



## **Scoil Cholmáin Naofa**

### **Policy on Homework**

#### **Introductory Statement**

This policy document was reviewed and amended in November 2013. It was drawn up following discussion by all members of teaching staff.

#### **Context**

Homework fosters independence, self-reliance, self-esteem, co-operation and responsibility and life-long learning. It is an essential part of primary education as it re-enforces what children learn in school. It provides a link between teacher and parent and encourages parental involvement in their child's education.

Homework provides the children with the opportunity of revisiting learning experiences encountered during the school day and of practicing the skills and concepts associated with those learning experiences. In the senior classes some homework is designed to challenge the children's ability and provide opportunities for creativity. The children are expected to do their homework to the best of their ability – no more, no less.

In general, homework is meant to be achievable by a child working on their own to the best of their ability. It is normally prepared by the teacher in class. It can be used to practise what is done in school or can be designed to challenge children's ability and provide opportunities for creativity.

The Class Teacher and Support Teachers discuss and agree appropriate homework to be assigned to children receiving additional support.

#### **Aims**

To benefit pupil learning

To consolidate work being done at school

To keep parents in touch and involved in their children's work

To promote a similar approach to homework across all classes

To develop and encourage the habit of independent study

## 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.
- Exceptions :  
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.

With regards to pupils who attend Homework Club who receive a Homework Pass from their teacher please note that this Pass will be given not for that particular night but for a night later in the week. This is required so that advanced notice can be given to parents and teachers that the child will not be at Homework Club.

For the week prior to the Christmas holidays and summer holidays homework will not be assigned.

- Please note extra homework may sometimes 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.

### **How much time for homework?**

The following are guidelines 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. The following are general guidelines only for each class level in terms of duration and content.

|                |   |
|----------------|---|
| Junior Infants | 10 – 15 minutes   |
|                | Sight Vocabulary / Jolly Phonics blending tiles   |
|                | Shared reading/ Reading Terms 2 and 3   |
|                | One written piece from the following list:  |
|                | Satellite workbook to practice letter formation   |
|                | Maths Satellite Book: Numeral Formation   |
|                | Jolly Phonics Workbook  |
| Senior Infants | 15– 20 minutes  |
|                | Sight Vocabulary – High Frequency Words   |
|                | Reading Power Hour leveled/ differentiated readers  |
|                | One written piece from the following list:  |
|                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Handwriting Practice Workbook</li> <li>• Phonics Workbook</li> <li>• Maths</li> <li>• Word Book and Sentences</li> </ul> |
| First Class    | Up to 20 Minutes  |

|                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
|                      | Reading Power Hour levelled/ differentiated readers                                      |
| <u>Learning Work</u> | Spellings  |
|                      | Tables / Number Facts  |
| <u>Written Work</u>  | Maths  |
|                      | Sentence Work / Phonics  |
| Second Class         | Up to 30 Minutes   |
|                      | Reading: Power Hour levelled / differentiated readers                                    |
| <u>Learning Work</u> | English Spellings  |
|                      | Irish Spellings  |
|                      | Tables / Number Facts  |
| <u>Written Work</u>  | Maths  |
|                      | Phonics/ Sentence Copy   |
|                      | Handwriting – workbook or copy   |
|                      | In place of other written work from ‘Alive O’ and ‘What a Wonderful World’ may be given. |
| Third Class          | Up to 40 Minutes   |
|                      | Reading: Power Hour levelled / differentiated readers                                    |
| <u>Learning Work</u> | English Spellings  |
|                      | Irish Spellings  |
|                      | Tables / Number Facts  |
| <u>Written Work</u>  | Two Pieces from the following:   |
|                      | Maths / English / Irish  |
| Fourth Class         | Up to 45 Minutes   |
|                      | Reading  |
| <u>Learning Work</u> | English Spellings  |
|                      | Irish Spellings  |
|                      | Tables / Number Facts  |
| <u>Written Work</u>  | Two Pieces from the following:   |
|                      | Maths / English / Irish  |
| Fifth Class          | Up to 50 minutes   |

|                      |                       |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
|                      | Reading               |
| <u>Learning Work</u> | English Spellings     |
|                      | Irish Spellings       |
|                      | Tables / Number Facts |
|                      | Prayers               |

|                     |         |
|---------------------|---------|
| <u>Written Work</u> | Maths   |
|                     | English |
|                     | Irish   |

|             |              |
|-------------|--------------|
| Sixth Class | Up to 1 Hour |
|             | Reading      |

|                      |                       |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
| <u>Learning Work</u> | English Spellings     |
|                      | Irish Spellings       |
|                      | Tables / Number Facts |
|                      | Prayers               |

|                     |         |
|---------------------|---------|
| <u>Written Work</u> | Maths   |
|                     | English |
|                     | Irish   |

In place of some of the work above written work from other subject areas such as Geography, History, Religion, Science may be given.

## Presentation of Work

Children are expected to do their homework to the best of their individual ability – no more, no less. A high standard of presentation is expected from all pupils with regard to their written work. From the end of 2<sup>nd</sup> class onwards all written work should be presented as cursive script.

## What happens when homework is not completed?

### Stage 1

*Pupils are expected to take down all homework in their homework journals each day.*  
*All homework including learning and reading homework must be completed each evening.*  
 In the event that some or all homework is not completed, parents should write a note in the child's homework journal explaining why homework is not completed.

### Stage 2



If the child comes to school without homework completed and without an explanation from his/her parent / guardian, a note (see attached) will be sent home noting that homework has not been completed.

The child's parent is asked to speak to his/her child, discuss the importance of homework and ensure that the omitted homework is completed that night.

The note regarding incomplete homework should be signed and returned to the school the following day.

### **Stage 3**

In cases where incomplete homework becomes a habit and the above procedures have been followed on three occasions, the child's parent will be asked to meet with his/her class teacher to discuss the matter.

### **Leisure Time Reading / Library Book**

Reading introduces us to diverse worlds and thoughts and gives children the opportunity to confront powerful emotional experiences in a safe environment. Reading allows us to share in the experiences of others and to learn from them. The cultivation of a regular reading habit privileges a child with a life enriching habit that will prove both pleasurable and valuable.

- **Leisure Time Reading**

A recent survey by the DES highlights the importance of cultivating the habit of independent reading. Leisure time reading is essentially an out of school activity yet it does not easily fit into our homework model.

How can we foster and develop this habit in our children?

- Encourage children to choose books independently.
- Talk to children about their choice of books and be aware of what they are reading in their spare time.
- Encourage children to spend time reading on a regular basis. This should include weekends and holidays.
- Library books should be brought back each week on the appropriate day. Every child (from 1st class onwards) should have a book for silent reading in class and to read at home. This can be a book brought in from home or taken from the school library. Some children are well able to cope with reading two books concurrently. For others this is too confusing.

- Continue reading aloud with your child as long as he or she considers it an enjoyable activity.
- Let your children see you reading.
- Join a public library.

### How much help should parents give?

- Parents should try to help their children with homework by:
  - Providing them with a suitable place and time to do their homework
  - A 'Same Time, Same Place' approach to homework is recommended.
  - 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. (this is of no benefit to your child.) If your child has difficulty 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

### How often should parents monitor homework?

- Parents should listen to their children reading and sign their 'Reading Record' journal every evening.
- 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 pages available at the end of the journal)*
  - *Please check that your child records his/her homework neatly in the correct page and ticks each item of homework when completed*
  - *Notes 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 often do teachers monitor homework?

- Ideally teachers like to check homework on a daily basis. However with large class numbers it is not always possible to check each child's homework every day.
- As children get older and learn to work independently, some items of homework are checked less often e.g. every second day or once per week
- For children in the more senior classes 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.

### 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.

### 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.

This policy will be reviewed by the Board of Management in 2016.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on

11/12/2013 Date

Signed: 

(Chairperson of Board of Management)