



# Mountain Sun Community School

## HOMEWORK Approach & Philosophy

First and foremost, we believe school is the place where the hands-on learning, knowledge acquisition, and fundamental academic and cognitive skills should be practiced. We believe time outside of school should be spent on childhood pursuits such as:

- 1) Extensive free time in the outdoors;
- 2) Being involved in the community;
- 3) Games and free play;
- 4) Enrichment activities such as athletics, music, art, etc;
- 5) Engaging the imagination (to further develop a sense of self); and
- 6) Participating in quality family time and meal times.

Furthermore, we believe “homework” should consist of real-life experiences that can reinforce the learning happening in the classroom. This means instead of sending home hours of homework on a daily basis we will encourage parents to look for teachable moments that enhance their reading skills and comprehension, mathematical acuity, scientific discovery, cultural and geographical lessons and discovery, and so forth. The difference between traditional classrooms and experientially based classrooms is that the practice of what is being taught happens during the school day. Most traditional classrooms receive lessons in various subjects, often moving from class to class and teacher to teacher throughout the day and then are *given homework as means to practicing the skills they were taught that day*. The daily schedule in this open classroom, experiential setting is designed for the discovery and practice of new knowledge **during the school hours**.

Our one primary request for work at home will be reading for approximately thirty minutes or more, but only as is pleasurable. We will not recommend timed reading that feels forced upon the child. Parental involvement in helping the child find reading exercises or books that interest them may be necessary. Obviously, the approach to this depends on the child’s reading skills as to whether they are reading independently or family members are reading to them, with them, or whether it will be a combination of the two.

There will be periodic occasions when homework will be assigned but generally for one of the following purposes:

- 1) ***When a student is struggling with certain concepts or fundamental skills.*** ~ *Such assignments would be made on an as-needed basis.*
- 2) ***When meaningful reflection on particular lessons or stories from the day seem appropriate and would further satisfy the student’s curiosity and deepen their authentic understanding and connection to the information.*** ~ *This may be in the form of journaling, creative writing, books reports, artistic interpretations of their newly discovered knowledge, or other expression of their understanding of the material.*
- 3) ***When students are actively engaged in project-based work (i.e. science projects, cultural projects, etc.)*** ~ *Generally with project-based work, the production will happen at school. Where this may overflow into after school hours is on the collecting of necessary materials, facts, and stories about the subject at hand. Our goal for this would be to have parents and children working together toward such collection (i.e. by going to the forest in search of tadpoles, signs of a seasonal change, by looking for evidence of multicultural impact within our own communities, etc.)*

## Research and Quotes about Homework

“.....any theoretical benefit of practice homework must be weighed against the effect it has on students’ *interest* in learning. If slogging through worksheets dampens one’s desire to read or think, surely that wouldn’t be worth an incremental improvement in skills. And when an activity feels like drudgery, the quality of learning tends to suffer, too. That so many children regard homework as something to finish as quickly as possible – or even as a significant source of stress -- helps to explain why it appears not to offer any academic advantage even for those who obediently sit down and complete the tasks they’ve been assigned. All that research showing little value to homework may not be so surprising after all.,,,” ~ Alfie Kohn, [The Truth About Homework](#), Education Week, September 2006.

According to research compiled by the *Center for Public Education*:

- ❖ There is no conclusive evidence that homework increases student achievement across the board.
- ❖ Older students benefit more from homework than younger students.
- ❖ Homework should be limited or it could have a negative effect.

“I wonder if the time kids spend on homework would be better spent looking for and nurturing their interests, passions and talents. If we take the child who hates homework, and use that same time, effort and energy to help him look for his gifts, perhaps he would become a concert pianist or composer or writer or inventor. Just an hour a day of homework adds up to 200 hours a-calendar-school year. If we focused that same time on finding a child’s gifts, what would that child become in a few years? What talent could be cultivated? How would that child feel about himself? How would his whole future and relationship to the world change?” ~ Resa Steindel Brown, [A Call to Brilliance](#)

“The way to solve the homework problem is to drastically reduce compulsory homework and emphasize the importance of quality class work” ~ William Glaser, [The Quality School](#)

“Although the merits of compulsory homework are questionable, students can easily be persuaded to do meaningful homework as an extension of classroom work. For example, students can finish uncompleted assignments or improve classroom work. They may also do tasks such as interviewing people regarding careers, watch educational television programs associated with school themes, do research within the community, volunteer service to the community, or play educational games with family members.” ~ James P. Krehbiel, *A Fresh Look At Schooling: The Role of Homework*

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“I have never let my schooling interfere with my education.” - Mark Twain