



Clocha Rince NS

**Homework Policy
&
Guidance Notes**

Introduction

This policy was developed by the school staff in October 2011. Submissions were invited from the general parent body. The policy was brought to the Policy Development Committee meeting. It was subsequently further developed and ratified at a Board of Management meeting on Thursday 18th October 2012.

Rationale

This policy was developed to provide guidance to parents on homework issues. It will also ensure a whole school approach to setting homework activities.

Why give homework?

- To re-enforce what the child learns during the day;
- To provide a link between teacher and parent;
- To ensure there is a link between parent/guardian and classroom lessons;
- To further develop our pupil's concentration skills and develop a work ethic towards learning.

How often is homework given?

Homework is given on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. Homework is not given on Fridays.

Sometimes at the discretion of the class teacher or the principal, children are given "homework off" as a treat or as acknowledgment of some special occasion or a 'job well done'.

Please note extra homework may be sometimes given during the week or at the weekend if a child has not done homework nor made a suitable effort or if the pupil presented untidy work.

Homework Content

Ideally homework will contain a balance between reading tasks, non-written 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", drawing/colouring, collecting information/items and finishing work started in class.

Homework Duration

Parents should consult the guideline notes in this policy regarding the maximum amount of time your child should spend on homework.

Teacher Monitoring

Ideally, teachers strive to check homework on a daily basis. It may occur, due to timetabling issues or other organisational issues that the class teacher does not check homework on the day after it was set.

Teachers may choose not to visit a piece of homework until the subject is scheduled in their class timetable.

Guidance Notes on Homework

General Guidance

Homework is meant to be achievable by a child, i.e. it provides an opportunity to practise work already done. Normally, homework activities will provide the child with the opportunity to re-enforce concepts which they will have already encountered during the school day.

However, sometimes with senior classes, some homework activities are designed to challenge children's ability to research. The nature of this homework dictates that the teacher cannot prepare the pupil's fully for its content.

Children are expected to do their homework to the best of their individual ability – no more, no less!

However, it should be noted that homework time devoted to reading and non-written tasks is as important as written work. Non-written tasks should also be supervised by a parent/guardian.

Non-written tasks should be revisited for short periods but should be revisited often i.e. at various times during the evening. A child will often be able to spell words immediately after learning them. This is because the child has placed the words in their short-term memory. Parents/Guardians should revisit the spellings (or other rote learning) at various intervals during the evening. This allows the pupil to revisit the spelling. The more often this is done the greater the chance that the child will place this learning in their 'long-term memory'.

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.

Reading Homework

The pupils will have reading homework every night. The reading content may be taken from your child's English textbook or other textbooks. It will often be taken from your child's 'Oxford Reading Tree' book.

Pupils are encouraged to read from their 'Oxford Reading Tree' book every night. This reading should be an enjoyable event for you and your child and should not be seen as 'homework'. Oxford Reading should not be associated with homework, but rather, as evening or bed-time reading.

The child that reads succeeds!!

All parents should have received comprehensive details on our Oxford Reading Programme. You should contact your child's class teacher if you have any query on the Oxford Reading Tree.

Duration of 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 also 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 homework that matters.**

The following are general guidelines only:

Homework will always be prescribed by the teacher in line with the maximum time guidelines below. If your pupil completes homework at a regular time in a quiet area of the house with no distractions and with complete concentration, homework should take no longer than;

| | |
|----------------|------------|
| Junior Infants | 15 minutes |
| Senior Infants | 15 minutes |
| Rang 1 | 25 minutes |
| Rang 2 | 30 minutes |
| Rang 3 | 40 minutes |
| Rang 4 | 40 minutes |
| Rang 5 | 50 minutes |
| Rang 6 | 60 minutes |

Remember the above does not include Oxford Reading time which should be a paired/shared and enjoyable experience between you and your child. Older pupils will be able to read independently but parents/guardians should still be involved in your child's reading through taking an interest in the book your child has selected.

How much help should parents give?

Parents should try to help their children with homework by:

- providing a suitable place and time to do their homework
- to prevent interruptions or distractions, like T.V. or other children
- ensuring quality time is being given to the completion of each task. 1 hour spent **at** homework does not necessarily mean 1 hour was spent **doing** homework.

Children in middle and senior classes should do written homework themselves and parents 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 regarding any problems

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.

Absent Notes should ideally be on a separate piece of paper as these need to be kept by teacher. Your child's journal may be used also if so wished. Please check that your child records his/her homework neatly in the correct page and ticks each item of homework when completed.

Clocha Rince NS Newsletter and other letters to parents are folded and placed in the current day of the homework journal. Please check your child's journal for such notes on a regular basis.

When should parents 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.
- If the time being spent at homework is **often longer** than the recommended amount of time.

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.

Thursday Night Stress

Parents often report 'Thursday Night Stress' when the pupils must complete their homework and prepare for spellings/tables tests on a Friday. Pupil must learn a few spellings and tables every night Monday – Wednesday and not leave everything until the night before the test. The ability to schedule one's learning is a valuable skill which all independent learners acquire. It also leads to quality learning experiences.

Remember

If homework is a continual 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 your child's class teacher.