources: Toronto (Canada) School District, Wellesley (MA) High School, and Needham (MA) High School, as cited in Needham High School Handbook; Zervas Elementary School Handbook (Newton, MA); Buck Institute for Education, Project-Based Learning ([www.bie.org](http://www.bie.org)).*

## Due Dates for Assignments Abutting School Vacations

When educators feel it is necessary to assign homework that has a due date near a school vacation (Thanksgiving, December, February, and April breaks), they must allow students adequate time to complete the assignment excluding the break period. Educators will adhere to the following guidelines when assigning the work and choosing a due date:

- Short term assignments (typically a one-night assignment) must be assigned at least two days/class periods before the break and may not be due the first day back from the break.
- Long term assignments must be assigned at least 5 days before the school break and not due at least until the 3rd day back after the break.

Source: Needham (MA) High School

## Calendar of “No Homework Dates”

Holiday	Date(s) Observed	Guidelines
Labor Day	Monday, 9/4/17	No homework should be assigned on 8/31. No homework collected on 9/5.
Rosh Hashanah	Thursday, 9/21/17	No homework should be assigned on 9/20. No homework collected on 9/22.
Yom Kippur	Saturday, 9/30/17	No homework should be assigned on 9/29. No homework collected on 10/2.
Columbus Day/Indigenous People's Day	Monday, 10/9/17	No homework should be assigned on 10/6. No homework collected on 10/10.
Diwali	Thursday, 10/19/17	No homework should be assigned on 10/18. No homework collected on 10/20.

<b>Veteran's Day</b>	<b>Friday, 11/10/17</b>	<b>No homework should be assigned on 11/9. No homework collected on 11/14.</b> <b>* All day PD, LLT on 11/13</b>
<b>Thanksgiving</b>	<b>Thursday, 11/23/17</b>	<b>No homework assigned on 11/22. No homework collected on 11/27.</b>
<b>December Vacation</b>	<b>(12/25/17) - (1/1/18)</b>	<b>Long term projects due after break assigned by 12/18/17. Not to be collected before 1/4/18.</b> <b>* No short term assignments to be assigned over the break.</b>
<b>MLK Jr. Day</b>	<b>Monday, 1/15/2018</b>	<b>No homework to be assigned on 1/12/18. No homework to be collected on 1/16/18.</b>
<b>Lunar New Year &amp; February Vacation</b>	<b>2/16/18 &amp; ( 2/19/18) - (2/23/18)</b>	<b>Long term assignments to be assigned by 2/9/18. Not to be collected before 2/28/18.</b> <b>* No short term assignments to be assigned over the break.</b>
<b>Passover/Good Friday</b>	<b>3/30/18 &amp; 3/31/18</b>	<b>No homework assigned 3/29/18. No homework collected on 4/2/18.</b>
<b>April Vacation</b>	<b>4/16/18-4/20/18</b>	<b>Long term assignments must be assigned by 4/9/18. Not to be collected before 4/25/18.</b> <b>* No short term assignments to be assigned over the break.</b>
<b>Ramadan Begins</b>	<b>Wednesday, 5/16/2018</b>	<b>No homework assigned on 5/16/18. No homework collected on 5/18/18.</b>
<b>Memorial Day</b>	<b>Monday, 5/28/18</b>	<b>No homework assigned 5/25/18. No homework collected 5/29/18.</b>
<b>Eid Ul Fitr</b>	<b>Friday, 6/15/18</b>	<b>No homework assigned 6/15/18. No homework collected 6/18/18.</b>

## Homework Missed as a Result of Absence

Upon return to school from an absence, students--with the support of educators and parents--will develop a plan to complete make-up work within a reasonable amount of time. Assignments and due dates will be determined at the discretion of the educator, but will allow the student a minimum of two days to complete homework missed due to absence.

## Roles and Guidance for Educators, Students, and Parents

Educators will:

- Adhere to Lexington Public Schools' "No Homework" dates
- Post homework in classrooms and/or online before the school day is over and ensure that students know their homework assignment before leaving class
- Coordinate dates for tests or long-term projects with other educators when possible
- Communicate promptly with students, and when appropriate, with parents, when students are struggling to complete assignments
- Make assignments that are given over a weekend to be equivalent in length to a daily assignment
- Differentiate homework where needed
- Break long-term assignments into "chunks" and provide frequent check-ins
- Provide appropriate and timely response to all homework assignments

- Give clear, concise directions; allow time for students' clarifying questions during class time
- Ensure that students who are absent know how they may make up homework

#### Students will:

- Record the directions for homework and learn where educators post assignments
- Ask questions, as necessary, to clarify directions for assignments
- Establish a routine for completing assignments and keeping materials in order
- Complete assignments neatly, on time, and accurately, to the best of their ability
- Plan time for the completion of long-term assignments
- When making course selections, consider ability to realistically complete assignments in a healthy manner

#### Parents will:

- Provide a suitable place for study
- Help students develop routine home study habits
- Limit assistance on assignments to ensure that the student's work is his/her own
- Encourage students to notify educators if they are experiencing difficulty completing assignments
- Be aware of long-term assignments and assist students in learning to budget their time accordingly
- Assist students in making wise and healthy course and course level choices

**The Lexington School Committee Homework Policy approved on June 29, 2017 and the language in the implementation guidelines above replace all previous language relative to homework in all LPS student handbooks.**