

St. Patrick's National School



Homework Policy 2025

Key Dates	
Parent Consultation	
Staff Consultation	
Board Consultation	
Ratification	

Rationale:

Homework supports the learning process by:

- Reinforcing and extending what the pupil has learned during the school day.
- Encouraging independent learning, self-discipline and a positive work ethic.
- Providing a means for parents/guardians to engage with their child's learning and stay informed.
- Encouraging learners to take responsibility for their work and progress.
- Occasionally, for senior pupils, offering opportunities for creativity and research or project work.

Homework is meant to be achievable and allows pupils to practise skills already taught in class. Children are expected to complete homework to the best of their individual ability – no more, no less.

When and How Often is Homework Given?

- Homework will generally be assigned Monday to Thursday.
- No homework is normally set on Fridays, weekends, or on the day before a public holiday, unless under special circumstances (e.g., project work for senior pupils or unfinished class work).
- For pupils in 3rd to 6th class, the expectation is that each evening's homework will generally include English, Irish, Maths and occasionally SESE (for example, where history is given for homework, this may replace English on that evening) in line with the class level and teacher planning.
- The decision to set homework, the amount and type will be age-appropriate, manageable, and differentiated as needed.
- In exceptional cases, if classwork was missed or homework neglected, additional tasks or weekend work may be required.

Homework Content

Homework will include a **balanced mix** of tasks, appropriate to the class level. These might include:

- Reading (silent, shared or oral)
- Learning work (spellings, tables/facts)
- Written tasks (English, Irish, Mathematics, SESE, etc)
- For 3rd-6th class: regular nightly tasks in English, Irish and Maths, plus occasional tasks in other subject areas, finishing work started in class, or project/research tasks.
- Creative tasks (drawing, colouring, short writing, design) where appropriate.

It is important to emphasise: quality over quantity. Teachers will ensure that tasks are meaningful and consolidate learning.

Suggested Time-Spans for Homework

These are approximate and may vary according to the individual child's speed, ability and concentration. The aim is to ensure time spent is appropriate and not excessive.

Class Level	Suggested Maximum Time*
Junior Infants	0 – 10 minutes (Mostly reading, phonics/word practice, light tasks.)
Senior Infants	Up to 20 minutes (Mostly reading, phonics/word practice, light tasks.)
1st Class	Up to 30 minutes
2nd Class	Up to 40 minutes
3rd Class	Up to 50 minutes
4th Class	Up to 60 minutes (1 hour)
5th Class	Up to 1 hour 15 minutes
6th Class	Up to 1 hour 30 minutes

* These are guidelines only. If a child regularly takes significantly more time, a note should be sent to the teacher.

Parental/Guardian Involvement

Parents play a key role in supporting good homework habits by:

- Providing a quiet, well-lit space, free from distractions (e.g., television or digital devices).
- Checking and signing the child's homework journal each evening.
- Encouraging and praising their child's effort and persistence.
- Ensuring the child undertakes the work themselves; parents should not complete the homework for the child. If a child is finding something difficult, parents may give explanation or support, but should sign a note in the homework journal for the teacher's awareness.
- Communicating with the teacher via the homework journal (or other agreed means) if homework takes much longer than the guideline time, or is causing persistent difficulty.
- Encouraging reading for pleasure, discussing what your child did at school, and making the homework routine a positive part of the day.

Accommodations for Pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN)

In keeping with the inclusive education policy, the school acknowledges that some pupils may require reasonable accommodations, differentiated tasks or supports in order to engage effectively with homework. The following provisions apply:

1. **Differentiation of homework tasks:** Teachers will adjust the length, complexity or format of homework for pupils with identified needs, ensuring tasks remain meaningful and achievable.
2. **Alternative homework formats:** Where appropriate, tasks may be modified to account for a child's specific learning profile (e.g., using assistive technology, word-processing instead of handwriting, reducing writing load).
3. **Reduced homework load or alternate focus:** For pupils with significant needs or fatigue after school, homework may focus on one key subject (e.g., reading or tables) rather than full nightly English/Irish/Maths, or may be spread over fewer evenings, in consultation with parents/guardians and teacher.

4. **Collaborative planning:** Teachers, parents/guardians and, where relevant, special education staff will review homework expectations for individual pupils (via SSPs or meetings) to ensure tasks are appropriate. The school draws on the guidelines from the NCSE (National Council for Special Education) and DEY (Department of Education and Youth) which emphasise that support should be based on identified needs.
5. **Flexible timelines:** Pupils with additional needs may be given extra time, or the opportunity to complete homework during school-based support time or designated in-class consolidation time rather than at home, where appropriate.
6. **Support for parents:** Parents/guardians of pupils with SEN will be kept informed of homework expectations, and encouraged to communicate with the teacher if homework is presenting an unreasonable challenge.

The school recognises that effective inclusion involves providing the right supports and accommodations so all pupils can participate meaningfully.

Role of Teachers and School

Teachers will:

- Set homework that is meaningful, age-appropriate, differentiated where necessary, and clearly explained.
- Ensure nightly expectations for 1st-6th classes include English, Irish and Maths, while remaining mindful of the child's individual ability.
- Provide accommodations for pupils with SEN, in line with support plans and inclusive education guidelines.
- Check homework regularly, provide feedback, and communicate with parents/guardians if homework is taking too long or not being completed for understandable reasons.
- Review the homework policy regularly with input from staff, pupils, parents/guardians and the Board of Management, ensuring it remains in line with current guidance and best practice.

When Should Parents/Guardians Contact the School?

Please contact the class teacher if:

- Your child cannot complete homework due to circumstances outside of their control.
- Your child is unable to understand the homework or is frustrated by the volume or difficulty.
- Homework is regularly taking much longer than the recommended guideline time.
- Homework is causing stress or anxiety, or interfering with your child's well-being.
- You believe your child may require differentiated homework tasks or supports due to additional learning needs.

Homework Timing and Routine

- Ideally, homework should be completed soon after school, while the child is still alert, though a short break is acceptable if needed.
- Homework should not be postponed until the morning before school.
- Establish a consistent routine (for example: homework begins at 4.30 pm each evening) to help children learn responsibility and independence.
- Maintain balance: playtime, rest, family time and extracurricular activities are important and homework should not dominate the evening.

Special Considerations

- Differentiated homework tasks will be used for pupils with SEN so that the workload is manageable and supports effective learning rather than causing frustration.
- Teachers will liaise with special education staff, parents/guardians and where necessary outside professionals to review the appropriateness of homework tasks for individual pupils.
- The school will monitor homework load and effectiveness through the homework journal and parent/teacher feedback, adjusting practice where necessary.

Review and Publication

- This policy will be reviewed every 2-3 years, or sooner if needed, in consultation with staff, pupils, parents/guardians and the Board of Management.
- A copy of this policy is available on the school website and in the school office.
- Any updated version will communicate changes to all stakeholders.

Summary Reminder for Families

Homework at St. Patrick's NS, Calry aims to strengthen learning, build good habits and support your child's progress. From 3rd to 6th class, it is expected that each evening your child will usually work on English, Irish and Maths, but the tasks will always be appropriate to your child's ability. If your child has additional learning needs, we will work together to provide accommodations so homework is meaningful and manageable. If homework becomes a source of stress rather than support, please contact us. Thank you for your support.

Ratification

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management of St. Patrick's National School, Calry, Sligo at a meeting held on _____.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

(Chairperson)

Signed: _____

Date: _____

(Principal)