

## **St. Mary's N.S. Cobh**

### **HOMEWORK POLICY**

Homework is an integral link in the chain of communication between school and home. Parents can monitor the progress of their children through continual reference to Homework diaries and liaison with teachers.

A questionnaire re homework was given to a representative sample (20%) of the parents/guardians of the pupils in November 2011. The data collected was incorporated into the homework policy.

The homework policy of St. Mary's N.S. has been formulated by staff with parental input. Members of working group were: Eileen Twomey, Cathriona Greally, Mary O'Mahony, Tracey Downes, Shauna McElhinney, Marion Tuohy and Ann Looney.

#### **Rationale**

The need to update the homework policy of the school can be attributed to the following:-

- Further strengthening of home-school links
- Reinforcing the learning experienced by the child during the school day
- Ensuring clarity as to the recommended time to be spent on homework
- Existing policy due for review

#### **Relationship to School Ethos**

St. Mary's seeks to enable each child to develop his/her potential.

The school also encourages the active involvement of parents in enabling their child to take responsibility and work independently. The homework policy of the school facilitates these ideals.

#### **Aims and Objectives**

The primary objectives of the policy are: –

- To re-inforce what the child learns during the day
- To provide a link between teacher and parent
- To enable the children develop a sense of responsibility and independence
- To enhance self-discipline and study skills
- To promote consistency and a uniform approach to homework across all classes
- To further develop links between home and school
- To develop a child's concentration skills and develop a work ethic
- Homework is meant to be achievable by a child, i.e. it provides an opportunity to practice work already done. It is normally prepared by the teacher in class. However, sometimes with senior classes, some homework is designed to challenge children's ability and provide opportunities for creativity
- Children are expected to do their homework to the best of their individual ability

#### **Policy Content**

It is school policy to assign appropriate class-related levels of homework as an important reinforcement in the learning process. Good study habits are fostered, independent learning is promoted and self-discipline is developed.

#### **What is the content of homework?**

- Ideally homework will contain 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 is generally based on class related work or work already covered in class
- If homework causes stress or worry to the child, parents are encouraged to convey these anxieties to the class teacher. If homework cannot be completed on a particular night, parents are asked to forward a written note
- Teachers check homework on a daily basis. Some homework may be self correcting. Children who do not complete homework satisfactorily may be required to re do this work. Parents are advised to supervise and check homework nightly
- Classes 1<sup>st</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> have a homework diary which parents are required to sign. The homework diary acts as a means of communication between class teacher and parent.

### **Gaeilge Homework**

All children in the school participate in Irish language lessons. Children with official Irish exemption circular 12/96 are not required to do Irish Homework.

### **Learning Support/Resource Teacher Pupils**

Where a child attends Learning Support/Resource Teacher, the homework marked for that child will be decided between the class teacher and the Learning Support/Resource Teacher.

### **How often is homework given?**

- Homework is given on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays but not on Fridays.
- In senior classes some project work and revision may be undertaken at weekends
- Sometimes at the discretion of the class teacher or the principal, children are given “homework off” as a treat or as acknowledgment of some special occasion

### **How much (time) homework?**

The following are guidelines for time spent at homework. Different children will complete the same homework in different lengths of time. Time spent will vary from day to day and also from the beginning to the end of the school year. It is important to remember that it is the quality and not the quantity of homework that matters. The following are general guidelines only:-

Junior Infants	-	0 – 15 minutes
Senior Infants	-	20 minutes
Rang 1	-	30 minutes
Rang 2	-	40 minutes
Rang 3	-	45 minutes
Rang 4	-	1 hour
Rang 5	-	1 hour 30 minutes
Rang 6	-	1 hour 45 minutes

### **How much help should parents give?**

- Parents should try to help their children with homework by:-  
Providing them with a suitable place and time to do their homework  
Preventing interruptions or distractions, like T.V. or other children

- Children should do written homework themselves and parents should only help when the child has difficulty
- If a child has difficulty with homework, the parents should help the child to overcome the difficulty with further explanation or examples, but not by actually doing the homework for the child. In this case the parent should write a note to the teacher explaining the problem
- Parents should check and sign a child's homework journal every evening
- Parents are encouraged to speak to the teacher if a child is persistently having problems with homework.
- Shared reading should form part of the child's daily after school routine

**The following tips may help to establish a homework routine:**

- Set aside a quiet regular time
- The child should be sitting comfortably at a table
- Homework time should include time for oral as well as written work. Oral work, particularly in the early stages of schooling, can consolidate that which is learned through both Irish and English
- Encourage your child to keep books and copies clean and tidy
- If your child is working independently be available to help and show an interest in what is being done. Praise your child's efforts at every opportunity
- If working with your child you feel yourself becoming impatient you should stop.
- If your child is persistently having problems with homework contact the teacher and discuss the difficulties
- If for any reason homework cannot be done please write a note in the copy/journal.

Remember when anxiety goes up learning goes down.

**How often do teachers monitor homework?**

- Ideally teachers like to check homework on a daily basis
- Some items of homework (and classwork) may be checked by children themselves under the direction of the teacher. This can be a useful part of the learning process for children.
- A record is kept of pupils who on a regular basis fail to do homework or leave it at home.
- If a pupil has a problem with homework she should inform the teacher

**Roles and Responsibilities/Implementation**

All stakeholders have a role to play in the implementation of this policy from pupils/parents right up to Board of Management.

**Ratification/Communication**

The Policy was ratified by the Board of Management in January 2012 and communicated to all parents.

**Timetable for Review**

This policy will be reviewed and amended as necessary