

Homework Policy

Members of Working Group

- Feedback from parents via questionnaire
- Teaching Staff
- Board of Management

Relationship to school ethos

Scoil Mhuire seeks to enable each child to develop his/her potential. Homework encourages pupils to work independently and take responsibility for their work.

Why give homework?

- To re-inforce what the child learns during the day
- To provide a link between teacher and parent
- To develop a child's concentration skills and develop a work ethic
- Homework is meant to be achievable by a child, i.e. it provides an opportunity to practise work already done. It is normally prepared by the teacher in class. However, sometimes with senior classes, some homework is designed to challenge children's ability and provide opportunities for creativity
- Children are expected to do their homework to the best of their individual ability – no more, no less.

How often is homework given?

- Homework is given on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays but not on Fridays. There are two exceptions:
 - If homework has been neglected during the week
 - In senior classes some project work is undertaken at weekends
- Sometimes at the discretion of the class teacher or the principal, children are given "Homework off" as a treat or as acknowledgment of some special occasion
- Please note extra homework may be sometime be given during the week or at the weekend if a child has not done homework, made a suitable effort or presented untidy work.

What is the content of homework?

- Ideally homework will contain a balance between reading tasks, learning tasks and written tasks
- This balance is not always possible and can vary considerably from day to day. However, it should be noted that homework time devoted to reading and learning is as important as written work
- Homework will regularly contain reading, spellings, tables, written work, pieces to be "learned by heart", drawing/colouring, collecting information/items and finishing work started in class
- Children often feel that reading and "learning by heart" is not real homework. Parents can play an important role in listening to reading and items to be learned ensuring this work is done well.

Homework Content for Junior Infants

(Before Christmas)

- Phonics Copy
- Novel

(After Christmas)

- Reading
- New Words

- Activity Book/ Maths
- Novel

Homework Content for Senior Infants

-Novel
 Reading
 Writing/Maths
 New Words/ Sight Words/ Tricky Words

Homework Content for First Class

- 1 piece of English Writing
- Reading
- Wordbox
- Spellings (3 new and revision)
- Tables

Homework Content for Second Class.

- Reading/ New words to practice
- English Spellings (5 new and revision)
- Irish Spellings (1/2 new and revision)
- Tables
- A block of mental maths from a tables sheet to practice tables
- 1 piece of written work
- Prayer/ Response for First Penance or Communion
- Sometimes a little bit of Irish Reading.

Homework Content for 3rd and 4th Class (Every evening)

- Tables
- Maths Activity
- English Reading and Spellings
- Irish Reading and Spellings
- Some written activities from any curricular area.

(other optional tasks)

- Tin Whistle
- Religion Activity
- Research Work over a number of nights
- Sourcing materials for classes such as science, art etc.

Homework for 5th and 6th Class.

- Tables
- Maths (6-8 sums)
- English Reading, Spelling and Written Activity.
- Irish Reading, Spelling and Written Activity.
- Irish Grammar
- Irish and English Poems
- Essay Writing over a number of nights
- Research/ Project Work over a number of nights.

Homework is given from Monday to Thursday. Normally there is no homework at weekends.

Homework for Absent Pupils.

Pupils absent for brief periods (a day or two) are not expected to complete homework. However, where a pupil is absent for an extended length of time due to prolonged illness etc. a teacher may prepare work following a request from the parent/ guardian. In this instance 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/ he 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 the school policy to encourage children to attend school every day where possible. In this way all children will receive an equal opportunity to learn.

How much time should homework take?

All children work at different rates and speeds.

Homework for Junior Infants and Senior Infants should take no longer than 30 minutes. First and Second to Second Class should take no longer than 45 minutes. Homework for Third class to Sixth class should take no longer than 75 minutes. In cases where homework is taking longer than these guideline times or is causing undue stress and anxiety to pupils, parents should contact the class teacher with a view to discussing homework strategies and/ or differentiation of homework.

How can parents help?

- Parents should try to help their children with homework by:
 - Providing them with a suitable place and time to do their homework
 - To prevent interruptions or distractions, like T.V. or other children
- Children should do written homework themselves and parents should only help when the child has difficulty
- 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
- Shared reading is not homework in the regular sense and it is simply meant to be an enjoyable exercise between parent and child. If it's not enjoyable, shared reading should not be done.

How often should parents monitor homework?

- Parents should check and sign a child's homework journal 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
- Ideally, all written messages to your child's teacher should be put in the homework journal (additional space available at the end of each weekly section)
- Please check that your child records his/her homework neatly in the correct page and ticks each item of homework when completed
- Letters to parents are folded and placed in the current day of the homework journal. Please check your child's journal for such notes on a regular basis.

How can Teachers help?

Teachers can help by:

- explaining to students and their parents or guardians the purpose and benefits of homework
- ensuring students and parents or guardians are aware of the school's homework policy
- providing quality homework activities related to classwork
- setting a suitable amount of relevant homework which is appropriate to the ability of each student

- ensuring that students are aware of what is expected of them, and how their work will be assessed
- giving students sufficient time to complete their homework and projects
- marking homework promptly and appropriately, maintaining homework records and providing feedback to students and parents or guardians.
- alerting parents or guardians of any developing problems concerning their children's homework and suggesting strategies that they can use to assist their children with their homework.

How often do teachers monitor homework?

- Ideally teachers like to check homework on a daily basis.
- Some items of homework (and classwork) may be checked by children themselves under the direction of the teacher. This can be a useful part of the learning process for children.

How can Students help?

Students can help by:

- being aware of the importance of homework
- being aware of their school's homework policy
- completing homework within the given time frame
- alerting parents or guardians to homework expectations
- seeking assistance from teachers and parents or guardians when difficulties arise
- showing their homework to their parents or guardians
- ensuring homework is of a high standard
- organising their time to ensure that sufficient time is given to homework and project work.

When should parents communicate with the teachers about homework?

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

When should homework be done?

- Each family situation is different - both parents working, child minders, etc. Ideally, homework should be done without any distractions e.g. television.
- Children should be encouraged to complete their homework in one sitting. Breaking up the homework into different sessions prolongs the activity and can result in the child feeling that he/she is doing homework all evening.
- Homework should never be left until morning time before school

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.

Non completion of homework in exceptional circumstances:

This policy acknowledges that in exceptional circumstances pupils may not be able to complete homework. Such circumstances include serious illness, unforeseen disruption to the evening routine in a home, delays at a hospital appointment etc. In this instance the parent/guardian should let the teacher know via a note in the journal or a phone-call.

Ratification and Communication

The Board of Management officially ratified this policy on 27th April 2016.

This policy was then circulated and communicated to members of staff and the school community.

Timetable for review:

This policy will be reviewed in 2018.