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## **Homework Policy**

### **Rationale**

St. Mary's National School's Homework Policy was reviewed and revised in light of changing attitudes to the value of homework, especially for younger children. The policy takes into account teacher, parent and pupil questionnaires, as well as a study done by Dr. Joan Kiely, Marino College of Education. This study was commissioned by the National Parents Council. It evaluated research papers on homework and also examined what types of homework are deemed to be productive in Irish schools.

### **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 acknowledgment of some special occasion
- Please note extra homework may be sometime be given during the week or at the weekend if a child has not done homework, made a suitable effort or presented untidy work.
- There is no homework in June

### **What is the content of homework?**

Junior and Senior Infants: Reading, Phonics and some Oral activities (Should take less than 15 minutes)

1st and 2<sup>nd</sup> class: Reading, Phonics (1<sup>st</sup>), Tables and Spellings (up to 20 minutes)

3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> class: Reading, Spellings and Tables (up to 25 minutes)

5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> class: Reading, Spellings (5<sup>th</sup> only), Tables, some maths and general school work. (5<sup>th</sup> class: up to 30 minutes. 6<sup>th</sup>: Up to 40 minutes)

On occasion children will be given various tasks to complete at home. These could include project work, interviewing a grandparent, taking photos of nature, learning a

new skill like peeling a carrot etc. This type of homework was deemed to be beneficial and stimulating in the Joan Kiely report.

### **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., devices 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
- Shared reading with children is meant to be an enjoyable exercise between parent and child. As your children develop their reading skills, you can use your discretion to decide who reads the story. For example, in Junior Infants the parent will read all of the story but the child may or may not like to point out words that (s)he recognizes. As your child goes up through the years and becomes a stronger reader, they might like to read every second page, and ultimately read it all themselves. As well as the reading set for homework we encourage parents to read with their children every night for as many years as the child enjoys doing that with you.

### **How often should parents monitor homework?**

- Parents should check and sign a child's homework journal every evening
- 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
- Ideally, all written messages to your child's teacher should be put in the homework journal

### **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 journal 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.

**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.