The following information gives examples of what you can do to support and help your child and his/her learning at home.

**English - Writing in K-6**

Reading and writing are closely connected. When children learn to read and write, they learn how literary and factual texts are written for different purposes and different audiences. In writing, children learn about the structure and grammar of written language as well as learning about handwriting and spelling.

**Supporting your child in learning to write**

When children begin to write they enjoy making marks and scribbles on paper. After a while they start to write some of the letters and sounds of the alphabet. They learn to write words. Eventually they learn to write sentences and are able to create a variety of texts. How can you help your child at home?

*Make writing experiences at home fun for you and your child:*

- write in front of your child and discuss what you are writing, e.g. shopping lists, cards, letters and notes
- talk about the different purposes and audiences for writing
- encourage your child to use a variety of paper for drawing and writing
- encourage your child to use pens, pencils, crayons, chalk and textas for writing
- encourage your child to draw and to write about their drawing
- praise your child for ‘having a go’ at writing words that are new to them
- encourage your child to write messages for you and other family members
- help your child to find little words in big words and to write them, e.g. carpet: car, pet, are, care, tar
- encourage your child to write cards and invitations, and letters to friends, relatives, neighbours, school teachers
- encourage your child to write signs, poems, favourite recipes and instructions
- encourage your child to label things that they design and make
- play word games such as ‘I Spy’, ‘Scrabble’, ‘Boggle’, ‘Scattcategories’, ‘Junior Pictionary’
- encourage your child to use a word processor or typewriter if available
- display paintings, drawings and writing that your child brings home from school
- encourage your child to develop their own photo album and encourage them to write labels for their photos
- encourage your child to keep a scrap book or photo album for putting in pictures and writing
- encourage your child to keep a diary and to write in it whenever possible
- encourage your child to write in the NSW Foundation Style Writing:

**Spelling in K-6**

Spelling is valued in our society. Teachers aim to help children understand that spelling correctly helps to communicate meaning. At school, spelling is taught as children learn to read and write. Children develop confidence when they ‘have a go’ at spelling words in their writing. Learning to spell is a complex process which takes place over the stages of schooling.

*How you can support your child in learning to spell:*

- play ‘detective’ games with words. Ask your child to be a detective and find:
  - words that rhyme, e.g. can, fan, man, tan
  - words that begin with the same sound, e.g. sun, sausage, sea
  - words that end with the same sound, e.g. hat, street
  - little words in big words, e.g. ‘am’ in ‘jam’
  - words that sound the same but are spelt differently, e.g. ate - eight, to - two - too, their - there
- play word games that focus on the sounds of words, e.g. Junior Scrabble, Boggle, Word Snap, Wonderwords, Junior Crosswords, I Spy, Hangman
• encourage your child to write words that start with a particular sound
• encourage your child to write words with three letters, five letters and so on
• try to make spelling activities enjoyable
• encourage your child to ‘have a go’ at spelling words
• encourage your child to ‘sound out’ words, e.g. h-i-t, s-a-n-d
• ask your child to write words that are not easily ‘sounded out’, e.g. home, watch, after
• encourage your child to develop memory tricks such as ‘a piece of pie’, ‘hear with your ear’
• encourage your child to use the LOOK SAY COVER WRITE CHECK method to spell a variety of words, e.g.
  ask your child to: - LOOK closely at the word
  - SAY the word and then
  - COVER it
  - WRITE the word and then
  - CHECK to see if it is correct!
• ‘hear’ your child’s personal spelling lists
• show your child how to use dictionaries, encyclopaedias and thesauruses

Reading in K-6
Learning to read is a complex process. For children to read well, they need to develop a range of reading strategies. Reading and writing are closely connected. When children learn to read and write, they learn about how language is used for different purposes and different audiences.

Supporting your Child in Learning to Read
Reading should be enjoyable for you and your child. If your child becomes distressed or loses interest when reading at home, take a break from reading and try again later.

All children, regardless of age, like to be read to. Make a special time whenever possible for reading with your child away from interruptions. You can help your child in reading when you:

• show your child that you value reading by reading whenever you can
• provide a variety of texts for your child to read to you, e.g. stories, comics, poems, plays, cartoons, reference books, magazines, children’s recipe books
• point out words on street signs, packets and labels
• encourage your child to predict what a book is about from the cover and illustrations
• reread favourite books
• talk about the different purposes for reading a picture book, a novel, a TV guide, a newspaper, a telephone directory, a recipe book, an encyclopaedia
• point out the different size and shape of words
• point out the first sound of a word and encourage your child to think of other words that begin with the same sound
• encourage your child to read books for enjoyment as well as for information
• praise your child when they are reading, e.g. ‘well done - that was a difficult word’
• encourage a positive attitude to books
• encourage your child to talk about characters and events in texts
• encourage your child to make sound effects for the characters and events
• ask your child to think of possible beginnings and endings for stories read and heard
• praise your child when they are reading
• ‘sound out’ difficult words and/or give clues to the meaning of difficult words
• encourage your child to have a go at reading words that are unfamiliar
• ask your child to read on past the unknown word to gain clues from the rest of the sentence
• show your child how to find the meanings of unfamiliar words in dictionaries
• encourage your child to watch films and videos of books they have read
• talk about the ways in which a film version of a book compares with the print version
• encourage your child to borrow books from the library.

If your child is having difficulty with reading, or not enjoying reading, ask your child’s teacher for help.
Talking and Listening in K-6
Children develop confidence using spoken language as they learn to talk and listen for different purposes. Talking enables children to clarify their ideas, explore issues, solve problems and to develop understandings in all Key Learning Areas.

Supporting your Child in Learning to Talk
Your child has learned to talk and listen with your help and encouragement. You can continue to support your child’s language development at school by doing some of the following:

- actively listen and respond to your child’s talk
- encourage your child to talk about their interests, friends, pets, favourite books and favourite movies
- show your child ways of talking for different purposes, e.g. using the telephone, inviting a friend to play, giving a message
- encourage your child to talk about television, video and radio programs
- give your child a series of instructions to follow
- encourage your child to give messages to other family members
- encourage your child to play a variety of games such as ‘The Shopping Game’ (one child begins by saying ‘I went shopping and bought an apple’. Each child has to remember what has been said before and add a new shopping item)
- encourage your child to talk about things they have made using blocks, plasticine, cardboard and/or junk material
- encourage your child to listen to stories being read by family members
- have your child listen to stories and retell them to friends and family
- encourage your child to talk about drawings, paintings and models that they bring home from school
- encourage your child to read a variety of books and to retell the story in their own words
- encourage your child to read a variety of non-fiction (factual texts) and talk about the information presented in these
- encourage your child to talk about their imaginary play
- encourage your child to talk to known adults as well as other children
- plan and discuss family outings, e.g. going to the beach, park, friend’s place, movie, zoo, museum, art gallery, sports events
- encourage your child to discuss and debate issues in the news and newspapers.

Stage Two 2012 Homework Program and CPS Policy

Rationale
Homework benefits students by complementing classroom learning and allowing them to practise skills and concepts learnt in the classroom. It also allows them to practice life skills in order to cope with life beyond school and home.

There is no evidence to suggest a link between lengthy homework tasks and success at university. However, there is evidence that suggests a link between organisational and time management skills and success at university.

There is no doubt that children need to practice concepts learnt at school, within time constraints, but the definition of ‘homework’ needs to be reassessed to include any work that children do at home that will benefit them as outlined above, and contributes to shared family time.

The role of homework

- Developing independent learning, self-discipline time management and organisational skills.
- Providing opportunities to practice and consolidate the skills introduced during the day.
- Understanding how their in-class learning can be applied to their at-home world.
- Extending student’s knowledge of the world around them.
- Providing opportunities to learn more about individual interests.
- Encouraging good study habits in preparation for further education.
The role of the parent

- Remember that it is the child's homework and he/she must have the final say about the finished product. It is their learning and they must have ownership of it for it to have any value.
- Teachers learn more about how a student is managing by examining the processes that a student has gone through rather than the final product and these processes may be quite different from the ones used when you went to school. Contact the teacher if your child is experiencing difficulties with homework expectation.
- Make sure your child has had time to eat and play and unwind before beginning their homework. Exercise, fresh air and social contact are critical aspects of health and well-being. Remember, your child has had six hours of challenging work already and the batteries are probably flat.
- Provide a comfortable environment that is relatively free from distractions and has a steady supply of equipment so they don't waste a lot of time “looking” for a pencil!
- Help them plan when they will do the homework assignment over the two week period they have to complete it in. Setting up a calendar with planned sessions may help everyone remember and they know they won't miss out on something they love doing e.g. Their favourite TV show.
- You are your child’s coach and cheer squad!

The role of the student

- Accept that homework is a part of school life, whether you like it or not, so just do it.
- Homework is helping you to develop a strong work ethic as well as independent learning and time management skills. You will really find these very useful when you get to high school.
- Make sure you know exactly what you have to do. If you don’t, find a time in your day to ask the teacher to explain it again. You can do this privately at lunch or recess or at the end of the day.
- Bring completed homework assignments back to school by the day they are due.

The role of the teacher

- Encouraging, supporting and helping students with homework tasks.
- Setting assignment tasks that reflect the learning in the classroom.
- Discussing, explaining and modelling all activities outlined on the homework grid.
- Set work for students on individual learning plans that support that student’s development.
- Giving constructive feedback on completed homework assignments.
- Ensuring students and parents or caregivers are aware of the school’s homework policy.

Procedures for Homework

Students in Years 1-6 will be provided with a homework grid at the commencement of each week.

Teachers will set tasks relating to different curriculum areas.

The homework policy will be reviewed regularly in consultation with the school community.

Our homework approach acknowledges the importance of family life and active pursuits of children and encourages students to plan their time to complete the set tasks within the constraints of their after school commitments.

This policy endorsed by the PeC 2007
What the research says...

For primary school aged children, there is no correlation between homework and improved outcomes, as there may be for high school students. Therefore, we are implementing a homework program that will increase students’ skills in the areas of:

- time management
- personal study habits
- independent learning and problem solving
- self-direction
- information literacy and research

This approach aims to improve the skills of students to effectively manage and complete assignments set and to engage students in their learning and to encourage students to be life-long learners.

Great Links

- TaLE (Teaching and Learning Exchange) for Parent and the community - http://www.tale.edu.au/tale/live/parents/index.jsp?muid-309701&taleUserId-4459902560&userType-u&username-