

HOMEWORK GUIDELINES

Rationale

It was deemed necessary to review the homework guidelines as teachers felt that homework was causing stress to some pupils, there was an inconsistent approach in the school and staff reported that they were concerned as to the educational benefit of some workbooks that were being used for homework.

Approach to this policy

- The teachers had many formal and informal conversations about their experiences with homework.
- The teachers, the parents and the children were surveyed.
- The parents association wrote to the Board of Management supporting the review of the homework policy
- The teachers and principal read research regarding homework and consulted with colleagues from other school regarding their experiences.

As a result of this background work it was felt that small achievable changes regarding homework with the provision of review the policy was the best plan of action. This allows for others areas of development to be part of the homework guidelines eg.School self-evaluation priorities in the future.

Introduction

In all Saints' National School we use homework as one of many educational tools. In our school, we give homework for the following reasons:

- To consolidate work already undertaken in school-it allows for revision and practice. However at times, homework may be more challenging and provide opportunities for creativity.
- To encourage children to become more independent learners and to revise, reinforce, finish work that has begun in school.
- To develop study skills and to assist in establishing an appropriate routine for children doing their homework.
- To develop a work ethic among pupils and assist in the development of concentration skills.
- Homework is intended to be achievable by the pupil and is normally prepared by the class teacher. Pupils are expected to do their homework to the best of their ability at all times.
- Homework also allows parents become aware of the work that is being done in school. It allows parents to be informed and involved in their children's school work.

Telephone: 01 – 2885355

Email: office@allsaintsblackrock.com

Principal: Amanda MacGowan

Roll Number: 10494K

Content of Homework

Homework is seen as reinforcement of work done in class

- 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 and finishing work started in class.
- Homework may not be academic in nature and may include physical or well being activities. The teachers will try to give longer times for these tasks to be completed noting potential difficulties with afterschool care arrangements .

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. Oral homework should be given equal importance.

Frequency and Quantity

- Homework is normally given on Mondays to Thursdays but not on Fridays. There are a number of exceptions :
 - ◆ if homework has been neglected during the week or is of a poor standard
 - ◆ in senior classes some project work is undertaken at weekends
 - ◆ at certain times of the year e.g. coming up to Christmas
- 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.
- Please note homework may sometimes be given during the week or at the weekend if a child has completed homework that does not reflect the child’s ability.
- Homework in the nature of a behaviour reflection sheet, ‘sorry’ letter or reporting of an incident etc. may also be given in some circumstances
- All pupils are assigned homework appropriate to their age and class level. Some of their tasks may be designed to consolidate the child’s classroom learning experiences, while other tasks will encourage the child to work independently and with initiative. Reading practice is a priority for all children.

Differentiation

Homework is differentiated for pupils with special educational needs. Homework may be assigned by both the class teacher and/or SET teacher following collaboration. Homework is often differentiated for different academic or well being reasons. This is at the discretion of the class teacher and principal and is not considered unless it is felt warranted.

Time Allocation

Different pupils will complete the same homework in different lengths of time. Time spent can vary from day to day and from one end of the school year to another. It is important to remember that it is the quality and not the quantity of homework that is important. The following are guidelines for time spent on homework.

Junior/Senior infants: 10- 20 minutes

First/Second class: 20-30 minutes

Third/Fourth class: 30-40 minutes

Fifth/Sixth class: 40-60 minutes

Home- Pupils and Parents

Roles and Responsibilities

The school and parents are co-educators of each child. Therefore each stakeholder has significant roles to undertake.

- Parents are responsible for helping their children with homework by:
 - ◆ providing them with a suitable room and table to do their homework
 - ◆ to prevent interruptions or distractions, like T.V. or other children
 - ◆ providing adequate time each day to do their homework
- 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. 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 are expected to sign the journal after checking their child's homework **when all tasks are completed**. The pupil's journal is an important record of their child's homework. It is also a valuable means of communication between parents and teachers. Ideally all notes to teachers should be written in the journal.

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- Parents should ensure that all homework is completed, is neatly presented and in keeping with the required standard.
- Parental interest and positive affirmation is to be encouraged as it motivates the child to work to the best of his/her ability. 'Mol an Óige agus tiocfaidh sí!'

From time to time homework may not be completed for various reasons:

- 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.
- Parents should write a note in the Homework Notebook explaining the reasons for homework not completed.

Parents are reasonable for communicating to the class teacher when homework is not completed.

Parents are responsible for speaking of homework in a positive manner and should be supportive of the teachers in their role as educators.

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.

School- Pupils and Teachers

Homework Journal

The class teacher assigns homework, taking into consideration the recommended time allocation for homework and monitors it on a regular basis.

The pupils are responsible for taking home all the necessary books, copies and equipment necessary to complete the homework.

Homework will be checked by the teacher either daily or at the end of each week depending on the task/activity set.

- Some items of homework may be checked by children themselves under the direction of the teacher. This can be a useful part of the learning process for children.
- Teachers only correct homework that they have set the pupils.

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- Teachers will not set homework or learning plans for children that are absent from school due to vacations. Accommodations will be made for children that are sick for a long time.
- Children that are sick at home for a short length of time and therefore unable to come to school are not required to do homework as a speedy restful recovery and return to school is more advantageous.

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 memorizing 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.

The Principal is responsible for the implementation of this policy and it will be reviewed as deemed necessary.

Signed _____
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date _____

Signed _____
Principal

Date _____

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