

St. Patrick's Comprehensive School

Homework Policy

Introduction

The school homework policy is rooted in the school's basic aim to assist students to develop their full potential in an atmosphere of cooperation and mutual respect.

Rationale of Homework

Homework is an integral part of the learning process. Learning continues through the completion of homework.

Teachers assign homework for many reasons. Homework can help to:

- Review and practice what has been learned in class during the day i.e. it is an extension of classroom learning and experience. It helps with the absorption of classroom learning.
- Explore subjects in greater depth than is allowed by class time. It allows for gaining a better understanding of the subject.
- Practise new skills and concepts and enable students to become more competent in their use.
- Introduce students to independent learning – the completion of projects, the use of the school and local libraries for research, the use of the Internet.
- Carry out preparatory work for the next day's class.
- Develop study skills and encourage independence, self-discipline and responsibility.
- Homework may be assigned to a class or a group within a class or individual according to student needs.

Homework and Parents

Homework at St. Patrick's Comprehensive School plays an important part in the education process.

- It provides a link between school and home and also gives parents the opportunity to reinforce the importance of learning.
- It provides parents with a means of becoming involved in the student's learning. Parents play a crucial role in shaping good attitudes and habits in relation to their child's homework. Monitoring of homework by parents/guardians ensures that homework is being recorded and completed – according to the needs of the student.

- Valuable learning comes from attempting as well as completing work. Students benefit from parental support and encouragement in persevering with difficult assignments.
- Experience has shown that parental involvement with homework is invaluable for the student. Encouraging a positive attitude is most beneficial and parents can play a major role in this.

If for some reason the assigned homework is not done or completed a note in the journal from a parent explaining why is required.

Types of Homework

There are many different types of homework.

- Homework can be short term i.e. due for the next day or long term e.g. the writing of an essay or the completion of a project.
- Homework can be written work, practical work or learning. In relation to learning homework it is very important that the student completes this each evening.
- Homework can be in the form of revision of work already learnt.

Time Allocated to Homework

Recommended time to be allocated to homework for each year group is as follows:

Junior Students:

- 1st Years – 1 ½ to 2 hours
- 2nd and 3rd Years – 2 to 3 hours

Senior Students:

- TYs – 3 hours including project work, participation in Transition Year activities and planned revision
- 4th and 5th Years – 3 hours **plus** planned revision time

Organisation of Homework

Students should expect to receive homework in most subject areas.

Homework, both written and oral, is considered of equal value and importance.

Homework is regarded as an extension of classwork and as a preparation for the next day's work.

In order to achieve, students must be prepared to spend time studying and revising as well as doing their homework.

It is very important that a student's very best effort is made at all times. When difficulty is encountered, a student should refer to his/her textbook or examples given in class. It is required that there would be some evidence of effort made as this enables the teacher to assess the student's learning needs.

Suggestions for Organising Homework

- Find a quiet place where possible and establish a routine.
- Try to avoid all obvious distractions, TV, Radio, Phone calls, Text messages etc.
- When possible, homework should be completed early in the evening rather than late at night.
- Try to complete homework on the night it is given, even though it may not be required for the next day.
- Design a personal timetable for homework, half hour blocks are recommended followed by a short break. Allocate time for study and revision also.
- Take notes when studying, highlight key areas, headings etc. These will be used later for revision.
- Use the textbook or notes given in class to help answering written questions.
- Where the homework involves solving problems, study the examples given in class first, before attempting the problems.
- When a student has to learn off material such as vocabulary, grammar, definitions, diagrams or formulae, they should test themselves regularly and keep testing until they know it.
- Make sure all written work is neat and tidy.
- When homework is completed, timetable and schoolbag should be checked to ensure that all books, copies, PE gear, Art materials etc are ready for the next day.

Teachers and Homework

- Writing homework on whiteboard where necessary.
- Giving students time to write homework in journals.
- Making parents aware of any problem in this area by sending a note home in the journal.
- Being aware of demands made on students in other subject areas, thereby allocating sufficient time to complete essays, projects etc.
- Ensuring homework is clearly marked to identify areas for improvement. Feedback should be constructive, practical and given in an appropriate time frame.
- Giving structured guidelines for revision.
- Ensuring that Study skills are part of the SPHE programme for all Year Groups.

Homework Journal

Each student is given a Homework Journal at the beginning of the year to record details of homework for each school day.

The following practice should be observed by all students in relation to their homework journals.

1. Separate entries for different subjects.
2. When homework is completed, a mark should be made to show this.
3. Due date column should be used when taking down homework.

Students should record carefully the instructions for their homework. They should ask questions, when necessary, to clarify the assignment. Before leaving school in the evening they should check that they have all the books, copies and any other material needed for that night's homework.

Students should carefully plan for the completion of long-term projects.

If a student is absent from class, he/she should find out what work was missed and what homework was given. Those involved in extracurricular activities must also complete their homework. For this purpose it is worthwhile having a contact number of another student who was present in class.

Parents are requested to sign the journal at the end of each week.

Setting Academic Targets

The setting of targets is an integral part of planning homework. As part of this process students are requested to set grade targets in preparation for house and state examinations. Students and parents, together, are encouraged to review the student's academic progress and to set achievable short and long term goals.

Supervised Homework

Supervised study (two hours) is available after school each day. Please contact Ms Dineen for details.

Subject Departments

Subject departments have homework policies and specific homework requirements.

