

HOMWORK POLICY

Introductory Statement and Rationale

The area of School Homework was examined and policy reviewed in 2023/2024 through the 6 step School-Self-Evaluation process. The context of this review was that the existing homework policy dated back to 2007 and although reviewed at staff meetings we had never really taken the full term and implementation to review. Homework impacts a lot of pupil-teacher relationships and can be source of home-school issues.

In recent years since 2019 / COVID etc there had been much discussion in the media and beyond about the merits of homework- should homework be banned !

As life and society has changed since 2007 we felt this is was the correct time to now move our joint approach to homework to match these societal changes.

To this end we surveyed all pupils and parents (Survey Monkey)

- What is the value of homework to each pupil in the short-term and longer-term on their education Journey?
- How does homework impact your family life?
- Does homework allow you to see how your son is learning at school?
- Would your son read / write / research / study at home if there was no formal homework?
- Which core areas should homework prioritize?
- Would you like a more flexible school approach to homework ? IE- Child can complete any night before Thursday / Friday.

The results of parent survey were conclusive as almost 90% still saw value in homework. Changing how we give homework to be more flexible and family friendly was also to the fore with only 20% in favour of retaining existing practices. The core subjects of reading , maths , writing and spelling were prioritized in that order. Parents also indicated they valued homework as it allowed them to see how their son was doing at school as well as developing important study and independent work habits.

The teaching staff were also surveyed to get a good insight into existing classroom practice and how they viewed the area of homework. Almost 80% indicated that current policy and approach “needed to change and adapt to match family life”. Over 90% felt homework should be adapted to be more flexible. Over 90% of teachers felt there should be a time limit to homework as a rough guide to teachers , parents and pupils. Almost 80% also felt that non-completion of homework needed to be addressed in policy and sanctions agreed.

In conclusion, our school community are in agreement to the retention of homework and adapting current practice to work in unison with modern family life.

Aims:

At St.Brendans PS, we value the importance of a link with the home and parents/guardians. Homework can be an integral link in the chain of communication between school and home. Through this policy we hope to strengthen positive home-school links through streamlining the processes involved. The homework policy of St.Brendans PS is formulated through consultation with teaching staff, the pupils, parents, the Principal and the Board of Management.

The aim of Homework is to foster independence, self-reliance, self-esteem, cooperation and responsibility and life-long learning. It is an essential part of primary education as it re-enforces what children learn in school. It provides a link between teacher and parent and encourages parental involvement in their child's education. In general, homework is meant to be achievable by a child working on their own to the best of their ability. It is normally prepared by the teacher in class. It can be used to practice what is done in school or can be designed to challenge children's ability and provide opportunities for creativity.

What are the aims of homework?

- That children develop work and study skills on a gradual basis
- aiming at independent study by senior level.
- That the children form good work habits.
- That the children learn to organize themselves.
- That the children learn to take responsibility for their work.
- To practice existing concepts, skills and to consolidate what is learnt in class.
- To ensure that there is complete understanding of new concepts.

Why give homework?

- To reinforce the child's memory of what he has learned during the day.
- To provide a link between home and school
- To give opportunities for parents/guardians to learn more about their child's day at school
- To develop a child's concentration skills and develop a child's concentration skills and develop a work ethic that will prepare them for the demands of secondary school and encourage them to take responsibility for their own learning
- Homework should be achievable for the child while allowing appropriate
- opportunities to challenge them and extend their learning
- Children are expected to do their homework to the best of their individual
- ability – no more, no less

How often is homework given?

Each class works differently. An outline of homework may be given out at the start of the week. Each teacher will allow a wider window of opportunity to complete homework within their classroom plans and structures.

Homework can be completed over the course of the week to allow flexibility for families.

Some tasks will need to be completed daily at the teacher's discretion.

At certain times of the year (e.g September June), class teachers may vary the homework given. Reading is encouraged every night.

How long should homework take?

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. As always if any child is experiencing difficulties please inform the teacher whom will be able to offer suggestions and support.

The following are general guidelines:

<u>Junior Infants /Senior Infants:</u>	Homework should take approximately 10 -15 minutes daily.
<u>1st & 2nd Class:</u>	Homework should take approximately 15-25 minutes.
<u>3rd &4th Class:</u>	Homework should take approximately 20-35 minutes.
<u>5th & 6th Class:</u>	Homework should take approximately 30-45 minutes.

The tasks set would be from the different subject areas of the curriculum

Homework Content

Usually, homework contains reading, spelling, maths and a literacy based activity. However, it should be noted that homework time devoted to reading and learning is as important as written work. Homework can contain reading, spellings, tables, written work, drawing/ colouring, collecting information/items, research, project work and finishing work started in class.

Parents play an important role in listening to reading and items to be learned, ensuring this work is done well.

When appropriate teachers will aim to allow flexibility when completing project work i.e. the method of presentation, focus of topic etc.

Class teachers and SEN teachers will collaborate and communicate regarding homework for pupils that the SEN team supports.

Tips for Parents/Guardians:

Encourage a positive attitude towards homework in all subjects from an early age.

- Parents have a responsibility to ensure that all homework given by teachers is completed as assigned.
- Encourage children to work independently as far as possible. Resist overhelping.
- Agree a suitable time for doing homework, taking into account of age, the need for playtime, relaxation and family time.
- Providing a quiet place, suitable work surface, free from distractions, interruptions and Smart devices.
- Encourage good presentation and neatness within a reasonable time.
- Check that the child has all necessary books, homework journal, copies, pencils, mathematical equipment, dictionary, P.E. clothes, etc if needed for the next school day.
- Communicate difficulties to the teacher if needs be.

Checking homework:

- Homework will be checked regularly by the class teacher.
- Repeated failure to do or complete homework will be reported to the Parent/Guardian and the Principal
- The pupil will be asked to redo or complete the activity again at home or during another activity in school.
- Credit will be given for effort as well as achievement regarding homework.

Parents/Guardians:

- As a result of the formulation of this policy parents are aware of the agreed procedures in relation to homework.
- Parents/guardians are asked to establish a routine for doing homework by providing a warm well-lit place away from T.V. or other distractions and adhering to the time guidelines.
- Parents can monitor homework by checking and acknowledging the completed task and by following up on outcomes the following day.
- If there are difficulties with homework, it is advisable that the parent should not do the homework. They could provide further explanation or do easier examples. It is very important that they write a note in the homework journal explaining the problem that arose.
- As far as possible the school will take into consideration the language, literacy levels etc, of individual families.

Success Criteria

The success or otherwise of the policy will be gauges from

- Feedback from teachers, pupils, parents, Home/School Community Liaison Person.
- Satisfactory homework exercises and assignments submitted by pupils.

Roles and Responsibility

The following people have particular responsibilities for the ongoing monitoring of the policy: Class Teacher, pupil, Principal, Parent/Guardian, Home/School Community Liaison teacher.

Implementation Date

The proposed date from which these procedures will apply is November 2024.

Ratification & Communication

The policy was presented to BOM and ratified on 21/10/2024 and communicated to the school community.