**Homework Policy**

**Introduction:**

Work has been ongoing to review of our school’s Homework Policy since the start of the 2020/21 school year. Consultation has taken place with teachers, parents and students to determine the best way forward in this regard.

This review had been planned for the past number of years, and there were some aspects of the previous Homework Policy that teachers, pupils and parents were quite happy with. Built into the previous version of the Homework Policy was the flexibility for teachers to give the appropriate amount and type of homework to their class, although there were general guidelines provided under both headings. The duration of recommended homework was deemed generally to be fine, while there was strong support for a more diverse and creative approach to the type of homework that teachers give, so that it doesn’t become monotonous or overly repetitive for students.

Another feature of the consultation process was that there was a wide range of views expressed within each group, sometimes in direct opposition with each other. For example, when asked which homework activities are the most useful, many students replied that “spellings” and “tables”, while when asked to say which activities were least useful, “spellings” and “tables” featured regularly in pupils’ answers too.

From the consultation carried out (results of which will be attached to the new policy) it is clear that there is general support for some kind of homework to be given, and that, when it is presented in a stimulating and motivating way to students, that the (potential) benefits are seen by all groups. There is also a majority of people in each group who feel that there is scope for greater variety and creativity to be introduced when it comes to homework. **It is this approach which will form the key change to the Homework Policy.**

**Definition and features of homework in this updated policy:**

* Homework refers to any work or activities assigned to students as an extension of classroom work.
* Homework can take many forms and includes reading, oral and written activities. Each type of activity has equal importance and therefore oral work is just as important as written work.
* Homework is an opportunity for teachers to be creative greater when assigning work, and to include greater elements of pupil choice, physical activity, project work and essential life skills as key parts of homework. There should be a mix of different activities given, and not an over-reliance on textbooks or written homework.
* Teachers will still give spellings, tables and reading in the homework that is assigned during the week, however it is not intended that these activities will encompass all of the homework given, and ideally there will be a range of written, oral and physical activities given to the class.
* Teachers will also have the discretion to ask their class to consider some questions/problems as their homework and for them to do some research on these at home (possibly even discuss them with the adults or siblings at home) and then discuss these with their teacher and class the following day.

**Role of the Teacher**

Teachers are responsible for:

* Providing students with time to note the homework activities in their homework journal
* Explaining how the homework might be carried out
* Coordinating with the special education teacher (SET) with regard to homework for those receiving support
* Correcting homework (through observation of work done or more in-depth written correction) or monitoring children’s checking of homework (peer or self-correction).
* Providing feedback to children and parents if necessary

**Role of the Student**

Students are expected to:

* Write homework tasks clearly and neatly in their journal as necessary
* Show their journal to parents and have it signed when completed
* Complete all assignments neatly and honestly
* Work independently and ask for help only when needed or when asked to consult with someone at home
* Read independently (or with a family member) on a daily basis

**Role of the Parent**

Parents are encouraged to:

* Plan a homework schedule and a place free from interruptions for the child
* Assist the child if necessary but not by doing the homework for the child
* Check that all homework has been completed, tick each completed task in the homework journal and sign the homework journal as required
* Engage with their child’s homework activities whenever possible, especially when there is scope for discussion with family members at home.
* Communicate with the teacher if the child encounters difficulty, has spent an undue amount of time at homework or cannot complete homework due to special circumstances, by writing a note in the child’s homework journal.

**Frequency and Duration of Homework**

Our homework policy gives individual teachers the flexibility to decide on the amount of homework that they consider appropriate for their class. However, the following guidelines apply:

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| --- | --- |
| Junior infants | Up to 15 minutes |
| Senior infants | Up to 20 minutes |
| 1st class | Up to 25 minutes |
| 2nd class | Up to 30 minutes |
| 3rd class | Up to 35 minutes |
| 4th class | Up to 40 minutes |
| 5th class | Up to 45 minutes |
| 6th class | Up to 50 minutes |

**Conclusion**

If done correctly, and with sufficient thought as to the ability of the children in the class and what motivates them, homework has the potential to

* consolidate the learning that happens in school, and to encourage children to take a greater responsibility for their learning
* develop the confidence and self-discipline needed to study on their own, and it can help to prepare them for secondary school.
* help parents keep in touch with what is happening in school for their children, and also how their children are getting on with their learning.

**Review date**

This policy is due for review in June 2024