

Policy on Homework for St. Mary's Secondary School (Reviewed by BOM on 18th Oct 2010)

Definition of Homework

Homework is the work given by a class teacher to revise and reinforce what was taught or to prepare for work to be undertaken.

Homework provides learning opportunities and experiences that consolidate and reinforce skills and understanding developed at school.

The intrinsic value of homework activities is far more important than the precise amount of time devoted to them. However, best practice suggests that the amount of time that should be spent by Second level students on homework should fall within the following daily ranges:

- First Year 1 ½ hours
- Second Year 1 ½ - 2 hours
- Third Year 2 – 3 hours
- Transition Year varies depending of project work and activities
- Fifth Year 3 - 3 ½ hours
- Sixth Year 3 ½ - 4 hours

Weekend study and revision is also essential.

The Aims of Homework:

The aims of Homework are

- to consolidate and reinforce skills and understanding developed at school
- to extend school learning
- to develop the skills, confidence, self-discipline and motivation needed to study effectively.

Relationship to School Ethos/Mission/Vision/Aims

St Mary's School is a community which is committed to developing each person's full potential in a positive, supportive and Christian environment.

The Homework Policy is rooted in our fundamental aim to develop each member of the school community.

Through the implementation of this policy we strive to enact the stated Mission, Vision and Aims of St. Mary's Secondary School and of our Trustees CEIST.

Rationale for Policy

Homework is an essential component in the service of education offered by St Mary's. Homework provides students with the opportunity to develop skills that complement those learnt in the classroom. It enables parents to involve themselves directly in the learning programme. Homework should enhance the student's growing independence as a learner and develop self-discipline and organisational skills.

Goals of the Policy

That through doing their Homework student members of the school community will

- 1) further their academic learning;
- 2) develop efficient management of self, time and materials;
- 3) involve parents directly in the learning experiences of their daughters.

Homework Policy Expectations

- a) Class Teachers are expected to
 - set homework that is clear, realistic yet challenging
 - have a clear objective, linked to study programmes, for tasks set.
 - give a clear deadline for completion of homework
 - set amounts of homework appropriate to students' age
 - consider the varying abilities of students when setting homework or when inspecting homework
 - apply sanctions for not completing homework consistently
 - check homework on a regular basis.
 - mark homework effectively
 - indicate what needs to be done to improve student performance
 - record the work in their teacher's diary

- b) Students are expected to
 - record all homework, written and oral, in their school journal
 - establish a regular homework routine
 - show their best effort in their homework both in content and in neatness.
 - hand up homework on the day it is due.
 - discover what work has been set during any absence and endeavour to complete it within the time given in as far as is possible

- c) Parents/guardians are expected to
- provide a reasonably quiet, suitable place in which students can do their homework free of distractions such as television, mobile phones, p.c. etc
 - ensure that a regular time is set aside for homework.
 - inform the school or class teacher of any reasons why a student was unable to complete a homework assignment. A parent/guardian may communicate this through the student's journal.
 - check and sign the School Journal weekly.
 - acknowledge individual notes from school personnel
 - discourage students from taking part-time work during the school term.

Inclusion of Students with Special Needs

In setting homework for students with special needs teachers are encouraged to balance the right of students to share fully in the work of the class, including homework tasks, with their individual learning needs.

For some students, the continuing involvement of parents is very valuable. Subject teachers will collaborate where possible with Resource and Learning Support teachers to ensure class tasks are manageable, and individual skill practice can be incorporated without overloading the students.

Roles and Responsibilities in developing, implementing, monitoring, evaluating this policy

1. Board of Management

The Board will ensure that the ethos and values of the Trustees are reflected in the formulation and implementation of this policy and that the Policy is submitted to *CEIST*. The Board will formally record the adoption of the Homework Policy, the commencement date and decisions about when the Code will be reviewed.

2. Principal and Deputy Principal

The Principal and Deputy Principal, under the direction of the Board, lead the work in developing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating the Homework Policy in St. Mary's Secondary School.

3. Teachers and other Staff Members

Teachers and other staff members bring

- their professional expertise in understanding the links between homework and learning;
- their experience of what works to help students to learn well;
- their knowledge of the school and the school community

to the process of developing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating this Policy in St. Mary's Secondary School.

4. Parents

The meaningful involvement of parents in the development, monitoring and evaluation of this Policy will contribute to its successful implementation. Parents can have a hugely positive influence on their daughters' homework.

Parents can:

- Encourage a strong sense of pride in homework and ownership of work.
- Reinforce at home the attitudes to homework and revision that together make for effective study
- Provide feedback to the school, through the Parents' Council or members of the teaching staff, on their experiences of the effectiveness of homework practices

5. Students

Students are more likely to support the Homework Policy when they have helped to develop it. Through their involvement students can:

- Experience being part of a collective effort to make sure this school is a good place to teach and learn.
- Have their experience, insights and expectations recognised and used.
- Learn to take personal responsibility for their homework

Success Criteria

The policy on Homework contributes to a positive learning environment in the school.

That students display a positive attitude toward homework

That the students will retain knowledge more effectively

That creativity, communication and thinking skills are stimulated

That students become efficient managers of self, time and materials

That students develop in skills, confidence, self-discipline and motivation

That parents are involved in their daughters' school learning and experiences

Review and Evaluation

The effectiveness of this homework policy will be monitored and evaluated. Each subject department monitors homework within the department at subject department meetings. Teachers evaluate the quality of homework and the contribution it is making to learning. The system will also be evaluated through staff appraisal at staff meetings.

In addition to monitoring arrangements the homework policy will be reviewed regularly to assess its effectiveness. The key criterion will be the extent to which the policy is contributing to the progress students make at school and their attitude to learning.