

Policy on Homework

This is a revision and development on existing practice in relation to homework. Staff drafted it during their Croke Park Hours and it was subsequently circulated to Board of Management and Parent's Association for suggestions and comments.

In keeping with the characteristic spirit of the school, this homework policy seeks to develop the childrens' ability to work independently and to develop the skills necessary for the life-long learning which will enable them to achieve their maximum potential.

This homework policy aims:

- To assist pupil learning on a day-to-day basis.
- To reinforce what the child learns during the day.
- To help children develop study skills and a good work ethic.
- To ensure uniformity of approach from class to class.
- To keep parents/guardians informed and involved in their children's day-to-day school work.
- To provide a channel of communication between parent/guardian and teacher for the benefit of the child.

How Often is Homework Given

- Homework is given Monday to Thursday on a regular basis.
- Homework may be necessary at weekends if homework has been neglected during the week or badly done.
- Extra homework may be given sometimes during the week or at weekends as a form of punishment.
- "Homework Off" may be given on occasions at the discretion of staff or to celebrate a special occasion or event.

How Homework Is Recorded

Junior/Senior Infants: All homework will be placed in the Homework Folders. Junior and Senior Infants are given a homework sheet every Monday outlining their homework for the coming week. However after Christmas, Senior Infants will be encouraged to write down their homework in their homework copy.

All children from 1st to 6th Classes use a pupil journal/copy. All children are required to record their homework carefully in the correct page of their journal/copy. Each item should be ticked off when it has been completed.

How long Homework Should Take

The following are guidelines only for times spent on homework. Different children will complete the same homework in different lengths of time. Times may vary from day to day and also from the beginning to the end of the school year. The following are suggested average guidelines for completion:

Junior & Senior Infants: 0-20 minutes

1st & 2nd Classes: 20-30 minutes

3rd & 4th Classes: 30-40 minutes

5th & 6th Classes: 50-60 minutes

Content of homework

- Ideally homework should contain a balance between reading tasks (shared/independent reading), learning tasks and written tasks.
- This balance is not always possible and can vary considerably from day to day.
- Homework will regularly contain reading, spellings, tables, written work, pieces to be “learned by heart”, drawing/colouring, music, memorising, collecting information/items and finishing work started in class.
- Children often feel that reading and “learning by heart” is not real homework. Reading and learning are equally important to time spent on written tasks. Parents can play an important role in listening to reading and items to be learned ensuring this work is done well.

The role of parents/guardians

- Parents/guardians are asked to make adequate provision for the completion of homework. Each family situation is different; however it is important that children have regular routines. A regular time for homework is important, the earlier in the afternoon the better. So also is a quiet and comfortable location where distractions can be kept to a minimum.
- While children should endeavour to do written homework themselves, parents/guardians should monitor and assist their children’s work, intervening only when they have difficulties.
- If a child has difficulty with homework, the parents should help the child to overcome the difficulty with further explanation or examples, but not by actually doing the homework for the child. In this case the parent should write a note to the teacher explaining the problem.
- Homework should be signed every night.
- Lots of praise and encouragement should be given when children do well. Effort is also worthy of praise.

How to help

- If a child is having persistent problems this should be discussed with the teacher by making an appointment. An occasional difficulty can be explained by writing a comment in the journal.
- Children with special needs may, after consultation between staff and parents, be given reduced or different homework in keeping with their needs and abilities.
- While reading/being read to is not homework, it is proven that it is a determining factor in developing high standards of literacy. Reading to children should not stop when they have learned to read for themselves. They still need to be exposed to literature of a standard higher than their own reading level.

How Often Parents Should Monitor Homework

- Parents should check and sign a child's homework journal/copy every evening.
- The pupil's journal is an important record of the child's homework. It is also a valuable means of communication between parents and teachers.
- Monthly newsletters and other letters to parents are placed in the current day of the homework journal. Please check your child's journal for such notes on a regular basis.

When Parents Should Communicate With Teachers About Homework

- When your child cannot do homework due to family circumstances.
- When your child cannot do homework because he/she cannot understand some aspect.
- If the time being spent at homework is often longer than the recommended amount of time.

Homework for Absent Children

Following a request from a parent/guardian for a teacher to prepare work for a child who is absent for a period of more than one week, the following procedures apply:

- If the child is absent due to illness, the class teacher will endeavour to provide some work in order to ensure that the child will not be too far behind class work on his/her return.
- If the absence is due to holidays or other similar events then the advice is that the child should read during the time off.

At all times it is school policy to encourage children to attend school every day where possible, in this way all children will receive an equal opportunity to learn.

Remember:

If homework is a stressful experience between parent and child, something is wrong! This leads to poor learning and defeats the whole purpose. Should this happen on a regular basis, please contact the class teacher.

Signed: _____
(Chairperson Board of Management)

Date: _____

Signed: _____
(Principal)

Date: _____