



St. Patrick's NS Homework Policy

Purpose:

At St. Patrick's NS, we give homework for the following reasons:

- To reinforce what the child has learned during the day
- To provide a link between teacher and parent
- To develop a work ethic among pupils and assist in the development of concentration skills.
- To develop consistency of approach and similar approach to homework especially when there is a change of staff.

Aspirations:

Homework is meant to be achievable by the child and to reinforce work already done. The teacher normally prepares it. However, sometimes with senior classes, some homework is designed to challenge children's ability and provide opportunities for creativity. For instance senior classes may be given project work to research over a number of weeks. Children are expected to do their homework to the best of their individual ability, no more and no less. Homework is given on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, but not on Fridays, with the following exceptions:

- If homework has been neglected during the week.
- In senior classes, some project homework may be undertaken at the weekend.
- Extra homework may be given during the week or at the weekend if a child has not completed their assigned homework, made a suitable effort or presented untidy work.
- Sometimes, at the discretion of the class teacher or principal, children are excused from homework as a treat or as an acknowledgement of some special occasion.

Content:

Ideally, homework will contain a balance between reading tasks, learning tasks and written work. This balance is not always possible and can vary considerably from day to day. However, it should be noted that homework devoted to reading and learning is as important as written work. Homework will regularly contain reading, spelling, tables, written work, pieces to be "learned by heart", drawing/colouring, collecting information/items and finishing work started in class. Children often feel that reading and "learning by heart" is not real homework. Parents/Guardians can play an important role in listening to reading and items to be learned ensuring this work is done well. We feel that parents must listen to their child reading aloud every night. Homework will be differentiated for children with individual learning needs.

Time Guidelines:

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. As outlined below it is important that children have a suitable place free of distractions to complete their homework. The following are general guidelines only.

Class	Duration
Juniors/Seniors	Up to 20 minutes approximately
1st/2nd class	Up to 40 minutes approximately

3rd/4th class	Up to 60 minutes approximately
5th/6th class	Up to 1 hour 15 minutes approximately

Parental/Guardian involvement:

Parents/Guardians can help their children with homework by providing them with a suitable place and time to do their homework and by trying to prevent interruptions or distractions, like T.V. or other children. Children should do written homework themselves and Parents/Guardians should only help when the child has difficulty. In line with our Internet Usage Policy, we remind parents that children should not have unsupervised access to the internet.

If a child has difficulty with homework, the Parents/Guardians 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. In the Junior classes, parents are encouraged to assist their child with his/her homework. As the child progresses to the Senior classes, it is envisaged that he/she develops more independence and the parents’ role becomes increasingly supervisory and supportive. Parents should encourage their children to read every night. They can read their class reader, Literacy Power Hour book or their library book. Indeed older children could even read some sections of the newspaper with help as appropriate. Reading with your child should be considered a very enjoyable and beneficial part of their nightly routine and has huge benefits for a child’s progress.

Monitoring Homework at Home:

Parents/Guardians should check that the homework is done in full and then sign a child’s Homework Journal every evening. The pupil’s journal is an important record of the child’s homework. It is also a valuable means of communication between Parents/Guardians and teachers. Ideally, all written messages to your child’s teacher should be put in the Homework Journal in the “Friday” or “Comment” sections of a particular week.

Additional pages are also available at the end of the journal. Please check that your child records homework neatly in the correct page and ticks each item of homework when completed. Notices, letters and newsletters to Parents/Guardians from the school are folded and placed in the current day of the Homework Journal or in the homework folder. Parents are asked to check each child’s journal for such notes on a regular basis.

Monitoring Homework at School:

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. Sometimes, under the direction of the teacher, children themselves may check some items of homework or class work. This can be a useful part of the learning process for children.

Communication about Homework:

In the relevant section of the Homework Journal parents should inform his/her child’s teacher when a child cannot do homework due to family circumstances or a child cannot do homework because she/he cannot understand some aspect. We also ask parents to inform us if the time being spent at homework is often longer than the recommended amount of time through the use of the homework journal.

Doing Homework:

Each family situation is different but, ideally, homework should be done before any television is watched soon after school while your child is still fresh. Some children, however, need a break before starting homework. Nevertheless homework should never be left until the morning before school. Remember, if homework is a stressful experience between parent and child, something is wrong! This leads to poor learning and defeats the purpose of this policy. Should this happen on a regular basis, parents are asked to contact the class teacher, by making an appointment through the office.

Active Homework:

As the school is working towards an Active Schools Flag, there will be times during the year when children will be given active homework. This may be for a block of weeks at certain times of the year and will usually be given on the night when your child has had PE at school. Active Homework will usually incorporate a short intense burst of physical activity. We consider being active to be a very important part of a balanced and healthy lifestyle.

Success Criteria

The success criteria of this policy will be determined by feedback from parents, pupils and teachers. This will be sought at Parent/Teacher Meetings during the first term. In general where pupils are handing in satisfactory exercises and assignments, reading and memorising activities are well practiced, this will be interpreted as reflecting positively on this policy. Similarly where the results of the regular class assignments are satisfactory this will also reflect positively on this policy.

This policy was agreed by all members of staff and ratified by the Board of Management. A draft policy was distributed to the Parent Association to review before ratification. This policy will be reviewed when necessary.

Chairperson's Signature:

Date:

Principal's Signature:

Date:
