

Title

Homework Policy

Introductory Statement

This policy was drawn up by the school principal in consultation with staff members to update the existing Homework Policy and to provide clear guidelines for parents.

Content of the Policy

Why give homework?

- To reinforce what the child learns during the day
- To provide a link between teacher and parent
- To develop a child's concentration skills and develop a work ethic
- Homework is meant to be achievable by the 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. There are three exceptions:
 - If homework has been neglected during the week
 - In senior classes some project work may be undertaken at weekends
 - If a child has been issued with a Yellow/Black or Red card (see Code of Behaviour)
- Occasionally, at the discretion of the class teacher or the principal, children are given "Homework off" as a treat or as an acknowledgment of some special occasion or, in some cases, as an award (individual teacher reward system)

- Please note: extra homework may be sometimes given during the week or at the weekend if a child has not done homework, made a suitable effort or presented untidy work.

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 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 that this work is done well.

How much time for 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:

Class	Time
Junior Infants	Up to 20 minutes
Senior Infants	
1 st Class	Up to 30 minutes
2 nd Class	
3 rd Class	Up to 40 minutes
4 th Class	
5 th Class	40 minutes – 1 hour
6 th Class	

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
 - To prevent interruptions or distractions, like TV/radio/games consoles/tablets
- Children should do written homework themselves and parents should only help when the child has difficulty
- If a child has difficulty with homework, that 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; an opportunity to engage in reading for pleasure.

How often should parents monitor homework?

- Parents should check and 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 and teachers
- Please check that your child records his/her homework neatly in the correct page and ticks each item of homework when completed
- Notes and other letters to parents are folded and placed in the current day of the homework journal. Please check your child's journal for such notes on a regular basis.

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 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 as the teacher plans around this
- 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.

When should parents communicate with teachers about homework?

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

When should homework be done?

- Each family situation is different. Ideally, homework should be done before access to television or computer games, soon after school while your child is still fresh. Some children like a break before they commence their homework; parents will be able to advise when best for their child to begin their homework
- Homework, as an exercise, is an opportunity for children to practice and work independently; it also gives the child responsibility which together contributes to the positive work ethic of any person. We ask parents to please ensure that homework is completed.

Roles and Responsibilities

- Teaching staff are responsible for the giving of homework
- Pupils are responsible for completing their homework
- Parents are responsible for providing an environment conducive to the completion of homework, checking that homework has been done and communicating with relevant teachers if homework is not completed.

Timeframe for Implementation

The policy is effective immediately and will be reviewed if deemed necessary by staff members.

Ratification and Communication

This policy is available to view on our school website: www.stjohnsballisodare.com