

St. Mary's N.S. Homework Policy

1. 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 foster a work ethic.
- Homework is meant to be achievable by the child, i.e. it provides an opportunity to practice 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.

2. How often is homework given?

- Learning homework is given throughout the year. However there may be less or no written homework set during the first fortnight in September and the month of June.
- Homework is given on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays but not on Fridays. There are two exceptions: - **(1) If homework has been neglected during the week. (2) In senior classes some project work is undertaken at weekends.**
- Sometimes at the discretion of the class teacher or the principal. Children are given "homework off" as a treat or as an acknowledgement of some special occasion.
- Please note extra homework may sometimes be given during the week or at the weekend if a child has not done homework, made suitable effort or presented untidy work.

3. What is the content of homework?

- Ideally homework will contain a balance between oral/reading 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, spelling, tables, written work, pieces to be "learned by heart" drawing/colouring, collecting information/items and finishing work started in class.
- There will be no written homework for Junior Infants and for first term of Senior Infants.

4. How much (time) homework?

- The following are guidelines for time spent at homework. Different children will complete the same homework in different lengths of time. However if your child is regularly taking longer than the recommended time to complete his/her homework please contact the class teacher.
- 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.

Junior Infants	10/15 mins.
Senior Infants	15 mins.
First Class	20 mins.
Second Class	30 mins.
Third Class	40 mins.
Fourth Class	50 mins.
Fifth Class	60 mins.
Sixth Class	1 hr. 10/15 mins.

5. How much help should parents give?

Parents should try to help their children with homework by:

- Providing them with a suitable place to do their homework.
- Preventing interruptions or distractions, like TV, phones, electronic devices or other children.
- Children should complete written homework themselves and parents should only help when the child has difficulty.
- If a child has difficulty with homework, the parent 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.
- 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 and that handwriting and general presentation of work is appropriate to the child's ability.

6. How should parents use homework journal?

- A parent should check and sign a child's homework journal every evening as it is 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 and your child should bring it to his/her teacher's attention.
- Please check that your child records his/her homework neatly in the correct page and ticks each item of homework when completed.
- Letters and other such communication to parents should 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.
- Infant parents will find these in homework folders.

7. How often do teachers monitor homework?

- Ideally teachers like to monitor 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.
- 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.

8. When should parents communicate with 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.

9. If a child is absent from school due to family holiday arrangements, it is School Policy not to furnish that child with homework or a work schedule for the week/two weeks, as the purpose of homework is to re-in force the work done in school. However a parent may decide to encourage them to keep a diary of their day, do a project on Country/Countries visited or do extra reading.

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.