**Homework Policy**

**St. Joseph’s Primary School**

**Why give homework?**

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* To reinforce what the child learns during the day
* To provide a link between teacher and parent
* To develop a child’s concentration skills and develop a work ethic
* Homework is meant to be achievable by a child, i.e. it provides an opportunity to practice work already done. The teacher in class normally prepares it However, sometimes with senior classes, some homework is designed to challenge children’s ability and provide opportunities for creativity
* Children are expected to do their homework to the best of their individual ability – no more, no less

**How often is homework given?**

* Homework is given on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays but not on Fridays. There are two exceptions:
  + If homework has been neglected during the week
  + In senior classes some project work is undertaken at weekends
* 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
* Please note extra homework may sometimes be given during the week or at the weekend if a child has not done homework, made a suitable effort or presented untidy work
* **Thursdays Together Initiative:** we have prioritised the importance and value of family. To this end, the last Thursday of the calendar month is homework free and families are encouraged to spend time together e.g. eat a meal **together** or do an activity **together.** Families must submit photographic / written evidence to be placed on a central noticeboard

**What is the content of homework?**

* Ideally homework will 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. However it should be noted that homework time devoted to reading and learning is as important as written work
* For junior classes, homework will mainly be in the key areas of literacy and numeracy. It may include phonics, reading, CAPER (Children & Parents Enjoying Reading), English & Irish rhymes, penmanship activities and maths activities
* For older classes, homework will regularly contain reading, spellings, tables, written work, pieces to be “learned by heart”, drawing, colouring, collecting information/items and finishing work already started in class
* 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 done well

**How much (time) homework?**

The following are guidelines for time spent at homework. Different children will complete the same homework in different lengths of time. Time spent will vary from day to day and from the beginning to the end of the school year. It is important to remember that it is the quality and not the quantity of the homework that matters. The following are general guidelines only:

**Junior Infants 1 –15 minutes**

**Senior Infants Up to 20 minutes**

**Rang 1 Up to 30 minutes**

**Rang 2 Up to 40 minutes**

**Rang 3 Up to 50 minutes**

**Rang 4 Up to 1 hour**

**Rang 5 Up to 1 hour 15 minutes**

**Rang 6 Up to 1 hour 30 minutes**

Homework is given from Monday to Thursday. Children in middle and senior classes may sometimes be required to work independently on projects at weekends.

**How much help should parents give?**

* Parents help their children with homework by:
  + Providing them with a suitable place and time to do their homework
  + To prevent interruptions or distractions, like TV or other children
  + Supervising and checking homework (especially for younger children) on a daily basis
* Children should do written homework themselves but parents should help when the child has difficulty
* If a child has difficulty with homework, help to overcome the difficulty with further explanation or examples, but not by actually doing the homework for the child. If necessary the parent should write a note to the teacher explaining the problem
* Shared Reading / C.A.P.E.R. is not homework in the regular sense and it is simply meant to be an enjoyable exercise between the parent and child

**Homework Journal**

* Pupils from 1st to 6th Class will have a homework journal
* Parents should check and sign the child’s homework journal every evening
* The pupil’s journal is and important record of the child’s homework, it is also valuable means of communication between parents and teachers
* Ideally, all general messages to your child’s teacher should be put into the homework journal
* Please check that your child records its homework neatly in the correct page and that each item of homework is completed
* All general notes to parents are placed the current day/week of the homework journal

**How often do teachers monitor homework?**

* Ideally teachers like to check homework on a daily basis
* 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
* Children themselves under the direction of the teacher may check some items of homework (and classwork). This can be a useful part of the learning process for children

When should parents communicate with the teacher about homework?

* When you child cannot do the homework due to family circumstances
* When your child cannot do homework because she/he cannot understand some aspect

**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.***