



*"Let the rooms be
full of happiness"*

*Scoil Iósaf National School,
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Homework Policy

A. Scoil Iósaf NS, Castlemartyr has an established practise of giving homework.

B. A school Homework Journal is used from Senior Infants to Sixth Class.

C. Why assign homework?

1. To reinforce what the child learns during the day.
2. To provide a link between teacher and parent.
3. To develop a child's concentration skills and develop work ethic.
4. Homework is meant to be achievable by a child, i.e. It provides an opportunity to practice work already done. It is normally prepared by the teacher in class. Sometimes with Senior Classes, however, homework is designed to challenge children's ability and provide opportunities for creativity.
5. Children are expected to do their homework to the best of their ability – no more, no less.

D. In Scoil Iósaf all pupils are cherished equally and to aid them in achieving their true potential, a reasonable amount of homework, usually prepared in class, is given each night, Monday to Thursday. This policy aims:

1. To provide a link between home and school.
2. To give the children learning opportunities outside of school.
3. To develop self-discipline.
4. Homework serves as revision of work done in school.
5. Homework provides the pupils with an opportunity to receive individual attention at a level that is not possible in class.
6. To give parents a regular insight into the child's work and the class teachers' expectations.
7. To ensure the production of good, quality homework.

E. Guidelines:

Children attending Scoil Iósaf receive a reasonable and regular amount of homework. The following are guidelines regarding time spent on homework.

1. Different children will complete the same homework in different lengths of time.
2. It is important to remember that it is the quality and not the quantity of homework that matters.
3. In the final term of the 2017/2018 school year the parents were surveyed regarding homework. The survey was a digital one. 94 families responded with contributions from all class levels. As a result, some changes have been made to the homework policy to reflect the wishes expressed.
4. Junior Infants: Homework is phased into Junior Infants once the children have settled at school. Junior Infants homework focuses on oral and reading tasks.

5. Senior Infants - 6th class: It was agreed that teachers would vary the work on particular nights.
6. All teachers will aim to assign work that can be completed within 30 minutes by average pupils working at average speeds.
7. The staff want to adopt a new approach to the teaching of spelling. The approach is based on dictation, with core words of spelling significance being the focus of the learning. It was felt that a lot of time was being spent on spelling at home. The teachers want instead to focus more teaching time on spelling. The approach adopted is that promoted by Brendan Culligan MA, lecturer in Marino College of Education. The families were asked to trust the school as the staff pursues a new approach. Similarly, the approach to the rote learning of tables should be a concentrated school activity rather than a homework task.
8. Children on an Individual Education Programmes (SEN pupils) will do the amount of homework which suits their needs as agreed between class teacher, parents and SEN teacher.

F. How often is homework given?

1. Homework is given Monday to Thursday inclusive.
2. There are two exceptions, as outlined in the following points.
 - a. If homework or schoolwork has been neglected during the week completion may be requested during the weekend.
 - b. In senior classes, some project work is undertaken at weekends.
3. 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.
4. **Birthdays.** Pupils in school on the day of their birthday will have a night off homework.
5. Pupils whose birthdays fall on Friday, Saturday or Sunday will be given a night off homework on the following Wednesday.
6. If birthdays fall during school holidays then the pupils concerned will have a night off on the first Wednesday when school resumes.
7. Pupils who have birthdays in June, July & August will have a night off on the last working Wednesday in May – a blanket night, thus ensuring one treat night for all.
8. In Scoil Íósaf there is no homework at all in the month of June (96.8% of parents who answered the survey agreed).
9. There will be no written homework in Scoil Íósaf for the first two weeks of the new school year. Teachers will assign homework and will allow time within the school day for children to complete the task involved. As all teachers differ in expectation this affords the teacher an opportunity to establish their ground rules. It also affords an opportunity for children to adjust to the demands of a new class teacher.

G. What is the content of homework?

1. Ideally homework will contain a balance between reading tasks, learning tasks and written tasks.
2. This balance is not always possible and can vary considerably from day to day.
3. However, it should be noted that homework time devoted to reading and learning is as important as time devoted to written work.
4. Homework will regularly contain reading, written work, perhaps pieces to be learned by heart, drawing/colouring, collecting information/ items and finishing work started in class.
5. 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 well done.

H. How much help?

Parents should try to help their children with homework by:

1. Providing them with a suitable place and time to do their homework.
2. Prevent interruptions or distractions e.g. TV or other children.

3. Children should do written homework themselves.
4. Parents should only help when the child has difficulty.
5. 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, it is best, if the parent writes a note to the teacher, explaining the problem, or request a meeting to discuss the matter.

I. How often should parents monitor homework?

1. 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.
2. Parents, please sign the homework journal every day and indicate time taken.
3. Ideally all written messages to your child's teacher should be put in the homework journal.
4. Letters to parents are rare nowadays as we are trying to reduce our carbon footprint. Notes, receipts to parents are placed in the current day of the homework journal.

J. How often do teachers monitor homework?

1. Ideally teachers should check homework on a daily basis. However, with large class numbers, it is not always possible to check each child's homework every day.
2. 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.
3. Some items of homework (and schoolwork) may be checked by children themselves, under the direction of the teacher. This can be a useful part of the learning process for children.

K. When should parents communicate with the teachers about homework?

1. When your child cannot do homework due to family circumstances.
2. When your child cannot do homework because he/she cannot understand some aspect.
3. If the time being spent at homework is often longer than desirable.

L. When should homework be completed?

1. Each family situation is different. Ideally, homework should be done soon after school, while your child is still fresh. However, some children need a break before starting homework.
2. Homework should never, if possible, be left until morning time before school.
Remember - If homework is a stressful experience between parent and child, something is wrong. This leads to poor learning and defeats the whole purpose. If this happens on a regular basis, please contact the class teacher.

M. Success Criteria:

The success of the policy is judged on:

1. The quality of homework produced.
2. Feedback from pupils, parents and staff.
3. On the amount of knowledge/learning gained.

N. Roles and Responsibility.

1. The Principal should be aware of each teacher's approach to homework.
2. It is the teachers' duty to explain homework.
3. Pupils are expected to do all homework.
4. Parents must provide a suitable environment for homework.
5. The Board of Management must approve the Homework Policy.

Scoil Iósaf has established the practise of keeping a record of "Homework not done". The school aims to maintain high standards in all areas at all times.

O. What happens if Homework is consistently not done?

1. On a first occasion of “not done or incomplete homework” class teachers will deal with the situation by way of encouragement/ “please catch up tonight”/verbal reprimand. (Reasonable accommodation must allow for human forgetfulness).
2. On a second occasion of “homework incomplete or not done” pupils will complete the missing work at break time.
3. Should there be a third occasion a text will be sent to the families concerned.
4. On a fourth occasion a text message will be used again.
5. On a fifth occasion a face to face meeting between parent teacher and pupil will be organised.
6. If the problem still persists the school day will simply move on. Enough school teaching time has been lost. The school has fulfilled its side of the bargain.
7. A final sign off text will be sent conveying the message that the school has discharged its obligation and will no longer be engaging with regard to homework in the current school year.

Policy Reviewed in October 2018
To be reviewed October 2020

Ratified on October 22nd 2018.

Signed: _____