

St Patrick's Cathedral Grammar School

HOMEWORK POLICY

INTRODUCTION

The primary function of all schools is teaching and learning. While significant learning takes place in the classroom, homework also has a vital role in the learning process. Homework provides the opportunity for:

- students to consolidate work done in class
- to prepare for learning in subsequent lessons
- to encourage students to develop personal responsibility for their own learning.

Successfully developing a sense of responsibility for their own learning empowers students and is vital for their attainment and success in school. It is a life skill and encouraging this sense of responsibility is an important aspect of the school's mission.

SCOPE of THIS POLICY

The policy is for the benefit of all students, parents and teachers.
The policy has been reviewed during the academic year **2017-2018**.

RELATIONSHIP to SCHOOL'S MISSION & AIMS

The school aims to encourage and facilitate students in reaching their potential, both personally and academically. Developing the life skill of personal responsibility for learning is an important aspect of this process. The importance of homework being a regular habit cannot be over-emphasised and it should be firmly established from form one upwards. Homework should also be completed carefully to the best of a student's ability

RATIONALE of THIS POLICY

1. Good homework practice is the foundation of teaching and learning
2. This policy will help students consolidate their classroom learning and prepare for it
3. Homework/study enables the student to take responsibility for their own learning.
4. Homework/study facilitates evaluation of teaching and learning for students and teachers.
5. This policy will improve student attainment.
6. With improved learning outcomes students will enjoy school more.

GOALS / OBJECTIVES

1. To foster a regular habit of daily homework.
2. To foster an organised and consistent approach to the completion of homework and study.
3. To encourage students to create time for personal study.
4. To encourage students to take responsibility for their work, both its completion and the standard of the work. Homework should be completed to the best of a student's ability.
5. To encourage parents/guardians to play an active role in monitoring homework and its completion on a daily basis in Junior Cycle and weekly for senior cycle students.

HOMEWORK EXPECTATIONS AND PRACTICES

EXPECTATIONS:

The following is the recommended time students should spend on *all* their homework (5 nights per week in junior cycle and 6 nights a week in senior cycle):

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|---------|-------------------------------------|
| Form 1: | On average 1 – 1 ½ hours per night. |
| Form 2: | On average 1 ½ - 2 hours per night |
| Form 3: | On average 2 - 2 ½ hours per night. |

Students in Senior Cycle should spend 30 to 45 minutes *per subject* on homework and study for on average 2½ - 3½ hours per night, six days a week.

This amounts to around 15 - 21 hours homework per week and would be normal for students in forms 5 and 6.

Leaving Certificate students will be competing with 55,000-65,000 other students many of whom *are* completing this amount of work/study.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE HOMEWORK POLICY

Learning is the most important activity in our school. Homework is a necessary support for learning. It is the student's responsibility, with the support of parents, to organise their books and materials, do the set homework and submit it to the relevant teacher on- time.

If students do not submit the set homework or if the work submitted is of an unsatisfactory standard, the following procedures will apply:

- If homework is not done or not completed satisfactorily, students will be required to complete/redo the work either during lunch break or for the following day. This also applies to work not 'learnt'.
- It is the student's responsibility to catch up on all class and home work missed due to absences. If the absence has been prolonged then a reasonable amount of time, as determined by individual teachers, will be allowed to catch up on all work missed.
- The teacher will put a 'No homework received' note in the student's school journal for each homework not handed in to them on-time.
- If the student misses any 3 home works (all subjects) in a single term they will automatically be placed on 'Homework Report' by their form teacher. The form teacher will also send a text to parents informing them of this.
- As soon as the student completes a full week with all home works submitted on time they will be taken off 'Homework Report'.
- In any event, the student may only remain on 'Homework Report' for a maximum of 2 weeks in any term. If, after 2 weeks, they still have not completed all the homework set they will be **referred to the 'academic council'**.
- The academic council response will be: (i) a member of the council will talk to the student and set agreed targets around homework and (ii) the Principal will send a letter to parents reminding them of their responsibilities around homework.
- For repeat appearances at the academic council, either a sanction will be applied or a privilege removed. In addition the student and their parents will be called to a meeting with the Principal.

(The academic council consists of the Principal and 3 or 4 other members of staff. For 2012-13 the members of the Academic Council are: Mrs Hick, Mr Dexter, Ms Daly and Mr Brady).

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

TEACHERS' ROLE:

- To ensure sufficient time is given to the allocation of homework in class
- To ensure the homework is relevant to the work of the class; it may be revision or preparation.
- To write the homework on the board preferably at the start of the class.
- To ensure that students record the homework in their journals
- To emphasise the importance of homework and the student's role in ensuring all set work is completed.
- To attempt to set a variety of homework types e.g. Written, Learning, Research etc.
- To ensure students understand what is expected of them in completing the set work.
- To correct homework promptly and give feedback
- To implement the policy in a way which emphasise homework as a positive thing
- To encourage a high standard of work by use of praise, commendations etc.
- To carefully monitor homework and record both completion and non-completion of work in their staff journals. A note to parents will be put in the student's journal for EVERY homework not submitted.

STUDENTS' ROLE

- To have journals in every class
- To record homework carefully in journals
- To have the necessary equipment in every class
- To find out what work has been missed when they are absent and catch-up this work in their own time
- To complete the homework on the night it is set if at all possible.
- To spend time at home on their studies whether or not homework has been set. This is an opportunity to consolidate work taught previously.
- To ensure parents sign their journal and view notes from teachers every day (J. cycle) or weekly (S. cycle).

If a student has been absent the onus is on the student to ask the teacher or fellow students "what work has been set?" and to complete it on time or as soon as the relevant teacher indicates.

PARENTS' ROLE:

- To look at and sign the journal regularly; every night in Junior Cycle and every week in Senior Cycle
- To ensure their child understands the importance of doing regular nightly homework. Students must be helped to understand that success is the result of regular hard work

- To take an interest in the *quality* as well as *quantity* of homework being done
- To take appropriate action if informed by the school that homework is not being done
- To inform the class teacher of any reasons why a student was unable to complete homework; the journal may be used for this purpose
- To inform the form teacher if the student is experiencing difficulties with homework
- To inform the form teacher if the student appears to be doing little homework.
- To encourage their child to attend the school Homework Club – especially in forms 3 and 6. Homework club runs 3 days a week, every week.

Meeting homework deadlines may not be always easy for students. They should not normally be excused homework, but may need help with time-management strategies.

OTHER ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Board of Management

Approve and support the policy

Principal, Deputy Principal, Academic Council

1. Co-ordinate the setting of homework by providing written guidelines to teachers
2. Inform parents of the contents of the homework policy, especially at meetings for parents in forms 1, 3 and 6 at the start of each academic year.
3. Set realistic targets with students in forms 3 and 6 and work with students to ensure they are attained.
4. Keep in regular contact with parents by text, letter or meetings.
5. Monitor the policy's implementation.
6. Monitor examination results – both in-house and state examination results

Form Teachers

1. Explain the policy to students not less than once per term.
2. Emphasise, to students, the importance of completing homework and completing it to the best of their ability.

3. Emphasise, to students, the importance of 'learning' homework, research and personal study.
4. Monitor the journals and record the number of homework notes from class teachers.
5. Check students are writing set homework in their journal.
6. Place students on 'Homework Report' as required and text parents to inform them.
7. Play their role in implementing the homework policy as described above.

Guidance Counsellor and Learning support teachers

1. Provide support and guidance especially to students with special needs
2. Provide advice on 'study skills' especially prior to examinations.
3. Provide support and guidance to students who have difficulties with homework.

Parents Association

Become informed about and support the homework policy

CRITERIA for SUCCESS

1. Quality of homework improves
2. Attainment improves
3. Students are more organised and journals are neater
4. There is greater completion of homework
5. Teachers are more satisfied with the standard of homework
6. Parents/Guardians are satisfied that the policy is being implemented

PROCEEDURES FOR MONITORING

1. Form Teachers, Deputy Principal and Principal will perform spot-checks of student journals to monitor progress.
2. Guidance and learning support team will note the frequency of referral of students experiencing difficulties with homework.
3. Parents/Guardians will be informed of any difficulties in line with the section on 'Implementation' above.

PROCEDURES FOR REVIEW

The policy will be reviewed after its first year of implementation and thereafter every 3 years by the Principal, Deputy Principal, Form Teachers and Class Teachers.

The methods of review will include a selection of the following:

1. Discussion by all members of staff at the end of year staff meeting.
2. Survey of students, teachers and parents/guardians in relation to the above-mentioned 'criteria for success'
3. Evaluation of student attitude to homework
4. Analysis and comparison of in-house and state examination results where appropriate
5. Evaluation of progress of students with special needs

APPENDIX 1: RECORDING AND COMPLETING HOMEWORK

This appendix outlines the steps that will be implemented during the first term. The aim is to inculcate an organised approach to homework.

Step	Focus	Important
1.	Journals	<p>Journals must be neat and well-kept. Write NEATLY in the journal the details of homework given Subject, homework, day/date due (Note: students should <i>always</i> aim to do homework on the day it is set while the work is fresh in their mind).</p>
2	Doing the Homework	<p>Written homework must be done NEATLY. It must be done in a tidy and well-kept copy. It must be done in the correct copy. It must be dated. It must have a title or heading. It should record the page number in the textbook, if relevant.</p>
3.	All Homework must be done	<p>Where 'learning homework' is given a jotter may be used to take notes, to practice recall. When the homework is done tick it in the journal. If desired note how long the work took.</p>
4.	Correcting	<p>Students learn from mistakes! Correcting is vital. Homework will be corrected in different ways: by the teacher gathering copies and correcting at home by testing (e.g. spelling test, oral or written questions) self- correcting by students in class under the direction of the teacher by group discussion where students examine each others homework and learn strategies for improvement.</p>
5.	Study	See Appendix 2: 'The Learning Process'
6.	Revise	<p>Revision is constant and an <i>essential</i> part of learning Use a timetable. Practice <u>recall</u> as well as re-reading material.</p>

Practice writing down short notes. Writing reinforces learning. See Appendix 2: 'The learning process'.

APPENDIX 2: THE LEARNING PROCESS

There are 3 steps to effective learning:

1. **Understanding** the new information
2. **Organising** and storing this new information in your head in a way that will allow you to recall it.
3. **Recalling** the information.

There are 3 foundation stones to effective learning:

1. **Motivation.** To be motivated we need to understand the purpose and benefits of homework and study.
2. **Time management.** When we learn new information we forget much of it unless we review the material regularly. The first review should take place the evening we have covered the work in class.
3. **A good learning environment.** We learn best when we study in a fixed place, that is comfortable, quiet and free from distractions. We should organise our materials and books in this area.

There are important Supertools for learning SQ3R:

1. **Survey** the material to be learned
2. **Use Questions** - Who/?What? Where? When? Why? to extract information from the chapter.
 - 3R = Read** – read the piece to get the answers you need to answer the Questions.
 - Recall** – Try and recall the information you have extracted from the chapter.
 - Review** – Attempt to recall the information again within 1 day of reading it.

APPENDIX 3: MONITORING AND EVALUATING HOMEWORK

The effectiveness of this homework policy needs to be monitored and evaluated.

It is envisaged that each subject department monitors homework within the department at subject department meetings. **Teachers** need to evaluate;

- The range of homework types set
- The amount of homework set
- Whether homework set is summative or formative in nature.
- The quality of homework done by students
- The contribution homework is making to learning.
- How constructive feedback is given to students.

The system can also be evaluated through staff appraisal at staff meetings.

In addition to monitoring arrangements the homework policy needs to be reviewed annually at the end of year staff meeting to assess its effectiveness. The key criterion should be the extent to which the policy is contributing to the progress students make at school and their attitude to learning.

Parents should be aware that 'homework' includes a variety of types of work. They should help their child by ensuring that such work is completed to the best of their child's ability AND ON TIME. This is especially true for the coursework elements for State Examinations. Time allotted to 'homework' should also include time for study and revision by students.

Homework may include:

- Written questions on work covered in class
- Learning material covered in class
- Learning poetry or quotes
- Writing an essay
- Doing 'practical work' for Art, Science or Home Economics
- Doing preparatory design work required for Art projects
- Writing up Practical experiments in the Sciences
- Writing up reports on Investigations or field studies
- Designing a presentation based on work covered in class
- Designing questions about material covered in class

- Advance reading before a topic is taught
- Advance reading with 'notes'
- Advance spider-diagram of 'what the student already knows' about a topic
- Independent research – probably internet based
- Creative design of games/materials for learning using coursework.