



ST. COLUMBA'S GIRLS NATIONAL SCHOOL WITH FACILITY FOR DEAF CHILDREN

HOMEWORK POLICY

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Why give homework?

- To consolidate what the child learns during the day.
- To keep parents in touch and involved in their child's / children's education.
- To promote consistency and a uniform approach to homework across all teachers and class levels.
- To develop a child's concentration skills and develop a work ethic.
- Enable children to develop a sense of responsibility and independence.
- Homework is meant to be achievable by a child, i.e. it provides an opportunity to practise 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 – no more, no less.

How often is homework given?

- Homework is given on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays but not on Fridays from Junior Infants to Sixth Class.
- 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.

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 will regularly contain reading, spellings, tables, written work, pieces to be "learned by heart", drawing/colouring, collecting information/items, physical exercise and finishing work started in class.

- Children often feel that reading and “learning by heart” is not real homework. Parents can play an important role in listening to reading and items to be learned ensuring this work is done well.

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:

Infants: 10 - 15 minutes
 1st & 2nd: 20-30 minutes
 3rd & 4th: 30 - 40 minutes
 5th & 6th: 40 - 60 minutes

Where pupils are receiving additional support from a member of the SEN Team, the class teacher and SEN Teacher will collaborate in relation to the nature and type of homework. Homework should not exceed the times indicated above.

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.
- 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.**
- Shared reading is not homework in the regular sense and it is simply meant to be an enjoyable exercise between parent and child. If it's not enjoyable, shared reading should not be done.

How often should parents monitor homework?

- Parents should check and sign a child's homework journal every evening and record the time it takes to complete.
- The pupil's journal is an important record of the child's homework. It is also a valuable means of communication between parents and teachers
- Ideally, all written messages to your child's teacher should be put in the homework journal (additional pages available at the end of the journal)
- Please check that your child records their homework neatly in the correct page and ticks each item of homework when completed.

How often do teachers monitor homework?

- Ideally teachers like to check homework on a daily basis. However with large class numbers it is not always possible to check each child's homework journal every day

- As children get older and learn to work independently, some items of homework are checked less often e.g. every second day or once per week
- Some items of homework (and class work) may be checked by children themselves under the direction of the teacher. This can be a useful part of the learning process for children.

When should parents communicate with the teachers about homework?

- When your child cannot do homework due to family circumstances
- When your child cannot do homework because she/he cannot understand some aspect
- If the time being spent at homework is often longer than the recommended amount of time.

When should homework be done?

- Each family situation is different - both parents working, child minders, etc. Ideally, homework should be done soon after school while your child is still fresh, however, some children need a break before starting homework.
- Please try to avoid all screen time until homework is completed.
- Homework should never be left until morning time before school

As homework is a consolidation of work done in class, not as an exercise in isolation, homework is not provided in advance of a child going on holiday during term time.

Remember

If homework is a stressful experience between parent and child, something is wrong! This leads to poor learning and defeats the whole purpose. Should this happen on a regular basis, please contact the class teacher.

This Homework Policy was ratified at a Board of Management Meeting in January 2025