



Scoil Mhuire Moynalty

Homework Policy

Introductory Statement:

The policy has been formed and reviewed gradually over a number of years, through various staff discussion groups and as a result of feedback from parents and BOM. This current policy was reviewed during May & June 2016 by all staff.

Rationale:

Children are encouraged to use homework as a time to re-enforce what is being learned at school, a time for communicating with their families and a time for research purposes. With the changes in teaching methodologies and our decision to create Homework Guidelines for all classes the teachers felt it necessary to review our Homework Policy in line with current practice at Scoil Mhuire Moynalty.

Aims and Objectives

We regard homework as an essential component in children's educational development. It is a prerequisite for good study habits in the future. It encourages one-to-one communication at home where the skills of talking, listening, reasoning and questioning can be enriching for the child.

- To reinforce that which is taught in school.
- To strengthen links between home and school.
- To create links between home-learning and school-learning.
- To develop a child's concentration skills and develop a work ethic.
- To encourage study skills and self-discipline.
- To motivate (e.g. through research) pupils to expand their knowledge.

Content of Policy

How often is homework given?

- Homework is given on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays but not on Fridays. There are two possible exceptions:
 - a) If homework has been neglected during the week
 - b) In senior classes some project work is undertaken at weekends
- Sometimes at the discretion of the class teacher or the principal, children are given a '*Homework Pass*' as a reward or as acknowledgment of some particular achievement.
- Special occasions e.g. birthdays, school celebrations, winning a competition may be occasions to exempt children from homework
- Please note extra homework may be given during the week if a child has not completed homework, made a suitable effort or presented untidy work.
- The following are guidelines for time spent at homework. Different children will complete the same homework in different lengths of time:

Junior and Senior Infants	20 – 30 minutes
First and Second class	30 – 40 minutes
Third and Fourth Class	40 – 45 minutes
Fifth and Sixth Class	1 hour uninterrupted

- It is important to remember that it is the quality and not the quantity of work that matters.
- Reading books, pre-reading and reading activities are encouraged with their parents/guardians.
- The homework content is usually a balance of learning tasks, reading, oral communication and written work
- Homework Guidelines are given to all children at the beginning of the school year. These guidelines are reviewed regularly by the class teachers and approved every September by the Principal.
- If homework has been done in an unacceptable way, the teacher may either
 - a) send a note to the parent requesting it be re-done or
 - b) give the child a set time to re-do it in class.
- No study skills are formally taught. However, parents are advised to encourage their children to take responsibility for their own homework as outlined below.
- All children are taught the school's approach on 'how to learn spellings at home using the 'Look, Say, Cover Write Check' method
- Shared Reading or Literacy Lift Off Reading is not homework in the regular sense and it is simply meant to be an enjoyable exercise between parent and child.
- Homework may be differentiated for children with Special Educational Needs or children with a Specific Learning Difficulty

How much help should parents give?

- Parents/guardians are strongly encouraged to take an active interest in their child's homework.
- Parents/guardians should try to help their children with homework by:
 - Providing them with a suitable place and time to do their homework
 - To prevent interruptions or distractions, like T.V. or other children
- Children should do written homework themselves and parents/guardians should only help when the child has difficulty
- If a child has difficulty with homework, the parents 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
- Parents should not do any kind of research for their children. They are encouraged to discuss topics or give examples of their own experience.

How often should parents monitor homework?

- Parents should check and sign a 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 parents and teachers
- Ideally, all written messages to your child's teacher should be put in the homework journal (additional pages available at the back of the journal)
- Please check that your child records his/her homework neatly in the correct page and ticks each item of homework when completed
- Parents are asked to record the time taken to complete homework in the journal.

How often do teachers monitor homework?

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

When should parents / guardians communicate with the 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 of the assigned work
- If the time being spent at homework is longer than the recommended amount of time as per the individual class Homework Guidelines
- If a child is experiencing difficulty with homework parents/guardians are asked to inform the teacher straight away. If a parent/guardian highlights a difficulty regarding homework the teacher will do his/her best to resolve this and communicate likewise to parent.

When should homework be done?

- Each family situation is different - both parents working, child minders, etc. Ideally, homework should be done before any television is watched soon after school while your child is still fresh, however, some children need a break before starting homework
- Homework should never 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.
Should this happen on a regular basis, please contact the class teacher.*

Pupils' Role with Homework

It is the pupils' responsibility:

1. To ensure they write down their homework correctly and neatly every day
2. To ensure they bring home the appropriate books/copies/pens.
3. To ask for the teacher's explanation of the homework if it seems unclear
4. To find a quiet time and space in which to do their homework.
5. To double check their spellings and / or tables
6. To try and use new vocabulary in written sentences and / or oral work.
7. To tick off work in the journal as it is completed.
8. In older classes, to do their own research e.g. libraries, internet, interviews.
9. To practice their spellings/music/tables/poetry for an appropriate amount of time, before asking their parents to check.
10. To ensure their parents observe or listen to or question their Shared Reading or class reading.
11. To fully complete LLO homework where appropriate
12. To ask for their parents' input, if required, and signature on their journal
13. To present their copies or projects in a neat, accurate, acceptable and timely way.
14. To put all their books back into their bag correctly for the next day
15. If the pupil finds that he/she is having a problem with their homework they should discuss it with parents and / or teacher

Some guidelines for parents with Literacy and Numeracy homework

Reading

- a) Encourage your children to read even if it means turning off the television and reading a newspaper/magazine (independently or with a reading buddy)
- b) Frequent reading aloud is beneficial, especially for younger children -- encourage them to read aloud articles from magazines, newspapers, TV guides or catalogues etc.
- c) The quality of silent reading can be checked by asking the child a few simple questions to ascertain content and comprehension.

Maths

- a) Encourage your children to have a positive attitude towards maths e.g. maths games on journeys in the car / tables / counting objects / reading signposts for distances / time / reading packets for weights of items etc. Maths is ALL AROUND US.
- b) Be familiar with the correct terminology and methods being used by the children in maths class. These can be checked by referring to the relevant example in the maths book.
- c) Remember the teacher is always approachable by way of a note in the journal and all teachers are happy to facilitate meetings with parents.
- d) Board Games are a wonderful opportunity to develop maths skills and strategies.

Implementation

This policy supersedes previous policies and is effective from September 2016

Ratification & Communication

This policy was reviewed and updated in collaboration with all staff during May & June 2016. This policy was subsequently circulated to all parents and BOM members for consideration.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management in November 2016. It will be available through our school website and/or administration office.

Review

This policy will be reviewed and amended as necessary by means of a whole school collaborative process.

Ratification of Policy

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on the _____

Signed _____

Fr. Joseph McEvoy

Chairperson, Board of Management

Date _____

Signed _____

Denise Ward

Principal

Date _____