



HOMEWORK POLICY

Meán Scoil Mhuire Longford

Chairperson: Ms. Karen Clabby
Principal (A): Ms. Mairéad Lyons
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Homework Policy Meán Scoil Mhuire

Introduction

The homework policy at Meán Scoil Mhuire is rooted in the school's basic aim to assist students to develop their full potential in an atmosphere of co-operation and mutual respect.

Rationale

The Homework Policy is a guide for students, teachers and Parents/Guardians on how to improve and support classroom learning so that each student may fulfil their true potential. It is intended to foster self-discipline, independent learning and encourage the student to take responsibility for their learning. Learning is a lifelong skill, and many strategies may be employed to improve learning.

Homework is an integral part of the learning process. Learning continues through the completion of homework.

Homework helps to:

- Reinforce the work done in class that day so as to improve understanding.
- Provide the students with practice of new skills and concepts and enable students to become more competent in their use.
- Extend the classroom learning and explore topics in greater depth than is allowed in classtime.
- Revise the work learned last week/ month/year.
- Introduce students to independent learning- completion of projects, the use of the local library for research, the use of the internet etc.
- Carry out preparatory work for the next day's class.
- Encourage the skills needed for students to study effectively on their own and to develop skills such as research and time management
- Encourage independence, self-discipline and responsibility for learning.
- Problem solve at students own pace.
- Prepare students for exams.
- Monitor the students progress and to provide the students with regular feedback on progress.
- Provide challenges and stimulus to gifted and talented students.
- Allow students to work at their own pace.
- Establish habits of concentration and learning.

Definition of Homework

Homework is subject based work assigned by the teacher, for completion by the student, alone or with others, outside of school. Homework is an umbrella term that comprises many types of learning. Some examples are as follows:

- Aural work/Listening comprehension
- Classroom based Assessment (CBA) preparation

- Designing
- Drafting
- Drama, Role play, Act it Out
- Drawing, Pictures/Diagrams/Tables
- Drill practice
- Eliminate possibilities (problem solving)
- Essay writing
- Home Economics Practical Preparation
- Interviews
- Investigations
- Learning assignments
- Listening Comprehension
- Library visit
- Looking for Patterns
- Making a model
- Memorising
- Music- Prep. & Practice of practical work
- Oral work
- Practices of procedures
- Preparation for class tests or exams
- Preparation for debates
- Problem solving
- Projects
- Reading
- Reflective diary
- Research
- Revision work
- Simple experiments
- Simplifying a problem
- Thinking
- Trial and Improvement
- Use an Equation
- Watching a television documentary
- Word processing
- Working backwards (problem solving)
- Written assignments

It is recommended that homework should be completed as soon as possible after class work to reinforce the learning. There is always homework to be done.

Roles and Responsibilities

Teachers, Parents/ Guardians and students play a significant role in the implementation of the homework policy.

The Responsibility of the Teacher (see Appendix 1 for further detail)

Good practice in relation to homework includes the following:

- Homework should be assigned to students based upon reasonable expectations.
- Teachers should give regular homework cognisant of the particular guidelines on homework within individual subject department policies.
- Teachers should give clear instructions for homework and time to record it in the Student journal.
- Teachers should be mindful in setting homework, of spacing large scale assignments such as essays and projects, allowing sufficient time to complete week-day homework in every subject area.
- Consideration should be given to reducing written work to allow revision time for tests.
- Differentiated homework may be given appropriate to the student's ability.
- Homework should be purposeful and meaningful to the work of the class.
- Teachers should check/correct homework as soon as practicable.
- Teachers should acknowledge and give feedback on the quality of homework, to direct and encourage improvement and learning.

- Peer Correction may be used- students correct another students homework in class under the direction of the teacher, as this can be a valuable learning experience.
- Teachers may communicate issues to do with learning through the Students journal/ Vsware.
- Teachers complete reports on students work twice a year.
- Parent/ Teacher meetings provide an opportunity for the teacher to nominate areas that need specific attention and to indicate what needs to be done to improve student performance in each subject area.

The Responsibility of the Parent *(see Appendix 2 for further detail)*

As partners in their daughter's education with the school, parents are expected to take an active interest in their homework.

Parents should:

- Support their daughter in setting aside time each day for homework.
- Provide adequate facilities to enable the students to undertake study.
- Provide adequate supervision as appropriate to the needs of the student.
- Ensure that the homework is completed to the best of the student's ability.
- Ensure that their daughter finds out their homework if she misses class for any reason.
- Check that the student reviews class work and engages in frequent revision.
- Provide work materials and ongoing support as needed.
- Ensure that the student plans sports and social activity around homework time.
- Assist teachers in monitoring homework by checking the student journal regularly and signing weekly.
- Furnish an explanatory note in the event that homework is incomplete or not done. (It is the parents'/guardians responsibility to inform the school or class teacher of any reasons why a student was unable to complete a homework assignment.)
- Communicate with teachers any concerns about the nature of homework or your daughter's approach to homework.
- Attend parent teacher meetings and support the work of the school in helping each student to reach her full potential.

The school recommends strongly that students should not have jobs during term time or during exam years. The level of concentration required for both class and homework are sufficient demand on the energy levels of growing students.

The Responsibility of the Student *(see Appendix 3 for further detail)*

- Full participation in the school's academic programme requires the satisfactory completion of all homework assignments set at the discretion of the subject teachers.
- The student must undertake to complete all homework to the best of her ability.
- The student is expected to and is responsible for recording all homework in the Student journal.
- The student is responsible for finding out and catching up on class work and homework if she misses class for any reason.
- Allowing another student to copy your homework or copying another student's homework is considered a serious matter. Copying is counter-productive.

- The student should study for the recommended period of time for their year group.
- The student must provide a note from the parent/guardian if homework is not done or is incomplete.

Suggestions for Organising Homework

- Find a quiet place where possible and establish a routine. Make sure there is adequate space, light, heat, ventilation etc.
- Try to avoid all obvious distractions, TV, Radio, Phone calls, Text messages, social media etc.
- When possible homework should be completed early in the evening rather than late at night.
- Try to complete homework on the night it is given, even though it may not be required for the next day.
- Design a timetable for homework. Half hour blocks are recommended followed by a short break.
- Take notes when doing homework, highlight key areas, headings etc. These will be useful later for revision.
- Use text book and notes given in class to help learning.
- Study examples before attempting to problem solve.
- Test yourself regularly on what you have learned e.g. vocabulary, spellings, grammar, definitions, diagrams, formulae etc.
- Make sure all written work is neat and tidy
- When homework is completed, timetable and schoolbag should be checked to ensure that all books, copies, PE gear, Art/ Music/ Home Economics materials etc. are ready for the next day.

Duration of Study

While the amount of time required to complete the same assignment may vary from student to student, below are guidelines for minimal homework times. Should the student satisfactorily finish the homework in less time, then the remaining time should be used for revision and self-directed learning.

Junior Cycle:

| | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1st Year - | 1½ hours <i>effective work</i> |
| 2nd Year - | 2-2½ hours <i>effective work</i> |
| 3rd Year - | 2½- 3 hours <i>effective work</i> |

Senior Cycle:

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| T. Y.- | varies depending on project work and activities |
| 5th Year- | 3 hours with 3+ hours at the weekend <i>effective work</i> |
| 6th Year- | 3½-4 hours with 6+ hours at the weekend <i>effective work</i> |

Effective work means you are awake, alert, focused and efficient.

The Leaving Certificate is a two year course and requires substantial effort and dedication over the 2 years. School work during holiday time may also be necessary.

All students will have homework every week night.

Student Journal/ Diary

It is mandatory that each student has her school journal with her in every class. It must be available to be viewed by any teacher on request. This journal is not a personal diary but an essential means of communication between teachers and parents and vice versa.

The student journal is designed to help students organise their work. Students are required to record homework for each subject each day in their journal.

Parents are strongly encouraged to examine the student journal on a daily basis and to sign it each week.

The journal provides:

- Pages on which to record homework given in each subject every day. Space at the end of each week which teachers and tutors may use to communicate with parents/ guardians.
- A space where parents sign weekly to indicate that they have examined the student journal for that week.
- Explanatory notes for absences, non-completion of homework etc. for parents/guardians to sign when required.
- There are pages provided in the diary to assist students in recording and monitoring progress and achievement in each subject area.

Study Skills

- Each individual class teacher provides tips on specific requirements and techniques within their own specialist subject area.
- Wellbeing Classes, SPHE and Guidance Counsellor classes cover content related to study skills.
- All 2nd Year and 5th Year Students have the opportunity to attend a study skills seminar/ workshop early in the school year. The focus is on note making, active learning styles, study techniques and realistic revision planning.

Supervised Study

Supervised study may be available after school from Monday to Thursdays inclusive, depending on interest. There is a fee for this and it is payable each term.

Sanctions:

Non-Completion of Homework:

- Homework is an essential part of school life. It is reasonable to expect that all students will make an honest effort to complete it satisfactorily.
- Teachers may record in the notes section of the student journal that homework has not been completed. Parents/ Guardians will be required to sign the note.

- An appropriate consequence for not completing homework will be assigned by the teacher.
- Parents/ Guardians may be required to assist in the implementation of a plan to support homework completion if deemed necessary.
- If failure to produce homework continues to be an issue or a lack of effort in completing homework is ongoing, the procedures outlined in the school code of behaviour will be followed including referral to the Year Head and recording of a negative behaviour on vsware.
- The Year Head may involve the Student Support Team, Guidance Counsellor, Home School Liaison Officer or School Completion Project Worker as appropriate.
- Situations may arise from time to time which prevent students having homework completed. Sanctions may not apply in such cases so long as an explanatory note or contact from the parent/guardian is provided.

Homework Rewards:

- Positive comments recorded in Student Journal
- Positive Comments recorded on vsware
- Teachers may have their own in class reward system for encouraging participation with homework.

Links to Other Policies

- Attendance Policy
- Code of Behaviour
- EAL Policy
- School Outings (Trips and Tours) Policy
- SEN Policy

Monitoring and Evaluating the Homework Policy

Monitoring Procedures

Year Heads, Guidance Counsellor, Principal and Deputy Principal will conduct ongoing monitoring of the homework policy through informal discussion with students, subject teachers and parents.

Subject Departments will review their guidelines on homework on a regular basis.

The Principal will report to the B.O.M.

Review Procedures

The homework policy will be reviewed every two years. Views of teachers, students and parents/ guardians will be sought as part of the review.

APPENDIX 1:

BEST PRACTICE FOR TEACHERS OF JUNIOR CYCLE STUDENTS HOMEWORK SKILLS

1. Recording Homework

- ❖ Give adequate time in class to assign and record homework. Check to ensure this is being done.
- ❖ Assign a variety of homework types
- ❖ Use the **codes** to record
 - (W) Written; (O) Oral; (L) Learning; (P) Practical; (R) Revision
- ❖ Students should know the completion date
- ❖ When using e-learning platforms homework may be posted on Teams.

2. Completing homework- advice to students

- ❖ 11/2 -2 hours per night X 5 nights (See duration of study for year group specifics diary and policy)
- ❖ Do on the day given where possible
- ❖ 10-15 mins. Per subject (all aspects)
- ❖ After 20mins approx.. leave it, come back to it and 'have another go' when finished other homework. Record time spent in Student Journal if still unable to complete homework. Parents/ guardians should sign journal at this stage.
- ❖ Teachers will ask to see evidence of effort made.

3. Ask for evidence of active learning of work

- ❖ Check in Homework Journal that learning/homework was written down.
- ❖ Check students homework copy

4. Revision

- ❖ Revision Targets/Plan for exam years
- ❖ Set Revision for assessments
- ❖ Include as part of homework
- ❖ Model quick recall & brainstorming as part of learning.

5. Teach students to be responsible for tracking their academic progress.

- ❖ Encourage and give time to fill in key test results in Homework Journal.
- ❖ Facilitate realistic target setting for your subject.
- ❖ Encourage students to talk about progress with parents/guardians
- ❖ Parents/ Guardians should sign Student Journal at the end of each week.

6. Focus on how to learn

- ❖ Refer to **POKER** Method
 - **Pre-test**- What do I know?
 - **Overview**- Read/ Scan- What is this about?
 - **Key Words/ Key Diagrams**
 - **Etch & Sketch**- Make notes/ Mind maps= Be active!
 - **Re-test**- Write/ Hear/ Draw. Check/ circle mistakes.

Remember- Look; Cover; Say/Write/ Check (Reading over alone is not learning to remember)

APPENDIX 2:

HOMEWORK GUIDELINES FOR PARENT/GUARDIANS

1. School Attendance

- ❖ Encourage full attendance at school.
Attending school every day is essential to success. Students should not take unnecessary days or half days off school as coursework covered by teachers each day is difficult for the students to catch up on when missed.

2. Student Journal

- ❖ This is key to success- it is a communication and collaborative tool between school and home.
- ❖ Parents/ Guardians/ Teachers may look at it whenever they wish
- ❖ Each class must be written in it
- ❖ Journals should be checked and signed weekly by Parents/ Guardians

3. What is homework?

- ❖ It is revision of the day's work in school.
- ❖ It is written work, oral work, practical work, research, revision/ relearning.
- ❖ Students should use the code for recording homework.
- ❖ **W**= written; **L**=Learning; **O**=Oral; **P**=Practical/do; **R**= Revision

4. Where?

- ❖ The same place and time every day, if possible. Routine is very important.
- ❖ A quiet room with required equipment/environment/resources, free from unnecessary distractions e.g. mobile phones.
- ❖ Check regularly what work is being done.

5. When and for how long ?

- ❖ Ensure your daughter spends the recommended time at her homework.
- ❖ As soon as possible after school.
- ❖ It is important that the student develops a homework routine and learns to manage time well.
- ❖ It should not be done in the morning before school or at lunchtime.

6. Time management

- ❖ Use a homework timetable
- ❖ 15-20 minutes per subject is the recommended. Check guidelines in the policy.
- ❖ After 20mins. Approx.. leave it, come back to it and 'have another go' when finished other homework. Record time spent in Student Journal. If still unable to complete homework, Parents/Guardian should sign Student Journal at this stage.
- ❖ Take breaks (max. 3 mins) and allocate EXTRA time at the end of homework for a particular subject if needed.

7. How to learn?

- ❖ Do homework on the evening given.
- ❖ Offer advice if your daughter finds a particular piece of homework difficult. Encourage doing their best, making an effort.
- ❖ Make sure to concentrate and pay attention when learning.
- ❖ Use active learning methods when memorising. Memory works best when you see it, hear it, do it.

- ❖ Use the 'Poker' method.
 - **Pre-test**- What do I know?
 - **Overview**- Read/ Scan- What is this about?
 - **Key Words/ Key Diagrams**
 - **Etch & Sketch**- Make notes/ Mind maps= Be active!
 - **Re-test**- Write/ Hear/ Draw. Check/ circle mistakes.

*Remember- **Look; Cover; Say/Write/ Check** (Reading over alone is not learning to remember)*

8. Coping with tests

- ❖ Help your daughter to learn to cope with anxiety. (Managing Stress and Anxiety- A Guide for Parents and Guardians, Available at: <https://assets.gov.ie/83460/3ea178f3-be19-467b-b96a-32f7e7871674.pdf>)
- ❖ Help your daughter to set realistic targets per evening for a test that may be coming up.
- ❖ Encourage 'PLANNED rather CRAMMED study'. This means learning every night rather than trying to do it all just before a test.
- ❖ Ensure that regular learning is being done.
- ❖ Use the weekend for revision.
- ❖ Encourage self-testing regularly and practice recalling information by saying and writing.
- ❖ Help your daughter learn from mistakes and make sure corrections are done.

9. How Parents/ Guardians can help during the school term.

- ❖ Stay involved with homework. Try to negotiate and advise. It is important to make homework a priority.
- ❖ This can be done in the following ways:
- ❖ Encourage homework being done before going out to other activities in the evening where possible.
- ❖ Check Student Journal regularly
- ❖ Check and monitor homework environment at home.
- ❖ Check presentation of written work.
- ❖ Insist that the school bag is packed the night before.
- ❖ Encourage your daughter to do her best.
- ❖ Encourage asking questions in class.
- ❖ Help and encourage self-testing of learning.
- ❖ Help the gradual movement towards independent responsibility and organisation of homework timetable and space.
- ❖ Encourage the development of a homework routine at weekend, appropriate to the Year Group of the student.
- ❖ Encourage regular exercise, relaxation and participation in extra-curricular clubs/ sports at lunchtime and after school if relevant.
- ❖ Encourage going to bed early on school nights and avoid using devices late in the evening.
- ❖ If your daughter is working a part-time job, please ensure an appropriate work/school balance is found. The school strongly recommends that examination students do not have part-time jobs during term time.

APPENDIX 3:

HOMEWORK GUIDELINES FOR STUDENTS

1. In class

- ❖ Always have your Student journal in class.
- ❖ Fill in every class in Student Journal.
- ❖ Always take down all the homework in each class. (Ask appropriate questions if unsure).

2. Recording Homework

- ❖ All subjects must be recorded
- ❖ Code to record all aspects
 - (W) Written
 - (O) Oral
 - (L) Learning
 - (R) Revision
 - (P) Practical

Do not write 'no homework' unless the teacher says so.

3. At home

- ❖ Set aside enough time for homework each night.
- ❖ Do homework on the night given if possible.
- ❖ Do homework early.
- ❖ Ensure your homework area is:
 - ✓ Available when required
 - ✓ Free from distractions and interruptions e.g. mobile phone, TV, games etc.
 - ✓ Contains all your study materials.
 - ✓ Contains a large enough workspace.
 - ✓ Has a comfortable chair.
 - ✓ Has enough light.
 - ✓ 15-20 mins. per subject- all aspects
 - ✓ After 20mins, leave it and come back to it at the end.
 - ✓ If in difficulty record time spent.
 - ✓ Do not leave weekend homework until Sunday evening.
- ❖ Packing your bag for the next day should be part of your homework routine.