

## **St. Joseph's N.S., Leitrim Village, Roll No: 01125B Homework Policy 2018**

### **1. Introduction**

This policy was originally formulated in October 2010 following a review of our sample homework policy and a detailed parent and teacher survey on the topic of homework. The policy was reviewed between September and November 2015, discussed at staff meetings and parents were issued an online questionnaire. The Policy was again reviewed between September and December 2017. Parents were given a questionnaire to complete and feedback from this along with discussion at staff meetings is incorporated into this policy. A printout of responses from the parental questionnaire will be kept on file in the school.

### **2. Rational**

The original policy was formulated in September 2010 following concerns raised by parents and teachers in relation to homework. It was also seen as an opportunity to promote positive home/school communication and to maximise the benefit of homework to the child's learning. This policy was reviewed in September 2015 and again between September and December 2017.

### **3. Relationship to the Catholic Ethos**

St. Joseph's N.S. seeks to enable each child to develop his/her potential. Homework encourages pupils to work independently and take responsibility for their assignments.

### **4. Aims**

1. To develop skills and self-discipline that will be of benefit to children in order to enhance learning.
2. To foster independence, self-reliance, self-esteem, co-operation and responsibility for lifelong learning.
3. To consolidate work done in class – it allows for revision and practice.
4. To develop study skills and to assist in establishing an appropriate routine for children in doing their homework.
5. To promote consistency and a similar approach to homework across all classes.
6. To encourage children to become independent learners and to revise, reinforce, finish work that has begun in school.
7. To strengthen links and communication between home and school and encourage parental involvement in their child's education.

### **5. Guidelines/ Content**

Homework is given on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays but not on Fridays, with certain exceptions:

- If homework has been neglected during the week.
- In senior classes some project work is undertaken at weekends.

All classes from Junior Infants to Sixth class will receive homework. 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 practice what is done in school or can be designed to challenge children's ability and provide opportunities for creativity.

Homework assigned will be *differentiated* to suit the ability of all children, taking into account the special educational needs of some children and the fact that homework may be given by another teacher (Resource/Learning Support Teacher). *As a result of differentiation not every pupil in a class or group may receive the same homework.*

Occasionally, at the discretion of the class teacher or the principal, children are given a 'Homework Pass', a night off homework, as a treat or as acknowledgement of some special occasion.

There will be a balance between oral, reading and written work and different learning styles will be kept in mind when assigning homework. All assigned homework will be properly explained to children in advance and will be given either at the end of a lesson or at the end of the day. Family circumstances will be taken into consideration when pupils are assigned certain tasks or activities as part of their homework.

Each teacher will use their own discretion with respect to weather conditions or other situations that could arise during the school year.

## **5.2 Homework Content**

Usually, homework contains 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.

## **5.3 Responsibilities of the parties involved in homework**

### **5.3.1 Pupils should:**

- Have a homework journal
- All pupils from 1<sup>st</sup> class to 6<sup>th</sup> class must enter their homework accurately into their homework journals.
- Ensure they take home relevant books and copies.
- Complete homework assignments to the best of their ability.
- Present written work neatly.
- If pupils encounter a difficulty they must attempt the homework and then communicate their problem to their parent/ guardian, who will in turn write a note to the teacher in the homework journal.

### **5.3.2 Parents/Guardians should:**

- Encourage a positive attitude towards homework in all subjects from an early age.
- Encourage children to work independently as far as possible and resist over-helping.
- Encourage children to organise themselves for homework. Have all books and materials to hand. The pupil should have their Homework Journal open to tick off work as it is completed.

- Agree a suitable time for doing homework, taking into account age, the need for playtime, relaxation and family time.
- Provide a quiet place, suitable work surface, free from distractions, interruptions and T.V.
- Encourage good presentation and neatness within a reasonable time.
- Check that learning (spellings and tables) is done and listen to reading.
- Sign the homework diary daily, checking that all homework is complete.
- Check that the child has all necessary books, homework journal, copies, pencils, mathematical equipment, dictionary, P.E. clothes, if needed for the next school day.
- Communicate difficulties to the teacher by writing a note to the teacher in the homework journal, after encouraging the child to attempt the homework.
- Have extra items at hand if needed during homework time such as pencils, erasers, rulers, tables book, dictionary etc.
- Parents / guardians are requested to inform the teacher if for any reason a child cannot complete their homework. This can be done via a note in the pupils Homework Journal.

### **5.3.3 Teachers should:**

- Set homework, review assignments and provide feedback to students.
- Monitor homework to help identify pupils with special difficulties
- Ideally, teachers check homework on a daily basis. However, with large class numbers, it is not always possible to check each child's homework journal 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 a week. 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 as it promotes responsibility and self-esteem.
- The teacher may at times consult with pupils in relation to homework assigned.
- Assist children who have difficulties with an aspect of previous homework. (It will be essential for the teacher to see the child's attempt to understand the child's difficulty and to assist the child).
- When homework is not done regularly the teacher contacts parents with a view to resolving the situation, via a note in the homework journal or phone call. A record will be kept for discussion with parents and brought to the attention of the principal.
- If the situation continues, then the matter is brought to the attention of the Principal who will contact the parent(s) and arrange a meeting to discuss how the matter can be resolved.
- Untidy homework is not acceptable and a teacher may request that it be redone.

### **5.4 Time recommended**

In relation to the time allocated for the completion of homework we can only offer guideline target times as it will depend greatly on each child's ability, interest, physical wellbeing and home environment.

We recommend the following times for the various classes: -

Junior Infants:	15 minutes
Senior Infants:	20 minutes
1 <sup>st</sup> class:	25 minutes
2 <sup>nd</sup> class:	30 minutes

3 <sup>rd</sup> class:	40 minutes
4 <sup>th</sup> class:	40 minutes
5 <sup>th</sup> class:	1 hour 15 minutes
6 <sup>th</sup> class:	1 hour 30 minutes

#### **6. Success criteria**

Satisfactory homework exercises and assignments submitted by pupils and feedback from teachers, pupils and parents will help assess the success of this policy.

#### **7. Roles and responsibilities**

The responsibilities of the pupils, parents and teachers are outlined in section 5.3 above. The principal will be informed of any pupils not completing homework on a regular basis and meet with the child's parents to discuss the matter.

#### **8. Implementation**

This policy will come into effect from January 2018, once ratified by the BOM.

#### **9. Review**

This policy will be reviewed at regular intervals such as every two years or as issues arise. The policy will be amended if the teachers, parents, pupils or B.O.M. consider it necessary.

#### **10. Ratification and communication**

This reviewed policy was presented to the B.O.M in January 2018 and was ratified. This policy will be uploaded to the school website and will be included in the next school Information Booklet for the parents of new pupils admitted to the school. Copies will be available to all staff.