



CBS Roscommon – Mean Scoil Na Braíthre

HOMEWORK POLICY 2015 – 2017

THIS POLICY LINKS WITH:

- The Code of Behaviour which includes our Suspension and Exclusion Policy & Procedures
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Attendance and Participation Policy
- School tour/extra-curricular policy
- Mobile Phone Policy.

Date of Latest Update	
Review Date	May 2016
Policy Agreed by Board of Management	May 2015
Policy Available for Staff at:	Staff Handbook; School Website
Policy Available for Parents at:	School Website; Office; Student Journal

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

This policy is rooted in the school's fundamental aim to foster in students a spirit of self-reliance, independence, co-operation and responsibility and to provide them with skills for life-long learning.

RATIONALE

Regular homework is a valuable aspect of the learning process and contributes to the development of sound study skills. It consolidates and supplements the work done in class and promotes independent learning and creativity.

GOALS

1. To ensure consistent approaches to the setting and reviewing of homework across the school.
2. To ensure an equitable distribution of study-time for each subject.
3. To reduce pressure on students from homework overload.
4. To promote the development by students of good study habits and effective study skills.
5. To enable students to develop a capacity to organise their own work.
6. To enhance the academic achievements of students
7. To encourage parents to take an interest in and to share responsibility for their children's work and progress.

POLICY CONTENT

1. Homework will be allocated at the discretion of the Subject Teacher.
2. Homework will be monitored to ensure that students are not overloaded.
3. A rough time guide will be suggested for each year group during guidance classes.
4. Each student must have a school homework journal with him every day.
5. With the exception of bereavement and serious illness students are expected to catch up on any class work and home work missed out on during their absence.
6. Students attending any school related activity must do all homework assigned by the teacher on the day of the activity. It will be the responsibility of the student to get the homework given.
7. A balance will be maintained between written/practical work and oral/learning work.
8. Teachers will provide feedback to students on homework (Literacy team).
9. Special consideration will be given to students with special educational needs.
10. Homework set will be purposeful and meaningful to the work of the class or to some future work.
11. A seminar on Homework/study skills will be delivered to all students in the first term.
12. Parents should monitor their son's homework journal on a frequent basis as this is the primary means of contact between parents and teachers.

13. Extended exercises such as project work; book review; debating will form part of an on-going assessment of each student.
14. Homework and class work must be neatly presented and organised; neat handwriting, margins, dates, titles, clean and properly structured. Notebooks and copy books must not contain graffiti.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Board of Management

1. To ensure that the policy is developed and evaluated from time to time.
2. To approve the policy.
3. To consider reports from the Principal on the implementation of the policy.

Principal, Deputy Principal and Year Heads

1. To establish structures and procedures for the implementation of the policy.
2. To monitor the implementation of the policy.
3. Ensure that the structures and procedures are in place for the consistent and effective implementation of the policy;
4. Meet with parents/guardians regarding homework issues when appropriate.
5. Meet with subject teachers regarding homework issues when appropriate;
6. Report to Board of Management on the implementation of this policy.

Subject Teachers

1. To implement the policy and provide feedback to students.
2. To keep records of homework.
3. To educate students in homework/study skills.
4. The teacher should always endeavour to provide some affirmation and where possible constructive criticism e.g. displaying work in classroom; submitting an essay in a competition; a marking criteria for the assignment.
5. Instruct in study skills as appropriate to the subject;
6. Set appropriate homework and give a time indication for completion.
7. Ensure that students record subject/homework/completion date in journals and note whether this homework will be Written (W), Oral (O), Learning (L), Practical (P) etc;
8. Ensure students are clear as to what they are expected to do;
9. Make an attempt to assign a variety of homework types e.g. research, written, oral, practical etc;
10. Present homework as something positive that contributes to learning;
11. Note that it is advisable to set common achievable homework with varying expectations;
12. Apply their knowledge of student ability and reading/writing levels when setting homework;
13. Implement the policy with emphasis on the positive and on encouraging the students to produce a high standard of homework;
14. Refer issues of repeated non-completion of homework to the Class Tutor or Year Head for appropriate action;
15. Keep the Year Head and the Care Team/SEN Co-ordinator informed as appropriate.

16. Liaise with other members of the subject department with regard to homework.

Class Teacher, Guidance Counsellor and Learning Support Personnel

1. To monitor the effects of the policy and to identify students experiencing difficulty.
2. To provide support and guidance, especially for those experiencing difficulty.
3. To liaise with subject teachers, especially in relation to consideration for students with special education needs.

Special educational needs

In setting homework for students with special needs teachers are encouraged to balance the right of students to share fully in the work of the class, including homework tasks, with their individual learning needs. These needs may include consolidation and reinforcement of specific skills. For some students, the continuing involvement of parents is very valuable.

Subject teachers collaborate with the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator to ensure class tasks are manageable, and individual skill practice can be incorporated without overloading the student.

Subject teachers will guide the gifted student in their learning and research.

Parents are encouraged;

1. To support school policy.
2. To provide suitable conditions for homework.
3. To ensure that their sons are not employed in part-time work during term as it may interfere with their homework regime.

To help children be successful with work at home and at school, parents can:

- Create a location in the home that is conducive to studying. Appropriate study environments are well-lit and quiet. Although every child's learning style is different, most teachers agree that students do best when the television is off and the student is free from distractions.
- Set aside a specific time for homework each day. This might involve limiting television-watching or phone calls until homework is finished. Mobile phone use should be prohibited during homework. Parents should be careful, though, not to put homework against activities students enjoy, or to create situations in which students rush through their work in order to get back to other activities. Family routines – which include set homework times – have been linked to higher student achievement.
- Make sure students have all the supplies they need. Parents should check in with students ahead of time about the kinds of projects they will be doing: It might be difficult to find a calculator or a report cover at 9pm the night before an assignment is due.

- Be available if students have questions. Parents can support their children by looking over homework and giving suggestions, but should not do the homework for them.
- Make an effort to communicate regularly with teachers. If necessary, parents should ask teachers to clarify their expectations. It is also a good idea to find out ahead of time what kinds of resources – such as tutors or services for second language students – are available to students if they need help.
- Avoid linking rewards or punishment to school performance. While it is important for parents to recognize students' achievements, they should avoid external motivators for performance. Instead, parents should emphasize the value of learning and show they appreciate their child's hard work.
- Respond to a request by a teacher for further communication on the issue of homework.

Students are required

1. To do homework set, both oral/learning and written/practical.
2. To present written homework properly and on time.
3. To have individual copy books for each subject or as requested by the subject teacher.
4. Record homework in journal: subject/homework/completion date/estimated time.
5. Engage in guidance/support in how to do homework given by each subject teacher (presentation, date, number of copies, etc.).
6. Complete homework to the best of his ability.
7. Use homework as an opportunity to improve his learning.
8. Communicate difficulties with homework to subject teacher.
9. Find out work missed when absent and endeavour to complete it within the time given, in as far as is possible. If the student has been ill a period of time will be given to the student to complete missed assignments.

Purpose of Homework

- It consolidates and reinforces skills and understanding developed at school.
- It encourages students to develop the skills, confidence, self-discipline and motivation needed to study effectively on their own. This is vital given the importance for students in the future of life-long learning and adaptability.
- It extends school learning, for example through additional reading.
- It sustains the involvement of parents in the management of students' learning and keeping them informed about the work students are doing.
- It allows the students to manage particular exam course work.
- It directs research.

Homework is both written and learning work given to reinforce the lessons studied in class. It is also used to extend the student's insight of this lesson and to revise work previously done. If students have any difficulty with any aspect of the lesson it may be

identified during homework and students will have an opportunity to raise their question or concern during the next class.

Journals

- Each student is expected to use his Journal, which is provided by the school at a cost. The cost of the Journal is determined by school management at the beginning of the new academic year. Journals are regularly monitored and are available to all teachers should they wish to communicate with parents and vice versa.
- A class teacher or tutor will communicate initially through the journal if a student fails to present written assignments or has failed repeatedly to complete learning assignments. A student who, for health or domestic reasons, is unable to complete his homework shall present the relevant teacher(s) with a written note to this effect from his parent(s)/guardian(s).
- The school journal must be kept free of graffiti or any other offensive material. If a student either defaces or loses his journal he will be required to replace it immediately at a cost.

Homework is an integral part of a student's education. Students are encouraged to have a routine for homework and this routine should be established very early in the year.

- Every student should enter the written and learning/reading homework into the Homework Journal.
- Parents must sign the journal weekly for students in all year groups every Thursday.
- Every student should enter the written homework into the correct subject copy. It should be dated e.g. homework for day/month/year. The questions and answers should be clearly written. This assists with revision.

Teachers will assign homework where appropriate to reinforce classroom learning. The teacher will monitor this homework. Sanctions may be imposed for not doing homework. Parents will be informed through the Student Journal of any sanction or observation from the respective teacher. A record of homework will be kept by the teacher. It is school policy to regard homework as not having been done if it is not presented on time.

IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURES

1. Each Subject Department will develop agreed guidelines on the amount of homework and the balance between written/practical work and oral/learning work that is desirable for each year group.
2. Each Subject Department will develop guidelines on the homework/study skills appropriate for that subject.
3. The Guidance Counsellor and the Special Education Needs Coordinator will advise on designing homework for students with special educational needs.

Appropriate tasks for homework

The range of tasks which are appropriate for students of various ages are many and varied.

Some examples are as follows:

- Written assignments
- Learning assignments
- Listening assignments
- Essay writing
- Reading
- Investigations
- Interviews
- Drill practice
- Simple experiments
- Research
- Public library visit
- Drafting
- Report writing
- Designing
- Revision work
- Practice of some procedure
- Problem solving
- Preparing for debates, role-plays etc
- Preparing for class tests or exams
- Making a model
- Drawing
- Word processing
- Projects
- Watching a television programme
- Listening to a radio article.

The above list is neither prescriptive nor exhaustive.

Tasks have a clear objective, linked to study programmes and this is made evident to the students. Homework time devoted to reading and learning is as important as written work.

SUCCESS CRITERIA

1. Good quality homework is being presented.
2. There is a reduction in the pressure on students in relation to homework.
3. Teachers, parents and students are satisfied with the effectiveness of the policy.
4. The goals are being attained.

MONITORING PROCEDURES

1. Class Teachers and Year Heads, through informal discussion with students and subject teachers, will conduct on-going monitoring through homework spot checks, and will note feedback from students, teachers and parents.
2. Subject Departments will review implementation once per term.
3. Principal and Deputy Principal will meet with Subject Departments, Year Heads, Class Teachers, and Care Team once per term.
4. The Principal will report to the Board of Management once per term.

REVIEW PROCEDURES

1. The policy will be reviewed after two years. The review team will comprise the Principal, Deputy Principal, Advisory Board of Studies and Year Heads and the Care Team.
2. Views and experiences of teachers, students and parents will be surveyed in relation to the success criteria through a homework survey.
3. School records will be analysed to assess impact on students' academic progress.
4. The progress of students with special educational needs will be given particular consideration.

Review

This policy was approved by the Board of Management in May 2015

Signed _____
Chairperson

It will be reviewed in May 2016. This policy will come into force on the 26th of August 2015. It will be reviewed after one year.

Appendix 1

Appropriate amount of homework for students

The intrinsic value of homework activities is far more important than the precise amount of time devoted to them. Quality is more important than quantity in this instance. Best practice suggests that the amount of time that should be spent by students at Second Level, on average, on homework should fall within the following ranges:

- **First Year 1 -1½ hours**
- **Second Year 1½ - 2 hours**
- **Third Year 2 - 3 hours**
- **Transition Year varies depending on project work and activities**
- **Fifth Year 2 and half - 3 hours**
- **Sixth Year 3 hours+. Blocks of weekend study and revision are also essential.**

Some students will complete all tasks quickly and correctly and may appear to have given very little time to their homework. Other students and those with specific learning difficulties may put in huge amounts of time and effort.

Teachers and parents must recognize this when considering the homework regime of any particular student. Students who find they are consistently taking much longer than the above times should discuss this with their subject teacher or Guidance Counsellor. Students should not be employed in part-time work during term as it may interfere with their homework regime.