

Homework Policy

Rationale

Existing Policy Draft was reviewed by staff on August 30th, 2013. This policy will be placed on the website in September for parental comments if desired. Updated redraft to be submitted to the B.O.M. in October. Scoil Chiaráin aims through its Homework Policy to inform all partners in Education of school policy on all aspects of Homework.

Relationship to characteristic of school spirit.

In preparing pupils to contribute and play a pivotal role in their school and community, it was felt that homework helps foster a work ethic and routine for their future education and lives.

Why give homework?

- To re-inforce what the child learns during the day.
- To provide a link between teacher and parent.
- To develop a child's concentration skills and develop a work ethic.
- Homework is meant to be achievable by a child, i.e. it provides an opportunity to practise work already done. It is normally prepared by the teacher in class. However, sometimes with senior classes, some homework is designed to challenge children's ability and provide opportunities for creativity.
- Children are expected to do their homework to the best of their individual ability – no more, no less.

How often is homework given?

- Homework is given on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays but not on Fridays.
- Sometimes at the discretion of the class teacher or the principal, children are given 'Homework off' as a treat or as acknowledgement of some special occasion.
- Normally there is no homework at weekends or on a school day just before a public holiday. However, children in middle and senior classes may sometimes be required to work independently on projects at weekends.

What is the content of homework?

- Ideally homework will contain 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', drawing/colouring, collecting information/items and finishing work started in class.
- Children often feel that reading and 'learning by heart' is not real homework. Parents can play an important role in listening to reading and items to be learned ensuring this work is done well.
- Guidelines on homework procedures for each class will be forwarded by class teacher at the beginning of the school year.

How much 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 that it is the quality and not the quantity of homework that matters. The following are general guidelines only:

Junior Infants	0 – 15 minutes
Senior Infants	Up to 15 minutes
1st Class	Up to 20 minutes
2nd Class	20 – 30 minutes
3rd Class	30 – 40 minutes
4th Class	40 – 45 minutes
5th Class	45 – 60 minutes
6th Class	Approx 60 minutes

Children attending a resource teacher will be encouraged to participate in as much class / homework as is possible and follow the same procedure as highlighted above – thus

enabling the child to integrate with class level but taking into account child's ability. Special Needs Assistant gives help with explanation / re-enforcement of homework – noting area of difficulty and standard.

How much help should parents give?

- Parents should try to help their children with homework by:
 - Providing them with a suitable place and time to do their homework.
 - To prevent interruptions or distractions, like T.V. or other children.
- Children should do written homework themselves and parents should only help when the child had difficulty.
- If a child has difficulty with homework, the parents should help the child to overcome the difficulty with further explanation or examples, but not by actually doing the homework for the child. In this case the parent should write a note to the teacher explaining the problem.
- Shared reading is not homework in the regular sense and it is simply meant to be an enjoyable exercise between parent and child. If it's not enjoyable, shared reading should not be done.

How often should parents monitor homework?

- Parents should check and sign a child's homework every evening.
- The pupil's homework copy is an important record of the child's homework. It is also a valuable means of communication between parents and teachers.
- Ideally, all written messages to your child's teacher should be put in the homework copy (additional pages available at the end of the journal).
- Please check that your child records his/her homework neatly in the correct page and ticks each item of homework when completed.
- Scoil Chiaráin Eolas and other letters to parents are folded and placed in the current day of the homework. Please check your child's bag for such notes on a regular basis.

How often do teachers monitor homework?

- Ideally teachers like to check homework on a daily basis. However with large class numbers it is not always possible to check each child's homework every day.

- As children get older and learn to work independently, some items of homework are checked less often e.g. every second day or once per week.
- Some items of homework (and classwork) may be checked by children themselves under the direction of the teacher. This can be a useful part of the learning process for children.

When should parents communicate with the teachers about homework?

- When your child cannot do homework due to family circumstances.
- When your child cannot do homework because she/he cannot understand some aspect.
- If the time being spent at homework is often longer than the recommended amount of time.

When should homework be done?

- Each family situation is different – both parents working, child minders, etc., Ideally, homework should be done before any television is watched soon after while your child is still fresh, however, some children need a break before starting homework.

Remember

If homework is a stressful experience between parent and child, something is wrong! This leads to poor learning and defeats the whole purpose. Should this happen on a regular basis, please contact the class teacher.