

# St. Mary's College Junior School



## Homework Policy

### Introduction

Homework fosters independence, self-reliance, self-esteem, co-operation, responsibility and lifelong learning. It is an essential part of primary education as it re-enforces what children learn throughout the day in the classroom. 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 his own to the best of his ability. However, there is also times when homework will require a parent to work with their child to complete a task. It is normally prepared by the teacher in class. Homework can be used to practice what is done in school or can be designed to challenge children's ability and provide opportunities for creativity.

### How often is homework given?

Oral and written homework is given on a Monday, Tuesday and Thursday. As part of our well-being programme, only oral homework is given on a Wednesday (Well-being Wednesday).

Sometimes at the discretion of the class teacher or the Principal, children may be given homework off/a homework pass as a treat or as an acknowledgment of a special occasion.

### Homework 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, work to be 'learned by heart', drawing/colouring, collecting information/items and finishing work started in class. Parents can play an important role in listening to reading and items to be learned, ensuring this work is done well.

## **Reading**

Children will have reading each night (Monday to Thursday) as part of their homework. This will take the form of either a class level text, individual ability-based text or both. Graded reading is set in English and Irish from first class.

## **Duration of 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 it is the quality and not the quantity of homework that matters. The following are general guidelines:

Infant classes – up to 20 minutes

1st & 2nd class – up to 30 minutes

3rd & 4th class – up to 45 minutes

5th & 6th class – up to 60 minutes

Homework is differentiated at all class levels. However, if homework is too difficult/taking too much time, the class teacher should be contacted to arrange a meeting to discuss how the matter can be resolved.

## **Students should:**

- Enter homework accurately in homework journals (Form 1 – Form 6)
- Ensure they take home relevant books and copies
- Read out loud to a parent/guardian
- Complete homework assignments neatly and to the best of their ability

## **Parents/Guardians should:**

- Encourage a positive attitude towards homework in all subjects from an early age.
- Encourage children to work independently as far as possible.
- Encourage children to organise themselves for homework.
- Agree a suitable time for doing homework, taking into account age, the need for playtime and family time.
- Providing a quiet place, suitable work surface, free from distractions and screens.
- Encourage good presentation and neatness within a reasonable time.
- Parents/Guardians are required to listen to their child reading out loud and sign their child's reading cards.

- Sign the homework journal once all homework is complete (Form 1 – Form 6).
- Check that the child has all necessary books, homework journal, copies, pencils, mathematical equipment, dictionary and any other items needed for the next school day.
- Communicate difficulties to the teacher using the homework journal/Aladdin.
- Parents are responsible for ensuring that reading books are not damaged and returned to school each day in good condition. Damaged or lost books must be replaced by parents/guardians.

### **Teachers should:**

- Ensure that work being assigned for homework is prepared in class
- Differentiate homework for all abilities
- Monitor homework on a regular basis to help identify students with difficulties
- Ensure that all homework is corrected and feedback given

### **What happens when homework is not done?**

Homework should be completed each night. However, the school understands that at certain times, children may have an unusual activity after school that leaves little time for homework to be completed (for example due to family commitments or involvement in a special occasion). In situations like, the parents should write a note in the homework diary and their child will be excused from homework. This should not happen on a regular basis.

When homework is not completed regularly, the teacher will make contact with the parent/guardian initially via the student's homework journal to try to resolve the situation. If the situation continues, then the matter is brought to the attention of the Principal who will contact the parent/guardian and arrange a meeting to discuss how the matter can be resolved.

### **Reviewing and evaluating the policy**

The policy will be reviewed and evaluated every three years or sooner if deemed necessary. Ongoing review and evaluation will take cognisance of parents/guardians, students, school staff and others. This policy will be revised as necessary in the light of such review and evaluation.

Ratified by Board of Management of St. Mary's College Junior School on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2026.