

# **St. Joseph's BNS**

# **Homework Policy 2012**

**DO NOT REMOVE FROM STAFFROOM**

**PROPERTY OF ST. JOSEPH'S**

## **Introductory Statement**

This policy was formulated with staff (discussions at staff meeting, pupil & parent questionnaires) and with parents and pupils (a survey of attitudes to homework and expectations).

## **Relationship to characteristic spirit of the school**

St Joseph's BNS seeks to enable each child to develop to her potential. Homework encourages pupils to work independently and take responsibility for their assignments.

## **Rationale - Why give homework?**

- To reinforce what the child learns during the day
- To provide a link between teacher and parent
- To develop a child's concentration skills, study skills and develop a work ethic and routine for pupils
- Homework is meant to be achievable by a child, i.e. it provides an opportunity to practise work already done. It is normally prepared by the teacher in class. 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.
- To strengthen links and communication between home and school

## **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 acknowledgment of some special occasion
- Please note extra homework may be sometime be given during the week or at the weekend if a child has not done homework, made a suitable effort or presented untidy work.

## **Assigning Homework**

All classes will receive homework assignments.

Homework reinforces work done in school, is differentiated according to children's needs and abilities and is always explained to children in school.

- 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

Homework will regularly contain reading, spellings, tables, written work, drawing/colouring, collecting information/items and finishing work started in class, *some project work, some research (interviews, IT work, etc)*, oral language activities and pieces to be “learned by heart”,. 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.

Homework is meant to be achievable by a child i.e. it provides an opportunity to practice 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 opportunity for creativity.

Homework is a link between home and school and is prepared daily in class as per work undertaken in class that day. We **do NOT set Homework for extended absences such as HOLIDAYS**. If you want to work with your child during holidays, encourage your child to read; perhaps your child could keep a holiday diary, do Maths quizzes, find out interesting things about the geography and history of your holiday destination, do a project for his class on his holiday destination, etc.

**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 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:

Junior Infants	0 - 15 minutes
Senior Infants	max 20 minutes
Rang 1	max 25 minutes
Rang 2	max 30 minutes
Rang 3	max 40 minutes
Rang 4	max 45 minutes
Rang 5	max 50 minutes
Rang 6	Up to 1 hour

Homework is given from Monday to Thursday. There is no homework at weekends or on a school day just before a public holiday. However, children in middle and senior classes may sometimes be required to work independently on projects at weekends.

There may be exceptions, birthdays, weekends, special occasions and sometimes children are given “No Homework” as a treat or an acknowledgement of some special occasion.

Extra homework may *occasionally* be given during the week or at the weekend if a child has not made a suitable effort at homework, has not done homework or has presented untidy homework.

### **Homework journal:**

Children in First to Sixth classes purchase a Homework Journal at the beginning of the year. The pupil’s journal is an important record of the child’s homework. It is also a valuable means of communication between parent and teacher. Ideally, all written messages to your child’s teacher should be put in the homework journal; teacher will also communicate with you through the journal. Please check that your child records her homework neatly on the correct page and ticks each item of homework as it is completed. Children are encouraged to put letters from school into the current page of their journal. Please check for notes on a regular basis. Please acknowledge a communication from the school with a signature.

Parents should check and sign a child’s homework journal every evening.

### **How much help should parents give?**

- Children are expected to do their homework to the best of their individual ability.
- Parents 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 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
- ‘Paired reading’ is not homework in the regular sense and it is simply meant to be an enjoyable exercise between parent and child.

### **How often should parents monitor homework?**

- Parents should check and sign a child’s homework journal every evening.
- They should write how long it takes for their child to complete the homework each night.
- 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 end of the journal)
- Please check that your child records its homework neatly in the correct page and ticks each item of homework when completed

### **Homework Clubs**

Homework Clubs are organized in the school for children from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> classes, available in school Monday to Thursday for one hour per day. It is organized by individual teachers and you should link directly with them through the School Office.

If children receive a '**Homework Pass**' it should be mutually agreed upon by teacher and pupil as to date of usage.

### **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 classwork) may be checked by children themselves under the direction of the teacher. This can be a useful part of the learning process for children.*
- Teacher will keep a record of pupils who regularly fail to do homework or leave it at home. This will be discussed with you at Parent-Teacher meeting or a note will be sent to you.

### **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 child need a break before starting homework
- Homework should never be left until morning time before school unless some revision is needed.

### **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.**

### **The Role of Parents/Guardians and Pupils**

This policy will also make parents aware of the need for a 'homework routine' – the provision of a suitable place and time for homework. A Homework Questionnaire will be sent to parents and pupils later in 2012 before finalizing this policy. Suggestions will be included in this policy.

### **Success Criteria**

Some practical indicators of the success of the policy

- Feedback from teachers, pupils, parents; (feedback via questionnaires was very positive)
- Satisfactory homework exercises and assignments submitted by pupils.

<i>Ratification &amp; Communication. To be reviewed annually</i>
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Staff input in May 2012.

Policy, when completed, will be circulated in the School Prospectus, School Server and available from each class teacher.