

Barrington Middle School Homework Guidelines

Barrington Middle School teachers will help you develop the responsibility needed to be prepared for learning each day. Being a successful learner involves self-discipline and organization. Good study habits are extremely important. Here are some hints to help you do well in school.

NOTE: In order to be successful at Barrington Middle school, you will need to read on a daily basis. Reading should occur in and out of school. Text should be both teacher and self-selected from a variety of genres.

- Teachers will work together with you to set academic goals. Write them down and return to them often. Work hard to achieve those goals by budgeting your time wisely.
- Your teacher will have you copy your assignments into your agenda/planner each day.
- Time will be provided each day for you to clarify any questions you may have about your assignments **before** leaving class.
- Refer to your agenda when you are packing your bag at the end of the day to ensure you have the necessary materials.
- Everyone has a peak learning time. Figure out when you are most alert during your after school time and plan to work on your assignments then.
- Be sure to complete assignments in a place that is well lit, quiet, and gives you access to materials you might need (including writing instruments, art supplies, dictionary, computer, etc.
- Avoid unnecessary interruptions.
- Study for the length of time you can remain focused. Take a break, do something active to increase blood flow to your brain, and return to your unfinished task with new energy.

If you are experiencing difficulty in a subject or on a particular assignment, or if you have been absent, seek extra help from your teachers. Teachers stay after school for extra help sessions on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday unless they have other district obligations. Extra help sessions will be arranged at times that are convenient for you and your teacher.

At times, a teacher will make arrangements for you to stay for additional help if it is apparent that you are having difficulty. This is not to be thought of as a punishment.

The amount of homework varies somewhat from teacher to teacher, subject to subject, and grade to grade. All assignments will have educational value and none will be given for punishment or as busy work. In cluster meetings your teachers discuss the type and amount of work assigned by their cluster colleagues and try to adjust assignments to avoid overloads.

Homework and practice will give you opportunities to deepen your understanding and proficiency with content being learned. Research on homework tells us some things about homework and practice. First, in general, students at the middle level should be assigned more homework than those at the elementary level and less than those at the high school level. Second,

your parents should be minimally involved in your homework. Third, teachers should communicate the purpose of homework and comment on it. And fourth, when learning a skill, you need a great deal of practice in order to achieve mastery.

Homework is serious business. It is a respected and traditional educational function for several reasons:

1. *to give you the opportunity to review your work and practice what you have learned.*

Homework assigned to provide practice is usually associated with learning a skill as opposed to learning information. When practice is the purpose of homework, it is important that you have a good understanding of what you have learned. You should understand it well enough to do it without needing help from you parents. Homework assigned as practice commonly increases your speed and accuracy relative to the skill you are learning. Homework will help you to work toward improving speed and internalizing a skill.

2. *to prepare students for a new topic*

When homework is assigned to prepare you for a new topic, the goal is to help you access prior knowledge about the topic. This type of homework assignment requires a different focus from you than is required to practice a skill to improve speed and accuracy. These homework assignments might ask you to reflect on what you have learned from other classes, from reading, and from other experiences.

3. *to elaborate on introduced material*

Homework assignments that ask you to build upon a topic you are studying might require you to conduct research, compare items, develop support for an argument, or show your knowledge in a graphic organizer.

Average Amount of Homework by Grade

Research supports between 10-12 minutes per grade for each grade a student has attended school.

Sixth graders should expect 60 – 72 minutes of homework per night.

Seventh graders should expect between 70 – 84 minutes of homework per night.

Eighth graders should expect 80 – 96 minutes of homework per night.

These times are estimates and are used as guidelines by teachers.

Weekends, long weekends, school vacations:

- No more than one night's equivalent of homework will be assigned over weekends or long weekends. Assignments given over long weekends will not be due until the day after school resumes. Students should select one night during the weekend that they will work on homework.
- No homework will be assigned over school vacations. Any long term homework which is due after a school vacation week must be assigned at least one week prior to a school vacation week and will not be due for at least five school days after a school vacation week. Students should plan accordingly to avoid having to work on long term assignments during school vacations.
- No tests will be given on the day school resumes after a long weekend or school vacation.

Announced Assessments:

Due to the many unified arts (world language, health, art, computer technology, etc.) and cluster classes (math, science, social studies, language arts, skills) that students at Barrington Middle School take, it may be necessary to have more than one announced assessment (quiz, test, district assessment, etc.) on the same day.

Cluster teachers will work together to avoid giving tests on the same day. However, it may be necessary to have two announced cluster assessments on the same day in addition to announced unified arts assessments at certain times of the year such as during mid-term and final exam weeks.

What should you do if you do not understand your homework?

Always notify your teacher before leaving class, if you do not understand your assigned homework.

If you realize, after arriving home, that you do not understand your homework assignment, you should make a serious and sustained attempt at completion. Your parent may attach a note to your work indicating that the assignment could not be completed because you did not understand it or because you worked more than the expected time for homework by grade (see above). This does not apply to long term assignments that have been left to the “last minute”. When working on long term assignments it is important that students apply the time management skills learned in school.

Consequences for failure to hand in daily homework:

If you fail to hand in daily homework on time you will receive 50% credit if it is handed in one day late. Daily homework handed in more than one day late will receive no credit without approval from your teacher. Students who fail to hand in homework on time will stay with their teacher for extra help after school on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday as needed. (Sixth grade students, however, will receive up to 75% credit for homework handed in one day late for the first semester of sixth grade. During the second semester sixth graders will receive 50% credit for homework handed in one day late.)

Your homework average will be worth 10% of your grade each quarter. It will be graded for completion/effort for nightly assignments and your teacher will review homework on the day that it is due, whenever possible.

Requests to limit homework will be considered when your teachers and guidance counselor determine that adjustments need to be made.

If you are out **more** than one day, your parents may request work by phoning the office (247-3160) prior to 8:30 on the second day of absence. If your teachers feel you will be able to complete work at home, without having been in class, they will send it to the office where it may be picked up by your parent at 2:15.