

# Homework Policy

## St. Kevin's Co National School, Greystones.

### **Rationale**

Homework fosters independence, self-reliance, self-esteem, co-operation and responsibility for life-long learning..

### **Aims of homework:**

- To benefit pupil learning.
- To reinforce work done in class.
- To strengthen links between home and school (Homework diary with parent / teacher comments).
- Throughout their period in St. Kevin's we endeavour to foster good study practices in our pupils that will prepare them for the next phase of their education in secondary school. We hope these will be of use to you working with your child at home.
- For students to take a little more responsibility for homework each year (Example: In Junior Infants this can mean being responsible for taking their books out of their bags and putting them back in again. By sixth class, pupils should be expected to work **fairly independently** as a preparation for secondary school, but it is a good idea to check their work on a regular basis)

### **Partnership between home and school**

As education is a partnership between school and home, we believe homework is an integral and beneficial link in our home/school communication. It enables parents to keep abreast of what their child is learning and involves the parent in the learning process. Homework allows the child to become progressively more independent and responsible for their own learning. To enable the child to benefit fully from homework, it is of utmost importance that parents support both their child and the school. To consolidate these links we use a homework journal from 1<sup>st</sup> class in which homework is recorded each day. This is a valuable link between school and home and is ideal for notes about school absences, homework difficulties and dental appointments etc.

### **General Homework Information**

- All classes will get homework on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and only on Friday for the following reasons:
  - a) If homework has been neglected during the week.
  - b) If the teacher deems it appropriate to assign extra homework as a result of inappropriate behaviour.
  - c) A child who has been absent or having difficulties in a particular area may be encouraged to do a little extra at the weekend. Again the support of the parent is necessary, as repeated absences through illness or other reasons can have an adverse effect on the child's progress.
- Occasionally, at the discretion of the class teacher or the principal, children are given 'homework off' as a treat, reward, or as an acknowledgement of some special occasion (eg. Birthdays)

### **Guideline target times for homework are as follows:**

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|--|------------------|
| a) 1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> Classes                   | Up to 30 minutes |
| b) 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 3 <sup>rd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> classes | 30 – 45 minutes  |
| c) 5 <sup>th</sup> and 6 <sup>th</sup> classes                   | 45 – 60 minutes  |

## **Class Guidelines**

The staff of St. Kevin's, in consultation with parents and the board of management, have formulated guidelines for parents to help and support their child with their homework. At the beginning of each school year, guidelines will be issued by each teacher outlining their expectations for their particular class.

**Junior class teachers** will speak to parents at reception class meetings and also communicate by letter. If your child does their homework with another person (i.e. child-minder) these guidelines should be discussed with them also. At this stage homework is a partnership between child and parent, as it involves reading to the child, reading with the child and hearing the child read. Homework should be an enjoyable experience and is fulfilling for both parent and child at this stage. A positive approach at the beginning will reap enormous reward later on.

**At middle and senior level** guidelines will be by written communication to parents and will also be explained in class. Lay-out and standards of presentation will be guided by the teacher and parents are asked to support the teacher in this area.

## **What happens when homework is not done?**

If children have not done their homework from the previous night and if they haven't furnished the teacher with a note from a parent, they will be required to complete the homework the following night.

## **Homework Content**

- Homework will usually contain a balance between reading tasks, learning tasks, and written tasks. This balance is not always possible and can vary considerably from day to day.
- Homework will regularly contain reading, spellings, tables, written work, pieces to be 'learned by heart', collecting information/items and finishing work started in class.

## **Pupils should:**

- Enter homework accurately in homework diary.
- Ensure that they take home relevant books and copies.
- Complete homework assignments to the best of their ability.
- Present written work neatly.
- Ensure they understand the homework being given before they leave school. If they do not, they should ask the teacher.

## **Parents/Guardians should:**

- Encourage a positive attitude towards homework in all subjects from an early age.
- Encourage children to work independently as far as possible. Resist over-helping.
- Encourage children to organize themselves for homework. Have all books and materials to hand. The pupils should have the homework journal open to tick off work as it is completed.
- Ensure a specific time should be set aside each evening to establish a routine. It is a good idea for the child to have a break after school but try not to leave it too late to start homework. Try and find a space that is quiet and with enough room to lay out book and copies. It is not a good idea to have the television on. Check the homework journal, when each task is completed tick it off and sign the space allotted.
- Help their child if they are having difficulty with their homework and put a note in their journal so their teacher is aware of their difficulty. If a particular area is causing repeated difficulty, make an appointment to see the teacher to discuss how best it can be remedied
- Encourage good presentation and neatness within a reasonable time.
- Inform the class teacher if their child is spending much longer than the guideline times above to complete their homework.
- Sign the homework diary, checking that all homework is complete.

- Write how long the homework took their child in the homework journal. If their child is unable to complete the written homework within a reasonable timeframe, it should be completed orally.
- Check that the child has all necessary books, homework diary, copies, pencils, maths equipment, dictionary, P.E. clothes, if needed for the next school day.
- Communicate difficulties to the teacher using the homework diary.
- Inform the teacher on the rare occasions that homework has not been completed and the reason why.
- Difficulties can arise at home that have an adverse effect on your child's performance. Please let us know, as allowances will be made to help in any way we can. All information is held in the strictest confidence.
- Sometimes children can forget to bring the necessary books home. Encourage a sense of responsibility and allow them to "phone a friend" and get the necessary information. If a copy is forgotten a page from another copy can be used. Again any difficulties that arise may be explained in the homework journal. Incomplete homework without a note from the parent will be expected to be completed at home by the next school day. This will be marked in the journal and parents are asked to sign it.
- All children are unique and will spend varying times doing their homework. Their teacher will give guidelines as to the approximate time to be set aside. If your child is taking a much longer time completing their work check they are working consistently. Allow them to stop and write a note to the teacher stating the time spent. Again make an appointment to discuss the problem with the teacher if it continues. Some children finish their work very quickly and they can be encouraged to use reference books to add to the information in their textbooks.

#### **Teachers should:**

- Set homework, review assignments and provide feedback to students.
- Monitor homework to help identify pupils with special difficulties.
- Notify parents/guardians if homework is regularly incomplete.
- St. Kevin's believes in positive reinforcement and each teacher operates a merit system whereby merits are awarded for improved work, kindness and being helpful in school. A homework pass is sometimes issued allowing the pupil night off written homework. This can be used in consultation with the teacher who will then mark it into the homework journal

#### **How often do teachers monitor homework?**

Ideally, teachers check homework on a daily basis. However 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 a 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 as it promotes responsibility and self-esteem.

#### **Review**

This policy was reviewed as a whole school exercise during Croke Park hours in February and March 2014. As part of this review mini meetings were set up to look at and agree on homework strategies at each class level

The next review will of this policy will take place during the 2016/17 school year

Ratified on 9/4/14

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Majella Lynch