



Loreto Community School Milford
Pobalscoil Loreto Baile Na nGallóglach

Homework and Independent Learning Policy

INTRODUCTION

Loreto Community School is a co-educational school under the auspices of the Department of Education and Science. The school has a Christian ethos whilst maintaining a deep respect for the diversity of traditions, values and beliefs found in the whole community. It aims for a high standard of educational provision but is also concerned with the development of the whole child. The school's mission statement asserts: "Loreto Community School respects the individual's rights and self-worth while promoting a happy, safe and Christian environment where all may realise their spiritual, educational and personal potential." An important aspect of developing potential is the ability to become an independent learner so that the student can continue to develop as a lifelong learner.

Loreto Community School recognises homework as an integral part of the learning process that reinforces classroom learning and supports students' academic progress. Effective homework fosters independence, responsibility, self-discipline and lifelong learning skills. It helps students revise work covered in class and prepare for upcoming lessons. Regularly assigned and corrected homework strengthens the link between learning at school and at home. This policy provides clear guidance for students, teachers and parents/guardians and ensures transparency, accountability and compliance with the Education Act 1998.

PURPOSE

1. This homework policy outlines agreed principles rather than fixed rules on the amount or timing of homework. It recognises that homework practices will vary across subjects and departments while being mindful of students' overall workload, particularly at Junior Cycle. The policy aims to ensure that homework is purposeful, meaningful and supports deeper learning and skill development. It emphasises the importance of student understanding, independent learning and responsibility. Parental/guardian support and communication are valued, and homework will be differentiated where possible to meet the diverse learning needs of all students. Consideration is also given to independent learning, project work and study that is needed within the new Junior and Senior Cycle.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all students enrolled in Loreto Community School, across Junior Cycle, Transition Year (TY), Leaving Certificate, and Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) programmes. It encompasses all subjects, departments, and curricular areas, including co-curricular and programme-specific learning activities where homework or independent learning is assigned.

The policy applies to all teaching staff responsible for assigning, monitoring, and providing feedback on homework and independent learning tasks. It also outlines the role of students in completing assigned work and the supportive role of parents/guardians in fostering positive homework habits and independent study routines.

Homework and independent learning, as defined within this policy, include a broad range of activities such as written work, oral and aural tasks, research, project work, reflection, revision, performance-based tasks, portfolio preparation, and digital learning activities. The policy applies whether homework is assigned through traditional written means or via digital platforms such as Google Classroom or Compass.

This policy operates during the academic year and applies to homework assigned during term time, including preparation for assessments, Classroom-Based Assessments (CBAs), state examinations, and programme-specific key assignments. It recognises that homework practices may vary between subjects and programmes while ensuring a consistent whole-school approach to purpose, expectations, accountability, and student wellbeing.

The policy is implemented in line with the Education Act 1998 and relevant Department of Education guidance.

RATIONALE

- Homework provides students with an opportunity to reinforce material already covered in class.
- Students engage in assigned learning activities, providing a foundation for future learning.
- The objective of assigning homework to students is to increase the knowledge, understanding and skills of the students.
- Homework encourages students to develop independent learning skills such as time management, organisation and self-motivation.
- It supports students in taking greater responsibility for their own learning, preparing them for further education and lifelong learning.

Definition of Homework and Independent Learning

Homework and independent learning is defined as the time students spend outside the classroom in assigned learning activities. It is not restricted to written work. It may take several formats: oral, aural, research, reflections, portfolios, performance, project work or revision (this is not an exhaustive list). A variety of homework assignments could be set by teachers. These include, but are not restricted to:

- Reading / pre-reading activities
- Task that pre-teaches a topic(s)
- Researching / sourcing and analysing materials
- CBA preparation
- Essay work and revision topics
- Oral/aural / written work
- Exam paper practice
- Reflection tasks
- Revision of classwork: written work and/or oral work
- Short revision work
- Development of oral and aural skills
- Watching educational documentaries and/or television programmes
- Preparing for debates, role-plays, etc.

Purpose of Homework and independent learning:

- Homework is an essential link between teaching and learning.
- It reinforces and consolidates work covered in class.
- Homework helps teachers and students assess learning and progress.
- It develops self-discipline, independence, and responsibility.
- It encourages students to meet deadlines and take ownership of their learning.
- Promotes communication between parents/guardians, teachers, and students.
- Homework is a core component of formative assessment, supporting ongoing learning and directly contributing to improved performance in summative assessments.

Time allocation for homework:

The amount of time spent on homework varies depending on the subject and the number of classes per week. Students at Loreto Community School are strongly encouraged to complete homework as soon as practicable, particularly where gaps occur between timetabled classes. As students differ in ability and pace, it is not possible to set a specific time requirement for homework for each subject. However, students are expected to engage in regular study and complete projects at home, developing their skills as independent learners.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The following section outlines the responsibilities the teacher, the student and the parents/guardians have in relation to homework.

Teachers Responsibilities:

- Teachers may assign clear, meaningful homework and ensure students understand what is required.
- Students will be instructed to record homework accurately, with clear submission dates.
- Homework will be appropriate to the year group and mindful of students' overall workload.
- Homework will be monitored. Homework may be corrected at a class or individual level.
- Teachers will use, at times, differentiated homework to support diverse learning needs.
- Students will be encouraged to engage in independent study, research, and project work that may operate alongside homework.
- Teachers may assign additional work to gifted and talented students.

Parents/Guardians Responsibilities:

- The support of parents/guardians plays an important role in students' learning and progress.
- Parents/guardians are encouraged to help students establish a regular homework routine and to prioritise homework alongside other activities.
- Where possible, students should have a quiet, suitable space to work without distraction.
- Parents/guardians should monitor homework completion and check the student's journal or the relevant digital platform regularly.
- If homework cannot be completed for genuine reasons, parents/guardians should inform the school through a note or Compass.

- Parents/guardians are encouraged to support and guide students with homework and independent learning, while allowing students to complete work independently.
- Parents/guardians should ensure students have the required textbooks and materials for school and homework.
- Access to a device would be beneficial to a student for homework/independent learning if possible.

Students Responsibilities:

- Students are responsible for accurately recording all homework and learning tasks in their school journal or designated digital platform, such as Google Classroom, including submission dates.
- Students must ensure they have the necessary books, copybooks, and materials required for each subject.
- Each student should maintain a separate copybook or folder for each subject and use it appropriately.
- All assigned work should be completed to the best of the student's ability and presented neatly and clearly.
- If a student misses a class due to school activities, such as sports or other extracurricular commitments, it is the student's responsibility to find out what work was assigned from peers/teachers and to complete it.
- Students must have a genuine reason for not completing work, and a note must be provided to their subject teacher.

COURSEWORK

Coursework forms an important component of assessment and learning in Loreto Community School. It provides students with structured opportunities to apply knowledge, develop skills, demonstrate understanding, and engage in sustained independent learning over time.

Coursework may include, but is not limited to:

- Classroom-Based Assessments (CBAs)
- Additional Assessment Components (AAC)
- Key Assignments (LCA)
- Practical coursework

- Research projects
- Portfolios
- Orals and performance-based assessments
- Subject-specific investigative or practical work

Coursework supports the development of critical thinking, research skills, creativity, collaboration, digital literacy, and self-management. It encourages students to take ownership of their learning and to meet clearly defined deadlines and assessment criteria. Some coursework may be required to be completed at home in the student's own time. In such cases, students are expected to manage their time effectively and to plan their work to ensure timely submission.

Students are expected to:

- Engage fully in all coursework components
- Meet submission deadlines
- Follow subject-specific guidelines and marking schemes
- Create original work that reflects their own efforts
- Seek clarification from teachers where necessary
- Ensure they have access to a computer or an appropriate digital device where required to complete coursework

Teachers will:

- Clearly outline expectations, success criteria, and deadlines
- Provide appropriate scaffolding and guidance
- Monitor student progress
- Provide formative feedback to support improvement
- Ensure alignment with State Examinations Commission (SEC) requirements where applicable

Parents/guardians are encouraged to support students in managing their time effectively and in meeting coursework deadlines while promoting independent work practices.

Additional Assessment Components (AAC)

Additional Assessment Components (AAC) form part of certain Senior Cycle subjects and are required components of the assessment set by the State Examinations Commission (SEC).

AAC may include:

- Coursework projects
- Practical examinations
- Orals and aural examinations
- Portfolio submissions
- Performance assessments
- Research studies

Students undertaking subjects with AAC requirements must:

- Adhere strictly to SEC deadlines and regulations
- Attend all scheduled practical, oral, or assessment sessions
- Complete preparatory and developmental work as assigned
- Ensure authenticity and compliance with examination regulations

Teachers will:

- Inform students of all relevant deadlines and procedures
- Ensure compliance with SEC requirements
- Maintain accurate records where required

The school recognises that coursework and AAC components may require sustained preparation over time. Students are therefore expected to manage their workload effectively and seek support where necessary.

Homework in Transition Year and Leaving Certificate Applied

Some school programmes require a different approach to homework, placing less emphasis on traditional written tasks and focusing instead on applied and experiential learning.

In Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA), homework reflects the programme's applied nature and may include activities such as observation, interviews, practical work, or project-based tasks.

Students are expected to understand the purpose of these activities and complete them to the best of their ability. As students prepare for key tasks over the two-year programme, increased time may be required for planning, written work, computer-based tasks, and presentations. Homework in Transition Year (TY) is varied and flexible. While some subjects may assign more traditional homework, others will focus on research, projects, and experiential learning. Teachers will ensure students understand the learning value and relevance of these tasks.

REVIEW AND AUDIT

- This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure its effectiveness and to comply with any changes in regulations or best practices. Updates or changes to the policy will be communicated to staff, students, and parents/guardians as necessary.
- The date from which the policy will apply is the date of adoption by the board of management.
- Implementation of the policy will be monitored by the Principal of the school.
- The revised or amended policy will be approved by the Board of Management.

The Board of Management agreed and ratified the policy. *Tue 24th Feb 2016*

Date:

Proposed by:

Seconded by:

Signed: *Margaret Bonner*
Margaret Bonner
Chairperson, Board of Management

Margaret O'Connor
Margaret O'Connor
Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management