

Mercy Primary School

Homework Policy

Introductory Statement

This policy was formulated with staff (discussion at staff meeting and questionnaire on individual teacher procedures regarding homework) and with parents and pupils (a survey of attitudes to homework and expectations).

Rationale

- To promote positive home/school communication.
- To maximise the benefit of homework to the child's learning.
- Existing policy is due for review.

Relationship to characteristic spirit of the school

Mercy Primary School seeks to enable each child to develop to their potential. Homework encourages pupils to work independently and take responsibility for their assignments.

Aims

- To reinforce what the child has learned; allowing for revision and practice. However, at times homework may be more challenging and provide opportunities for creativity.
- To provide a link between teacher and parent allowing the child to see that both the homework and the school share educational goals for them. It involves the parent in the learning process.
- To provide for teacher-directed, parentally-led, one to one work in literacy and numeracy i.e. reading, tables and spelling.
- Homework should in general be achievable for a child working on their own, under the supervision of a parent. Homework allows the child to become progressively more independent and responsible for her own learning.
- To provide opportunities for research and other work, using out of school resources (e.g. books and Information Technology) found in the home or other places such as libraries.
- To develop study habits and to assist in establishing an appropriate routine for children in doing their homework.

Guidelines (content of policy)

Homework Content

We believe that learning and reading tasks are as important as written homework. In Mercy P.S. we place a huge value on literacy, therefore, outside the time spent on homework, students and parents are encouraged to read for a short time each night. Parents can play an important role in listening to reading and items learned ensuring that this work is done well. Many children will only reach full potential in reading if they do one to one reading with a parent. Many children will only be fully competent in spelling and tables if they learn and are asked these as part of their daily homework. Homework time devoted to reading and learning is as important as written work. The homework set by any class teacher should reflect a balance between written, reading and learning tasks, ensuring that the written tasks are brief enough to allow for time to be spent on reading and learning. In the area of Maths, there are numerous ways to support and develop your child's mathematical knowledge, skills, understanding and attitude. Home/School link sheets, tutorial videos (through Seesaw) and helpful apps can be sent home to parents at the discretion of the teacher. Homework will regularly contain reading, spellings, tables, written work, pieces to be "learned by heart", research, collecting information/items, finishing work started in class and opportunities for creativity. SESE homework will be assigned when children are involved in project work. At times, during good weather teachers will assign outdoor activities. However, sometimes, in the senior classes, some homework is designed to challenge the pupil's ability. The class teacher normally prepares it. The student is expected to complete her homework to the best of her individual ability. Oral work, particularly in the early stages of your child's school life, can consolidate that which is learned. Homework reinforces work done in school and is differentiated according to children's needs and abilities and is always explained to the children in school.

Frequency of Homework

The class teacher sets homework Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday each week. The nature of homework will vary between different classes and topics of study. Homework is not set for the weekend or on a school day just before a public holiday.

Sometimes at the discretion of the class teacher or the principal, children are given "No Homework" as a treat, a prize or as acknowledgement of some special occasion.

A homework pass is sometimes issued allowing a student a night off homework. A student may use a "Homework Pass" earned as part of Mercy Primary School's Code of Behaviour Policy in consultation with the teacher who will record it in the student's Homework Journal.

Duration of Homework

The following are general guidelines for the time to be spent at homework. Different children will complete the same homework in different lengths of time. Time spent will vary from day to day and also from the beginning to the end of the school year. The better a parent can encourage a child to focus on homework, which can be difficult in the home environment, and the better a parent can

ensure that a child does not get stuck in any particular area of homework, the quicker the homework will be completed.

It is important to remember that it is the quality and not the quantity of homework that matters.

A little homework done well is a greater lesson than a lot done badly.

Junior Infants: 10-15 minutes

Senior Infants: 15-20 minutes

1st class: 20-30 minutes

2nd class: 30 minutes

3rd and 4th class: 30 to 45 minutes

5th and 6th class: 45 minutes – 1 hour

Parents and Guardians should note that the above guidelines are approximate and are allotted times that teachers expect the average student in each class to spend on homework.

Literacy & Numeracy

The government's national strategy Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life includes a range of actions to enable parents to support children's learning. The strategy recognises that parents who are engaged in their child's learning, have a significant positive impact on a child's educational achievement- especially in literacy and numeracy.

Homework Journal

- In Junior and Senior Infants, the daily homework is outlined in a weekly Homework Sheet in each child's Homework Folder.
- Students from 1st class to 6th class have a homework journal. The class teacher writes the homework on the whiteboard and allows time for the students to write it into their homework journal. Parents are expected to sign the diary when all tasks are completed
- Parents should check their 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 parent and teacher. Ideally, all written messages to your child's teacher should be put in the homework journal; the teacher will also communicate with the parent through the journal.

How often do teachers monitor homework?

- Homework journals are checked regularly by the class teacher-designated days, spot checks, etc. As children get older and learn to work independently, some items of homework are checked less often. The homework journal will be checked by the class teacher on a daily basis in so far as possible. However, in the senior classes, they may be checked every second day or twice weekly. Some items of homework (and classwork) may be checked by the

children themselves under the direction of the teacher. This can be a useful part of the learning process for children.

Responsibilities of Pupils

- Enter homework accurately in homework journal
- In the case of Infants, take home their homework folder
- Listen carefully to the teacher when the homework is being prepared.
- Ensure they take home the necessary books and copies.
- Complete learning, reading and written assignments, to the best of their ability.
- Present work neatly.

Responsibilities of Parents

A HOMEWORK QUESTIONNAIRE was sent to the parents in January 2022; very positive feedback was received from both pupils and their parents; many suggestions have been included in this policy.

- Encourage a positive attitude towards homework in all subjects from Infants on.
- Agree on a set time for homework with your child.
- Be consistent-discuss, monitor and check homework every night, where possible.
- Provide a place that is free from distractions and interruptions, where there is no access to media, such as televisions, mobile phones or iPads
- Encourage the child to stay focused on the homework tasks, to complete their homework, working as independently as possible.
- Encourage your child to organise herself for homework. Have all books and materials to hand. The child should have their homework diary open to tick off work as it is completed.
- Try to avoid confrontation with your child over homework. Encouragement can be more helpful.
- Allow your child to make mistakes, but encourage them to find their own mistakes and correct them. It is good for them to see that making mistakes is a part of life.
- If your child is having genuine difficulty, try to help them but don't exceed the allotted time (see Guidelines). Make contact with your child's teacher explaining the specific difficulty if possible. The parent can help the child to overcome the difficulty with some explanation or example, but not by actually doing the homework for the child.
- Check that learning (spelling and tables) is done, listen to reading and check neatness of work.
- Check that the child has all necessary books, homework journal, copies, pencils, mathematical equipment, dictionary, P.E. clothes and uniform for the next day.
- Communicate difficulties to teachers using the homework journal.

Remember, if homework is a stressful experience between parent and child, something is wrong! This leads to poor learning and defeats the purpose of this policy. Should this happen on a regular basis, please make an appointment to discuss this matter with the class teacher.

Other Ways in which Parents can help Children to Learn

- Participate in home school programmes, e.g. The HSCL teacher offers explanatory Maths classes to support parents in the area of Maths and how it is taught at all class levels.
- Read to your child and allow her to share her reading with you.
- Join the local library
- Talk to your child about the work she is doing in school
- Encourage your child to use the Irish phrases they learn in school, by using any phrases you yourselves know
- Watch children's television programmes with your child and talk to her about them.
- Visit local museums, libraries and places of interest
- Attend talks in relation to educational matters organised in the school.
- Monitor the amount of time spent by children watching T.V., playing on play-stations etc;
- Ensure that children get to bed early on school nights.

- When possible, help your child relate homework assignments to everyday life and skills.
- *In general, be encouraging and supportive, your attitude is contagious.*

Responsibilities of Teacher

- Set homework ensuring that the work is balanced between learning, reading and written.
- Only a small amount of written work should be given to allow the child and parent to focus on the reading and learning.
- Ensure that written work is work that the children are familiar with.
- Monitor the completion of homework. Monitoring the completion of homework may be daily, every two days or weekly, depending on tasks completed for homework. As children get older and learn to work independently, some items of homework are checked less often.
- Some items of homework may be checked by the children themselves under the direction of the teacher. This can be a useful part of the learning process for children.
- Unsatisfactory homework will be brought to the attention of the child and where necessary, the parents/guardians of the child.
- If requested by parent, extra work will be provided by the class teacher or SEN teacher to support the child's learning.

Homework Feedback

- Homework journals are checked regularly by the class teacher-designated days, spot checks, etc. As children get older and learn to work independently, some items of homework are checked less often. The homework journal will be checked by the class teacher on a daily basis in so far as possible. However, in the senior classes, they may be checked every second day or twice weekly. Some items of homework (and classwork) may be checked by the

children themselves under the direction of the teacher. This can be a useful part of the learning process for children.

- We recognise that pupils benefit from feedback on their homework as soon as possible. Much of the homework, particularly in Junior & Senior Infants, may not be formal paper exercises requiring formal marking. Therefore, much of the feedback may be verbal from the teacher to the student; the format and timing of the feedback depending on the nature of the homework and when it is assessed by the teacher.
- We recognise and will reward student for their efforts in homework tasks in accordance with our school rewards system. Constructive feedback from parents about their child's homework is also welcomed by the school.

Absences

- Students who miss lessons due to being withdrawn from lessons to attend dental appointments and other medical appointments may be given as homework the work they missed, if appropriate. The school reserves the right to decide if this is appropriate or not.
- Where a student is absent due to medical reasons, it is not school policy to supply work to cover these periods, as the student should be able to attend school if she is well enough to undertake work.
- Where a student is absent due to holidays, it is not school policy to supply work to cover these periods. If you want to work with your child during holidays, encourage your child to read; perhaps your child could keep a holiday diary; you could have maths quizzes with your child; you can find out interesting things about the geography and history of your holiday destination.

Homework for children with Special Education Needs

Provision/differentiation is made for children with Special Education Needs. Where pupils are receiving additional support from a member of the S.E.N team, the class teacher and the SEN teacher will collaborate in relation to the nature and type of homework the child is to receive. Homework should not exceed the times indicated.

Failure to do Homework

- If homework is not done on a given night, students will be asked to do the work the following night.
- The teacher will keep a record of pupils who regularly fail to do homework or leave it at home.
- Homework repeatedly not done or signed will be investigated.
- If there are good reasons for not doing homework, a written note from parent to teacher is required by way of explanation.
- Homework missed due to illness or absence does not normally have to be completed
- The class teacher will contact the parents if problems persist. If a situation continues and a child does not do homework continuously, the teacher may inform the Principal who will

contact the parents. The School Code of Behaviour will be used to encourage children to do their homework when necessary. Likewise, parents are encouraged to contact the class teacher if the child is experiencing problems at home with homework.

Useful Internet websites for Parents to Access further information

Help My Child Learn

This website is for the parents of children aged 0-12 years, from birth to the end of primary school. To keep the website easy, the word "parent", includes parents, guardians, family members and child minders. The website is about how you and your family can enjoy learning together. It is designed to support parents with fun activities and tips according to their child's age. Each age group has lots of ideas for helping children with talking, playing, reading, writing and using numbers. (<http://www.helpmykidlearn.ie>)

The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) Information for Parents. The NCCA has developed a number of resources to help parents to support your child's learning in primary school. Many of these are available in various languages. You can follow links for Infant classes, 1st & 2nd classes, 3rd & 4th classes and 5th & 6th classes.

(http://www.ncca.ie/en/Curriculum_and_Assessment/Parents/Primary/)

The NCCA Early Childhood-birth to 6 years (Aistear Guidelines)

Parents are the most important people in their children's lives. Aistear contains lots of ideas, suggestions and practical examples of how parents can support their children's early learning and development.

(http://www.ncca.ie/en/Curriculum_and_Assessment/Parents/Early_Childhood)

<http://www.education.ie/en/Parents/> Contains a number of different links which include Special Education Needs, Primary Curriculum, Literacy & Numeracy and Resources

<http://www.ncca.ie> The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment provide resources and information on play, literacy & numeracy for parents of children from ages 0-12 years of age

<http://www.scoilnet.ie> Scoilnet is the Department of Education and skills official portal for Irish education. It has a wealth of resources that will help your child's learning.

<http://www.askaboutireland.ie/learning-zone/primary-students/> AskAboutIreland is an excellent website set up by the public libraries. The primary section has information for all ages and is split into History, Geography, Gaeilge, Music, English, Environment & Art

http://www.ncse.ie/for_parents/Information_Pamphlets.asp The National Council for Special Education (NCSE) has produced a pamphlet for parents of pupils with special education needs.

<http://resources.woodlands-junior.kent.sch.uk/> Woodlands Junior Kent Primary School website has links to ICT games for Science, English, Maths, History and Geography.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/> The BBC Bitesize website has excellent literacy & numeracy websites for pupils ranging from 4-11 years of age. Check out the links for KS1(ages 4-6) and KS2 (ages 8-11). Check out the Scottish 1st and 2nd levels as well.

Success Criteria

This success criteria of this policy will be determined by feedback from parents, students and teachers. Feedback will be sought through questionnaires. Homework appropriate to class level and individual child's ability and satisfactory presentation of homework completed by pupils will be interpreted as reflecting positively on this policy. Policy being evaluated and reviewed periodically by the school staff will also reflect positively on this policy.

Roles and Responsibilities

Class teachers, the principal, pupils, parents and guardians will, in co-operation with each other, be responsible for the implementation of this policy.

Implementation Date:

To be agreed after consultation with staff and parents/guardians and after presentation to the Board of Management of Mercy Primary School. The policy will be referred to regularly to check that it is being consistently implemented. The Principal is responsible for the implementation of this policy and for its review.

Date:

Timetable for Review:

This policy is to be reviewed in

Ratification and Communication

This policy review was completed by MaryClare Moore in the 2021- 2022 school year. The policy was discussed at the In School Management Meeting. It was circulated to teaching staff and reviewed by them. It will be available on the school website.

Presentation to the Board of Management on: 01/10/2022

Ratified by the Board of Management on: 11/10/2022

Signature of Chairperson, B.O.M: *Brian J Kennedy*

Questionnaire findings

More varied homework content-to include outdoor activities, PE, SESE subjects (in particular science), handwriting, art, religion, apply learning to real-life setting

Make homework more fun

Parents seeking

- support in the area of Maths and how it is taught at all class levels
- extra work for struggling students
- more variety-seem to get the same homework everyday
- more active practical homework tasks that encourage parental involvement

Text too small on Seesaw

Ensure that SEN students write down all their homework in journal daily

Some parents don't understand the directions/material which limits their ability to assist their children.

A few children highlighted problem-solving & tables in maths as areas of difficulty.

Findings have been addressed throughout the policy.