

St Nathy's College



Homework Policy

School Ethos

St Nathy's College is under the trusteeship of the Diocese of Achonry and the Bishop of Achonry is our patron. St Nathy's is a voluntary secondary school and is Catholic in character, inclusive in its intake, and comprehensive in its curriculum. The ethos of St Nathy's College reflects the legacy of three schools which came together in amalgamation in 1995: St Joseph's Secondary School (Sisters of Mercy), Ballaghaderreen Vocational School and St Nathy's College. As a community of faith, friendship and learning, St Nathy's reflects the best of human values profoundly rooted in the values of the Gospel. We are especially mindful of the disadvantaged and those with special needs.

Creating the Policy

The Homework Policy was created in accordance with St Nathy's Vision Statement.

St. Nathy's College was established to act as a Centre of Learning. We strive to achieve this within a fostered Christian environment which equally provides for the faith and personal development of each student.

All of our school endeavours and activities are directed towards these objectives.

Definition

In a school context and from an educational perspective, homework means work given by a teacher to a student or a class that will engage a student in an activity, which could involve reading or writing certain material, or a combination of both.

The reading of material may involve reading for a specific purpose so as to glean information from the piece, relevant to the coursework currently being undertaken in class. It may also involve reading with a view to improving reading skills.

Reading as homework may be given as a relaxing exercise. A written homework, including Mathematics, or any activity that will involve the use of pens, pencils, colouring pencils, etc. is a piece of work given to a student/class that will involve the student/class presenting a visual piece of work for a teacher that the teacher can mark. A mark is defined as a verbal remark, a written comment, grade or tick on the work. The work may also be initialled by the teacher, and a note taken of the date.

Rationale

The purpose of homework is to help the student to revisit and reflect on work that has taken place in the classroom, or to encourage further reflection, with the ultimate aim of enhancing academic achievement and developing student skills. Homework is given to supplement what is currently being covered in the class, and may involve recollection of data covered in class, or creation of a piece of work based on guidelines by the teacher. It will involve a student physically presenting the work, normally to be done at home, to the teacher on a specific date.

Homework Policy Statement

St Nathy's College believes that homework plays a pivotal role in the provision of a successful educational experience. The self-discipline required to complete a homework task should be fostered from the beginning of First Year as it is vital at later stages of secondary education and beyond. Student diaries should contain all work to be carried out at home and correct use leads to vastly improved time management and organisational skills. These diaries provide a link between parents/guardians and teachers and this correspondence via the diary is essential. Not only does homework lead to students working independently it also reinforces skills learned in class. Alternative materials and sources of information, not always available in the classroom, may be utilised at home and parents/guardians may become involved in certain projects. Homework also benefits the teacher as he/she can readily access the progress of each individual student and recognise potential problems at an early stage.

Aims of Homework

- To reinforce work carried out in the classroom while it is still fresh in students' minds and therefore more likely to be retained.
- To enhance the educational experience.
- To foster self-discipline and self-motivation in the student, which will be beneficial throughout his/her school career.
- To create a meaningful link between teachers, parents and students, through diary correspondence.
- To develop an understanding of diary entry, reminders, deadlines, and time management, therefore increasing organisational skills.

Procedures

- Each subject teacher will set homework regularly. The nature of the work will vary between year groups, different classes, and topics of study.
- Teachers will ensure that all instructions concerning homework are clear to everyone in the class and sufficient time is allowed for the student to write down the homework in his/her diary.

- Teachers, Tutors and Year Heads and, in the case of Second Year students, Academic Mentors, will check that pupils are recording homework correctly.
- Work will be marked and pupils will be provided with feedback in a way that facilitates ongoing improvement and learning, and acknowledges achievements made.
- It is recommended that homework should be linked with and integrated into a programme of teaching and learning thereby forming part of the process of Assessment for Learning. It should be designed in such a way as to offer the students opportunities for self-assessment.
- In adopting the Assessment for Learning approach the teacher gives feedback in three key areas in the student's learning cycle
 - What homework the student has completed correctly
 - What weaknesses there are in the student's work
 - What the next step/s should be to improve performance or understanding
- This kind of feedback will be most helpful when the learning intentions and criteria for success are clearly understood by the students. The teacher's comments should relate to the task in hand, the learning intention and the criteria for success
- Records of homework, grades and comments should be maintained by each teacher.
- Teachers examine each case of non presentation of homework on an individual basis. In the first instance teachers should apply their own sanction and communicate via a note in the student's diary. If a teacher suspects that there is an underlying problem they are advised to contact the relevant Year Head. It may be the case that a student is experiencing difficulty with the subject area or is experiencing other difficulties. If these difficulties persist the issue should be referred to the Pastoral Care Team or S.E.N. Coordinator as appropriate.
- A student who has a valid reason for non-completion of homework must have an explanatory note from a parent/guardian dated and signed in his/her diary. The student must show the note to all relevant teachers.
- Persistent non-presentation of homework will be brought to the attention of the Year Head, in written report form, to allow the situation to be further investigated.
- Teachers who notice students copying homework in their class should bring this to the attention of the relevant teacher.
- Sanctions for non presentation of homework will be at the discretion of the individual class teacher and in accordance with school policy.

Recommendations

- It is recommended that a policy of positive affirmation is fostered in the classroom. Students should receive praise for achievements.
- The intrinsic value of homework activities is far more important than the precise amount of time devoted to them. Best practice suggests that the amount of time that should be spent on average by students at second level on homework should fall within the following ranges:
 - First Year 1½ hours minimum
 - Second Year 2½ hours minimum
 - Third Year 3½ hours minimum
 - Transition Year 1½ hours minimum depending on project work and activities
 - Fourth Year 3½ hours minimum
 - Leaving Cert. 3½ hours minimum. Weekend study and revision is also essential.

Some students will complete all tasks quickly and correctly and may appear to have given very little time to their homework. Some students and those with learning difficulties may put in more time and effort. Teachers and parents need to consider the varying abilities of students when setting homework or when inspecting homework.

Guidance for Parents/Guardians

Homework is an integral part of school life, and in today's hectic lifestyle, must be included in a daily routine. As parents/guardians, you play an important role in creating an environment where your son/daughter can complete all homework tasks effectively.

Routine

Establishing a homework routine will help encourage your son/daughter to view homework as a daily and necessary exercise.

Atmosphere

It is of paramount importance that the correct atmosphere is created for undertaking homework. A quiet place without distractions should be used. Television, mobile phone, tablets, computer games and such activities should only be permitted when homework has

been completed. Ensure others in the household respect the efforts of your child in doing his/her homework.

Provide a well-ventilated room, with good lighting, a desk/table without clutter, and a comfortable chair.

Parents may also choose the option of sending their son/daughter to supervised evening study in school.

Diet

A good diet, including plenty of water, is essential to maintain and sustain your child's hydration and concentration.

Communicating and Listening

Homework for students of all ages is very important. Talk to your son/daughter about the subjects they like and try, if possible, to steer them away from negative thoughts on the subjects they may not like. Listen to your son/daughter, and let them know you understand. Look at their homework, and display an interest in their activities. If your son/daughter is showing signs of stress, or is struggling with his/her homework, enquire how you may help him/her.

Ensure the school diary is signed daily and is checked for communications from teachers.

Guidance for students

- Students must record all homework in their diaries.
- Students must complete all homework to the best of their ability.
- It is the responsibility of students involved in extra-curricular activities to find out and complete homework assigned in their absence.
- Students should seek clarification from the teacher on any aspect of their homework of which they are unsure.
- Students must make sure their homework is completed and available for correction at the allocated time.
- Students are expected to present all homework on time and in a tidy, legible and organised form.
- Students should put together a weekly timetable for homework and study and place it in a visible place in the home.

Signed: Declan O'Callaghan

Date: 31/05/2016

(Chairperson B.O.M.)

Date of Review: One year hence.