

Parental Homework Survey

Thank you if you participated in the Homework survey last term. I was pleasantly surprised by how many parents took the time to fill out the survey. 273 responses is excellent with around two thirds of the parents of Years 7 and 9 taking part. The overwhelming majority of the comments made were supportive. Around the same period of time, we also surveyed around 80% of the students in Year 9,10 and 11 about their views on homework. Year 7 were also asked about homework as part of a wider survey looking at how they had settled in to the school in the first term. I have included their responses in the feedback to you.

Please indicate what year your son is in		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Year 13	1.5%	4
Year 12	5.1%	14
Year 11	11.4%	31
Year 10	15.8%	43
Year 9	22.7%	62
Year 8	19.0%	52
Year 7	24.5%	67
<i>answered question</i>		273
<i>skipped question</i>		0

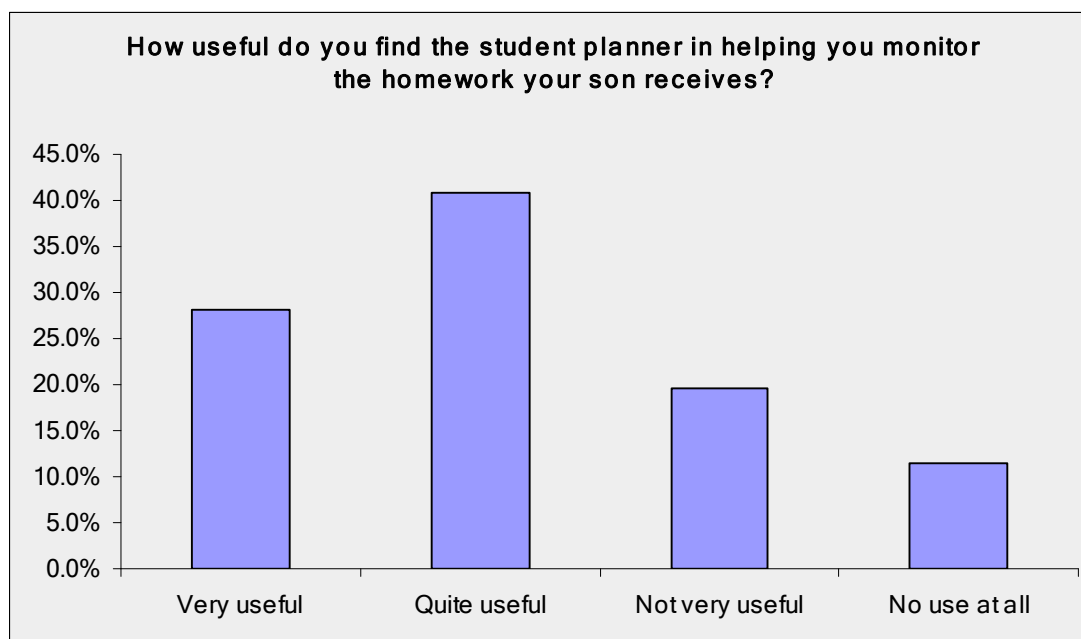
Time taken to complete homework

How much time would you estimate your son spends on average on a weeknight completing his homework							
Answer Options	Please indicate what year your son is in					Response Percent	Response Count
	Year 11	Year 10	Year 9	Year 8	Year 7		
Less than 30 mins	9	9	18	8	7	21.1%	51
30 mins to 1 hour	11	19	28	32	38	52.9%	128
1 to 2 hours	8	12	10	10	16	23.1%	56
More than 2 hours	1	2	2	0	2	2.9%	7
Other (please specify)							12
						<i>answered question</i>	242
						<i>skipped question</i>	13

Clearly the time spent seems to be around an hour in duration every weekday. Your results correspond to the findings from the students where around 65% of students stated that they spent around an hour a night on

homework. There were 14 parental written comments. The responses made commented on variation from week to week but 5 out of 14 stated that their son did their homework at school in their lunch hour. Students were asked this and 6% of them said they always did homework at school. Victoria College is looking at ways to support students that prefer to complete homework at school.

Student Planner



Most parents find the planner useful in monitoring the homework their son receives. Parents were invited to comment in question 5 and around half did so. Most stated that the planner was only as good as their son was in filling it out.

Many parents were concerned that they could not check that the information in their son's planner was correct and comments made were often about how they could independently verify the details in the planner.

This was discussed at a meeting of the Academic Heads of Department. It was felt that students need to organise their time effectively themselves and writing their homework in their planner was an integral part of this. The students responding in the homework survey stated that they always or usually use their planner to record homework (89.5%) with around 90% of the students saying that they always meet the homework deadlines. Interestingly when asked why they missed deadlines 13% stated that it was because they had not written it correctly in their planner. However 74% said it was due to other distractions such as social media sites such as Facebook, computer games and TV. Nevertheless the Year 7 survey indicated that many of the students found organisation of homework challenging. We will be investigating ways to support this year group. In the meantime the Directors of Study for each House will be independently and randomly checking student planners for

all years to ascertain if the planners are being used effectively and looking at strategies to promote more effective completion of the student planner.

Help with Homework

How often do you help your son with this homework?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Frequently	3.5%	9
Often	8.5%	22
Sometimes	69.4%	179
Never	18.6%	48
Is there a particular subject you help your son with (please specify)		99
	<i>answered question</i>	258
	<i>skipped question</i>	15

Parents commented that the most help they gave was in helping by testing their son for revision purposes especially in languages. Sciences and Maths were also popular subjects nominated as receiving assistance. The student survey showed that 49% of students occasionally asked for help with their homework with 68% of the help requested from parents.

Homework Club

Does your son use the Homework Club facility?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Frequently	5.4%	14
Sometimes	4.2%	11
He used it in the past	11.6%	30
Never	78.8%	204
Do you find this facility helpful in helping your son organise his homework?		45
	<i>answered question</i>	259
	<i>skipped question</i>	15

Most parents are not using this facility but the ones that do seem to find it useful. 45 parents left comments with 20 of them saying that they found it very useful in organisation of homework. A typical comment was

‘Very helpful as he views it as dedicated home work time and does not seem to get distracted’.

Some parents would like to see homework club extended in time or divided into year groups with more input from teachers to help with completing homework. Victoria College will be looking at extending this facility as

suggested by parents and also supporting those students that prefer to do their homework at school.

The amount of Homework

This question simply asked the question

'Do you think the amount of homework set by the school helps to consolidate your son's learning?'

Parents were then invited to comment. 139 parents (58%) think we are getting the amount of homework about right. 36 (15%) parents think we do not give enough homework and 13 (5%) parents think we give too much. The rest of the comments made were qualified statements generally stating that it was difficult to tell if the amount of homework was helping. Typical comments were as follows.

'It's hard to judge how valuable it is. I do know though that it has a huge impact on family life and causes a lot of stress. I think it is important to set simple quick tasks to establish whether or not the child has understood the work set and to help create a self motivated study ethic in the child'

Other parents said that the amount of time given varied.

'I don't find the homework consistent. it depends on the teacher and the subject'

Evidence from the students gave the same picture with 51% stating that it was about right, 32% too much and 8% too little. The students themselves also stated that the amount of time required varied. This was also discussed at the Heads of Department Academic meeting.

The type of Homework

The final question asked

Do you think the type of homework set by the school helps to consolidate your son's learning?

Parents again were asked to comment and 227 chose to do so. Of that number 137 (60%) thought that the homework tasks given consolidated their son's learning. I included 'mostly' and 'usually' in this group but not sometimes. 15 parents said no the homework tasks did not consolidate their son's learning. The rest of the comments were made up from those that stated that they did not know or were unsure or it varied. Some parents feel that teachers were best placed to judge this.

'It is difficult to judge that as we are quite remote from what he is learning'

The homework tasks that parents did not feel relevant or helpful were those that encroached on family time especially in holidays.

'I think the projects have helped him to work independently and helped to structure his time management abilities. Holiday homework is a bit painful... and stressful if we are off the island for the holiday period'

Discussion amongst Heads of Department has put forward the recommendation that for Years 7-9 project deadlines should be put on the calendar in a similar way to the controlled assessment dates for GCSE. Homework set in the week before the holiday should be given to students early to promote advance planning.

Summary

I feel most parents think that the quality and quantity of homework we are giving is about right. They value the structures that we have put in place to support the organisation of homework such as homework club and the student planner.

Action points to be monitored and developed as a response to the comments made include

- Sixth form students as helpers to assist in homework club for subjects/year groups possibly as part of their community service.
- Directors of Study to spot check homework planners.
- Homework projects set in holidays to be put on the calendar.
- Further investigation into supporting Year 7/8 in organising homework and their planner effectively.

If after reading this summary you would like to receive an individual response to the comments you made in the Homework survey or if there are any additional points you would like to make, please e mail Moira Taylor, Assistant Head: Academic on m.taylor@vcj.sch.je

