

Homework Policy

This document seeks to outline the policy in Holy Family School regarding homework by addressing some commonly asked questions in this regard.

Why give homework?

- To reinforce what the child learns during the day.
- To provide a link between home and school.
- To develop a child's concentration skills and develop a work ethic.
- It is a useful tool for assessing whether children really understand what has been taught in class and it assesses their presentation skills.
- It establishes a routine which is a good preparation for second level education.
- Homework is meant to be achievable by a child, i.e. it provides an opportunity to practise work already done.

How often is homework given?

- Homework is given on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays but not on Fridays.
- There are three exceptions:
 - if homework has been neglected during the week
 - in senior classes some project or preparatory work is undertaken at weekends
 - in middle and senior classes some practical work is undertaken.
- Sometimes at the discretion of the class teacher or the Principal, children are given "homework off" as a reward for good behaviour or as acknowledgment of some special occasion.
- If a child has not done homework, made a suitable effort or presented untidy work, it may be completed during morning break-time or the following night.
- If a child persistently fails to do homework parents will be informed by a note home in the homework journal and the work may have to be completed in school during some specially liked activity.

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.
- Infant classes will be given word bags, matching picture/word bags and paired reading books for homework.
- 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 thus ensuring this work is done well.

How much time for homework?

The following are guidelines for time spent at homework. Differences in ability will be taken into account-different children will complete the same homework in different lengths of time. Children experiencing difficulties in English reading and spellings will not be given Irish spellings. 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 & Senior Infants 10 minutes
Rang 1&2 20 to 30 minutes
Rang 3 &4 45 minutes
Rang 5 & 61 hour

How much help should parents/guardians give?

Parents should try to help their children with homework by:

- Providing them with a suitable place and time to do their homework
- Preventing interruptions or distractions, like T.V. or other children.
- Children should do written homework themselves and parents should only help when the child has 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.
- Parents should adhere to the methods used in school. This is particularly so in Mathematics. If the child is using a method that is foreign to the parent it would be much better to leave the child alone rather than impose another method thus confusing the child.
- 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/guardians monitor homework?

- Parents/guardians should check the child's homework every evening.
- In junior classes parents should sign the child's reading sheet and homework copy.
- In middle and senior standards the homework journal should be signed by a parent/guardian
- The pupil's journal is an important record of the child's homework. It is also a valuable means of communication between parents and teachers.
- Only notes regarding homework between parents and teachers should be put in the homework journal. All other notes re absences/sicknesses etc. which may contain private information should be put in separate notes.
- Please check that your child records his/her homework neatly in the correct page and ticks each item of homework when completed.
- Other notes/newsletters to parents will be folded and placed in the current day of the homework journal. Please check your child's journal for such notes on a regular basis.

How often do teachers/guardians monitor homework?

- Teachers check homework on a daily basis.
- A variety of methods are used to correct homework depending on the content and the age of the children:
 - Teacher correction
 - Class correction
 - Class discussion
 - Children exchange work for correction
 - Children write answers e.g. spellings, tables

- Some items of homework (and class work) 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/guardians communicate with the teachers about homework?

- At parent/teacher meetings.
- When your child cannot do homework due to family circumstances.
- When your child cannot do homework because she/he has encountered some difficulty.

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 school while your child is still fresh.
- ♣ If necessary it should be supervised by an adult.
- ♣ Homework should never be left until morning time before school.