

Scoil Mhuire, Davidstown

Homework Policy

Introduction

Scoil Mhuire is a co-educational vertical school primary school aged pupils, together with special needs pupils integrated in mainstream classes. Homework is anything that students do outside the normal school day that contributes to their learning in response to guidance from the school. Homework encompasses a whole variety of activities instigated by teachers and parents to support children's learning. For example, a parent who spends time reading a story to their child before bedtime is helping with homework. Homework, along with schoolwork, teacher observation, diagnostic and standardised testing provides an overall picture of the student's progress and development as s/he advances through school. This enables the teacher and Principal to maintain standards throughout the school, to strive for excellence and to ensure that all students achieve their full potential.

Rationale

- To promote consistency and a similar approach throughout the school, especially when there is a staff change in Scoil Mhuire.
- Scoil Mhuire seeks to enable each child realise his/her potential. Homework encourages students to work independently and take responsibility for their own learning.

Aims

As education is a partnership between school and home, we in Scoil Mhuire believe homework is an integral and beneficial link in our home school communication. It enables the parent(s)/guardian to keep abreast of what their child is learning and involves the parent(s)/guardian in the learning process. Homework allows the student to become progressively more independent and responsible for his/her own learning.

In Scoil Mhuire we give homework for the following reasons:

- To consolidate the work already undertaken in school; allowing for revision and practice. However, at times, homework may be more challenging and provide opportunities for creativity
- To encourage the student to become a more independent learner and to revise, reinforce, finish work that has begun in school
- To benefit student learning
- To develop a work ethic among students and assist in the development of concentration skills
- To provide opportunities for students for independent learning and study

- To develop the confidence and self- discipline the student needs to study on their own
- To strengthen links between home and school
- To allow the student to develop the practice of working on his/her own without the constant presence of the teacher or other students
- To provide opportunities for students to use out of school resources (e.g. books and Information Technology) found in the home or other places such as libraries
- To give opportunities for research and other work.

Content

Usually, homework contains 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', research, collecting information/items, finishing work started in class and opportunities for creativity e.g. Easter Bonnet. However, sometimes in the senior classes some homework is designed to challenge the pupil's ability. The class teacher prepares it. The student is expected to complete his/her homework to the best of his/her individual ability.

In Scoil Mhuire we place a huge value on literacy, therefore, outside the time spent on homework students and parents are encouraged to read for a short time each night and to participate in the Paired Reading programme which operates in our school.

Homework will only be given in the areas already covered, taught or discussed in school and should therefore be within student's capability.

Homework will inevitably change during the school year.

The Nature of Homework

- At the beginning of each school year, guidelines will be issued by each teacher outlining their expectations for his/her particular class
- Junior and Senior Infants teachers will speak to parents at class meetings in September and will also communicate by letter
- At middle and senior level guidelines will be by written communication to parents and will also be explained in class
- Students who do homework with another person, parent(s)/guardians should discuss these guidelines with them also
- We have a system whereby the class teacher sets homework Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday each week. The nature of the homework will vary between different classes

and topics of study. Homework is not set for the weekend, when a student is absent or during the school holidays unless

- ✓ homework has been neglected during the week;
 - ✓ homework has not been done to the best of the student's ability on a regular basis during the week;
 - ✓ in senior classes some project work may be undertaken at weekends.
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- Occasionally at the discretion of the class teacher or the Principal, students may be given a night 'off homework' as an acknowledgement of a special occasion/event in the school
 - Scoil Mhuire believes in positive reinforcement and operates a merit system whereby merits are awarded for improved work, kindness and being helpful in school. A homework voucher is sometimes issued allowing a student a night off homework.

Informal reading is encouraged. Paired reading is not homework and it is simply meant to be an enjoyable exercise between parent and child.

Useful sites

Help My Kid Learn

This website is for the parents of children aged 0 – 12 years, from birth to the end of primary school. To keep the website easy, the word 'parent', includes parents, guardians, family members and child minders. The website is about how you and your family can enjoy learning together. It is designed to support parents with fun activities and tips according to their child's age. And each age group has lots of ideas for helping children with talking, playing, reading, writing and using numbers.

(<http://www.helpmykidlearn.ie>)

The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment [NCCA] Information for Parents

The NCCA has developed a number of resources to help parents to support your child's learning in primary school. Many of these are available in various languages. You can follow links for Infants Classes, 1st & 2nd Classes, 3rd & 4th Classes and 5th & 6th Classes.

(http://www.ncca.ie/en/Curriculum_and_Assessment/Parents/Primary/)

The NCCA Early Childhood – birth to 6 years (Aistear Guidelines)

Parents are the most important people in their children's early lives. Aistear contains lots of ideas, suggestions and practical examples of how parents can support their children's early learning and development. (http://www.ncca.ie/en/Curriculum_and_Assessment/Parents/Early_Childhood)

Absences

- Pupils who miss lessons due to being withdrawn from class to attend dental appointments and other medical appointments may be given as homework the work they have missed, if appropriate.
- Where a student is absent due to medical reasons, it is not school policy to supply work to cover these periods.
- Where a student is absent due to holidays, it is not school policy to supply work to cover these periods.

Time

The following are guidelines for the time to be spent at homework. Different students will complete the same homework in different lengths of time. The time spent will vary from day to day and also from the beginning to the end of the school year. The task selected by the class teacher is commensurate with the ability of the student.

The following are allotted times that teachers expect the average student in each class to spend on homework.

- **Junior Infants: 10 - 15 minutes**
- **Senior Infants: 15 – 20 minutes**
- **1st class: 20 – 30 minutes**
- **2nd class: 30 minutes**
- **3rd & 4th classes: 30 to 45 minutes**
- **5th class 45 minutes – 1hour**
- **6th class: 1 hour – 1hour 30 minutes (maximum)**

Role of Students

- Enter homework accurately in the student diary
- Listen carefully to the teacher when the homework is being prepared
- Ensure to take home relevant books and copies
- Complete homework assignments to the best of their ability
- Present work neatly
- Remember to learn your tables, spellings, poems or prayers that may be marked for homework
- When you have written work to do, write carefully and tidily
- Remember to read aloud to an adult every night that reading is marked for homework

- Take care of all your books and copies – don't scribble or draw on covers
- Never eat or drink or have food or drink near your work in case of accidental spillages
- Have your homework signed by a parent.

Role of Parents/Guardians

- Encourage a positive attitude towards homework from an early age
- Assist their child with homework in Junior & Senior Infants
- Agree a suitable time for doing homework, taking account of age, the need for playtime, relaxation and family time
- Provide a quiet place, suitable work surface, free from distractions, interruptions and television
- Encourage their child to work independently as far as possible. Resist over- helping
- Encourage their child to organise himself/herself for homework. Have all books and materials to hand. The child should have the student diary open to tick off work as it is completed
- Encourage good presentation and neatness within a reasonable time
- If you see areas that require improvement, identify them and work on one area at a time. Do not accept untidy or incomplete work
- Supervise child's homework, checking and signing it on completion
- Check that the child has all necessary books, student diary, copies, pencils, mathematical equipment, etc. for the next school day.

Remember, homework should not be a stressful experience between parent and child. Should this happen on a regular basis, please make an appointment to discuss this matter with the class teacher.

Role of Teachers

- Assign homework in accordance with the homework policy
- Provide students with time to note homework in the student diary
- Explain how the assignment might be carried out
- Lay out and standards of presentation communicated clearly to the students
- Pitching difficulty level of homework to the needs of the class
- Consult with the Learning Support/Resource Teachers regarding the needs students availing of support teaching

- Correcting homework on a daily basis and providing feedback. Some items of homework may be checked by the students themselves with teacher guidance forming part of the learning process for the students.

Failure to do Homework

- If homework is not done on a given night students will be asked to do the work the following night.
- Homework repeatedly not done or signed will be investigated.
- If there are good reasons for not doing the homework, a written note from parent to teacher is required by way of explanation.
- Homework missed due to illness or absence does not normally have to be completed.
- The class teacher will contact the parent if problems persist. Likewise, parents are encouraged to contact the class teacher if the child is experiencing problems at home with homework.

Success Criteria

The success criteria of this policy will be determined by feedback from parents, students and teachers. Feedback will be sought at Parent/Teacher meetings and/or through questionnaires. In general, where students 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.

Copies of the policy will be circulated and communicated to all members of the staff, students, parents and guardians.

Signed:

Date: