

# Homework Policy

## Introductory Statement

This policy was formulated with staff (discussion at staff meeting and questionnaire on individual teacher procedures regarding homework) and with parents and pupils (a survey of attitudes to homework and expectations).

## Rationale

- To promote positive home/school communication.
- To maximise the benefit of homework to the child's learning.
- Parental feedback at Parent Teacher Meetings had shown there were some problems with the content and time being spent on homework by some pupils.
- Existing policy is due for review.

## Relationship to characteristic spirit of the school

Scoil Chóca Naofa seeks to enable each child to develop to her potential. Homework encourages pupils to work independently and take responsibility for their assignments.

## Aims

- To reinforce work done in class – it allows for revision and practice
- To develop study skills and to assist in establishing an appropriate routine for children in doing their homework
- To strengthen links and communication between home and school
- To encourage children to become independent learners and to revise, reinforce, finish work that has begun in school.
- To promote consistency and a similar approach to homework across all classes

## Guidelines (content of policy)

### Assigning homework:

All classes will receive homework assignments.

Homework reinforces work done in school, is differentiated according to children's needs and abilities and is always explained to children in school.

Homework contains a balance of task, including reading, spellings, tables, written work, pieces to be 'learned by heart', drawing/colouring, collecting information/items, finishing work started in class, some project work, some research (interviews, IT work, etc)

Children often feel that reading and 'learning by heart' are not real homework. Parents can play an important role in listening to reading and items learned ensuring this work is done well.

In senior classes some project work may be undertaken at weekends.

Homework is meant to be achievable by a child i.e. it provides an opportunity to practice already done.

The teacher in class normally prepares it. However, sometimes with senior classes, some homework is designed to challenge children's ability and provide opportunity for creativity.

Children are expected to do their homework to the best of their individual ability.

Because Homework is a link between home and school and is prepared daily in class, WE DO NOT SET HOMEWORK FOR EXTENDED ABSENCES e.g. holidays – if you want to work with your child during holidays, encourage your child to read; perhaps your child could keep a holiday diary; you could have maths quizzes with your child; you can find out interesting thing about the geography and history of your holiday destination.

### How often is homework given?

The following are general guidelines only for time spent at homework. Different children will complete the same homework in different lengths of time. Time spent will vary from day to day and also from the beginning to the end of the school year. It is important to remember that it is the quality and not the quantity of homework that matters.

Junior Infants/Senior infants	Up to 10 minutes
First/Second Classes	Up to 20 minutes
Third/Fourth Classes	Up to 40 minutes
Fifth/Sixth Classes	45- 60minutes

Homework is given from Monday to Thursday. Normally there is no homework at weekends or on a school day just before a public holiday. However, children in middle and senior classes may sometimes be required to work independently on projects at weekends.

There may be exceptions - birthdays, weekends, special occasions- and sometimes children are given "No Homework" as a treat or an acknowledgement of some special occasion.

Extra homework may sometimes be given during the week or at the weekend if a child has not made a suitable effort at homework, has not done homework or has presented untidy homework.

### Homework journal:

Children in First to Sixth classes purchase a Homework Journal at the beginning of the year.

Some teachers expect parent to sign Journal every evening while others expect a signature if the Journal contains a communication from school. Teacher will inform you at the start of the year as to the requirements for the year.

However, parents should check 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 parent and teacher.

Ideally, all written messages to your child's teacher should be put in the homework journal; teacher will also communicate with you through the journal.

Please check that your child records her homework neatly on the correct page and ticks each item of homework as it is completed.

Children are encouraged to put letters from school into the current page of their journal. Please check for notes on a regular basis.

### How often do teachers monitor homework?

Teachers like to check homework on a daily basis.

Homework Journals are checked regularly by class teacher – designated days, spot checks, etc.

As children get older and learn to work independently, some items of homework are checked less often.

Some items of homework (and class work) may be checked by children themselves under the direction of the teacher. This can be a useful part of the learning process for children.

Teacher will keep a record of pupils who regularly fail to do homework or leave it at home. This will be discussed with you at Parent-Teacher meeting or a note will be sent to you.

### Homework Club

A homework Club was established in 2008 for children from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> classes.

If children receive a 'no homework pass' it will always be for the following day – to allow parents of children in HW Club to be notified.

### The Role of Parents/Guardians and Pupils

A HOMEWORK QUESTIONNAIRE was sent to parent in June 2010; very positive feedback was received from both pupils and their parents; many of the suggestions have been included in this policy.

This policy will also make parents aware of the need for a 'homework routine' – the provision of a suitable place and time for homework.

Parents should try to help their children with homework by:

- Providing them with a suitable and time to do their homework.
- Preventing interruptions or distractions, like T.V. or other children
- Allowing child to do written homework independently: help when there is a difficulty.

Parents can help the child overcome the difficulty with some explanation or example, but not by actually doing the homework for the child.

**Shared reading/Library Reading/Reading for Pleasure** is not homework in the regular sense. It is meant to an enjoyable exercise between parent and child. If it's not enjoyable, shared reading is of little value. REMEMBER : IF HOMEWORK IS A STRESSFUL EXPERIENCE BETWEEN PARENT AND CHILD, SOMETHING IS WRONG.

IT WILL LEAD TO POOR LEARNING AND DEFEAT THE WHOLE PURPOSE OF HOMEWORK.

SHOULD THIS HAPPEN ON A REGULAR BASIS, PARENT SHOULD CONTACT CLASS TEACHER.

#### **When should parents communicate with the teacher about homework?**

When your child cannot do her homework due to family circumstances.

When your child cannot do her homework because she cannot understand some aspect.

If the time spent on homework is consistently longer than the recommended amount of time.

#### **Success Criteria**

Some practical indicators of the success of the policy

- Feedback from teachers, pupils, parents; (feedback via questionnaires was very positive)
- Satisfactory homework exercises and assignments submitted by pupils.

#### **Roles and Responsibility**

Principal

Class teacher

Pupil

Parent/Guardian

#### **Implementation Date**

This policy was ratified initially in JUNE 2010. Following annual review it is again ratified in January 2014

Policy will be circulated on Web page and available from class teacher.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Chairperson Board of Management)

NAME of CHILD: \_\_\_\_\_ CLASS: \_\_\_\_\_

### Homework Questionnaire for Parents

What are the benefits for your child in doing his/her homework?

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How long does it take your child to do her homework?

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Do you help your child with her homework? If yes, what areas do you give her help?

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Do you think that homework should be given at weekends?

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How long do you think that a child of her age group should spend doing her homework?

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Are there any changes you would like to see made in relation to your child's homework?

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Additional comments

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Thank you for taking the time to fill in this questionnaire. All answers will be treated in confidence.

## Homework Questionnaire for Pupils

Why do you get homework?

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How long does it take you to do your homework?

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Do you get help with your homework?

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What is your favourite type of homework?

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What part of your homework do you find the most difficult?

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What would you change about homework? (suggesting NO HOMEWORK is NOT an option)

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## PARENTS' ANSWERS

Huge satisfaction rating with preparation of homework by teachers

### HELPING WITH HOMEWORK

Generally parent help with homework when needed – maybe explain questions, ask spellings, check maths; often they just keep an eye to make sure it's being done.

### INTERESTING CHANGES PARENTS ARE LOOKING FOR:

More Irish homework – nuacht- grammar

Too many reading books – paired/text – we used to go the library – now too much other reading

Reading projects at weekends

Need to go back to learning by heart – tables, poems,

More project work

Project work to initiate children to do own learning – esp on topics of interest to themselves

More Irish to improve standard

Sometimes too repetitive for children who have no problems – maybe more challenging

Harder spellings and reading activities

Very concerned with how Irish is taught – consider balance of oral and written – both are needed in secondary

Less writing – more reading – it could be about history or geography

Projects and looking up things

Independent learning – looking up words in a dictionary or on the computer, quizzes, multiple choice questions

### OTHER CONCERNS:

Is standard of Irish going down?

Less homework topics; more of one or two topics – so that bags would be lighter

Consider less in June when sun is shining- give outdoor projects

Would be watching TV if no homework

Could be more challenging

Give examples – things are different than when I was at school – so I can't always explain properly

Different children need different homework – some kids need little help – for others H/W goes on for ever

Encourage love/joy of reading – membership of library – school and local

Homework club is great because it was difficult to explain maths and Irish the way a teacher can

More conversation Irish

Children in same class but different rooms get different homework – Why?

Generally a great deal of satisfaction with homework. But examples of children taking up to 1½ / 2 hours doing homework (probably senior classes).

## PUPILS' ANSWERS

Irish and Maths seem to be areas that cause most difficulty.

Many children would like to do projects; they also like looking up things for History and Geography.

Writing stories also popular.

## MOST DIFFICULTY WITH

Irish spellings; Maths /Table; If no one at home knows Irish no one can help you – if no one at home knows English it's really hard