



St Mary's CBS Portlaoise

Homework Policy

February 2024

Homework Policy

Rationale for giving homework:

Our school motto is “*From each their best.*” This motto is the cornerstone of all our work in this school. Every student is expected to work to the best of their ability and be the best person that they can be. This motto is the rationale for the assignment of homework, as the following explains:

The aim of this Homework Policy is to

- Promote learning beyond the normal class lesson, encouraging habits of enquiry and investigation.
- To reinforce classroom learning, as learning at home is an essential part of good education, since it gives pupils the opportunity to practice at home the tasks/skills done in class and required to answer questions in the State examinations.
- To help students to further develop skills and attitudes they need for successful lifelong and independent learning.
- To develop self-discipline.

Definition of Homework

This includes more than just written exercises or learning lists of verbs, etc. It also involves regular revision work and exam preparation. A wide variety of homework assignments are set by teachers and may include:

- Projects and research work
 - Report writing
 - Essay writing
 - Learning Vocabulary
 - Reading / Reviewing
 - Drawing / painting
 - Watching instructional videos
 - Designing and making models
 - Experiments
 - Visits to the Public Library
 - Using the internet for research
 - Listening to radio programmes, podcasts or watching television programmes recommended by the teacher
 - Preparing and assembling ingredients or craft materials for all practical subjects
 - Aural and Oral preparation in Irish and European languages
 - Preparing for Classroom Based Assessments (CBA's)
- (This list is not exhaustive)

1. This homework will be corrected either on the projector screen, on the board or checked/marked in student's copies. Homework may also be checked orally or through a written exam. Certain exercises require individual marking, and this will be at the teacher's discretion.

2. Allowances will be made when correcting homework from students with additional educational needs. This may involve differentiated work by (1) level (2) by task and (3) by process according to the curriculum and the assessment of that subject.
3. In most circumstances, homework should be completed on the night it is assigned. This will help standardise the length of time a student spends at homework and help develop the good habit of a homework/study routine.
4. The Guidance Department and subject teachers will provide study advice to all year groups.
5. In all year groups, the subject teacher is well placed to advise their students the best way to study their subject and prepare for project / examinations / assessments.
6. In First Year, the Career Guidance teachers, SPHE teachers and the Year heads support students in their transition from primary school into secondary school. This involves instructing them how to meet the requirements of many teachers assigning homework, the organisation of their assignments throughout the week and helping them develop good learning habits which will serve them throughout their education.
7. Parents/guardians are expected to check their son's Homework Journal weekly to ensure homework is being recorded in all subjects and to reply to comments from teachers. Parents/guardians should also sign the Homework Journal each week.
8. Each student is required to have a Homework Journal. **It is the student's sole responsibility to record his homework correctly.** This journal also acts as means of communications between teachers and parents/guardians regarding their son's behaviour and homework etc. It is where teachers record 'No Homework' stamps and must be brought to class each day.
9. Teachers may also put some homework on Microsoft Teams, our school's learning platform. All students are given a school email (@portlaoisecbs.com) when enrolling and, when using this, can access Microsoft Teams and other Microsoft Apps on any device at home or in school. Some homework assignments may be submitted through MS Teams, at the teacher's request.
10. Students absent from class to represent the school at games or other trips/events are required to contact a class colleague or consult MS Teams to find out the homework assigned, and as far as possible to complete such homework. We acknowledge the commitment of our students to school activities and sport, but their studies must be maintained to as high a standard as possible while taking part in such activities. Parents should discuss with their sons the number of sports and activities they are involved in, both inside and outside of school, for the sake of their studies and their health. Even the best time management plan must operate within a 24-hour day.
11. If absent from school for other reasons (illness, withdrawn from school for holidays), a student should act responsibly and find out the work which was taught and make serious attempts to catch up. Teachers are expected to have each lesson's work uploaded to MS Teams for those absent for any reason and for any length.

12. When homework is not complete, of a poor standard, not submitted on time, or where deteriorating patterns are emerging, sanctions may be imposed, and contact made with home, as per page 13 of our Code of Behaviour:

- *The Student Journal is used to record and monitor homework. Parents/guardians are asked to regularly check the Journal, as this is found to lead to a significant improvement in student engagement with homework.*
- *Instances where students do not complete homework will be noted in the Student Journal and on VS Ware, on the Behaviour Tab. This also records the date and allows for easy identification of emerging patterns.*
- *A similar approach will be taken for instances where homework is unsatisfactory.*
- *Where patterns of neglect emerge with certain students, contact will be made with 's/guardians by the subject teacher, making them formally aware of the problem.*
- *Should the situation not improve, the parents/guardians will be requested to meet with the subject teacher to discuss the issue.*
- *When student does not complete homework for a teacher, the teacher will stamp his journal with 'No Homework' and enter a 'No Homework' on the Behaviour Tab on VSware.*
- *5 'No Homeworks' result in a Friday Detention (1.45pm – 3.45pm). A further 5 also get a Friday Detention. A further 5 will earn a Saturday Detention (9am-11am). Parents/guardians will be asked to meet with the year head and after this, and the system will begin again with a Friday Detention for the next 5 'No Homeworks, and so on.*
- *When emerging patterns such as this are noticed, the student is obviously having serious problems with his studies. Strategies will be put in place to support him.*
(extract from our Code of Behaviour, page 13)

Other Homework Sanctions

A teacher may apply the following sanctions on a student in one or more of the following ways, at their own discretion:

- **When a homework assignment has been missed, all teachers should expect that this homework assignment will be completed for the following class. This way the student is not missing out on the learning intended by assigning that work in the first instance;**
- A verbal reprimand;
- A teacher may write a note home for a parent/guardian to comment;
- Discussion with the parents/guardians by phone/letter/visit to the school;
- Extra work may be assigned;
- The student may be required to do lunch-time detention, supervised by the class teacher, to complete the assigned homework.
- Failure to attend this detention, on time, will result in a Friday afternoon detention being issued by the year head;
- If a student regularly fails to make any attempt at homework, he will be placed on a report card (Appendix 1) where teachers confirm whether homework was produced to the correct standard. If improvement is not forthcoming, parents/guardians will be asked to attend a meeting at the school with the principal.

Project Deadlines

In many subjects, projects form a large part of the final mark. When teachers set tasks to be completed by certain dates, and students fail to keep up to these tasks, the teacher may make a referral to the Year head. (Appendix 2) who will meet with the student. If there is no genuine reason for the tasks being late or incomplete the student will serve a Friday afternoon detention. During Detention, the student will work on their project, if possible (depending on the subject). Even if the student manages to catch up in the interim, he will still do the Detention for having wasted the time, when he should be working to his potential. **It is the responsibility of the student to complete his own projects on time.**

Deadlines for Classroom Based Assessments (CBA's) are non-negotiable and set by the school/State Exams Commission (SEC). Parents/guardians must be aware that if these deadlines are missed, the project work will not be accepted.

Time Allocation for Homework – per school night

There are no fixed rules for the amount of time students should spend on homework, but the following broad general guidelines could be helpful:

1st Years:	1 hour and 30 minutes
2nd Years:	1 hour and 30 minutes – 2 hours
3rd Years:	2 hours – 3 hours - Weekend study and revision are also essential
5th Years:	3 hours
6th Years:	3 hours – Weekend study and revision are also essential
TY	3 hours over the course of a week

If a student finds himself with less homework than above, then time spent studying would be time wisely spent. This is an opportunity to revise a chapter, a theorem, a verb, a poem etc. and help improve his overall academic performance.

Role of stakeholders in a St. Mary's CBS Homework Policy

The principal

- Communicate Homework Policy to all students and parents.
- Encourage parents/guardians to create a home environment that fosters homework.
- Ensure teachers and new teachers are aware of the Homework Policy.
- Monitor Homework Policy implementation.
- Make homework a topic of parent and staff meetings.
- In conjunction with the Career Guidance Teachers, organise a study skills seminar for 3rd years and 6th years and an evening session for parents/guardians.
- Meet with students who persistently do not submit homework.
- Meet with parents/guardians of students who persistently do not submit homework.
- Require parents/guardians to accept the Homework Policy (on the App) every year when the student is applying for re-admission to the school.

Year heads

- Liaise with the junior class tutors who spot check student journals;
- At the weekly Care Team Meetings, they will flag students who are showing a pattern of *No Homeworks* on their Behaviour Tab. Those present (Guidance Counsellor, other Year heads, AEN Coordinator, Behaviour Support Coordinator, Principal and Deputies) may be able to shed some light on why this is happening, and strategies can be put in place to improve the student's homework record.
- If a student is issued with a Report Card for homework, the year head will check for signatures of teachers and parents/guardians each day and when improvements are noted, decide when to stop re-issuing the Report Card. Failure to keep to agreed meetings with their year head may result in a Friday Detention.
- When 5 *No Homeworks* have accumulated on the Behaviour Tab, they issue a Friday or Saturday Detention, as appropriate.

Teachers

- Emphasise the Homework Policy to students.
- Be aware of students' additional needs from the AEN Register on VShare which is updated regularly.
- Assign differentiated homework (where necessary) according to the needs of the subject and of the student – of appropriate duration and suitable challenge.
- Give students feedback on homework – check in individual copy or display on the board/screen, this list is not exhaustive.
- Discuss homework at Parent Teacher Meetings.
- When homework is not submitted, the teacher must both stamp the student's journal with the No Homework stamp and then note it on VShare.

Parents/Guardians

- Check Homework Journal weekly and use it to communicate with teachers over homework issues.
- Sign the Homework Journal every week.
- Be aware of the Homework Policy and have a positive homework ethic in the home.
- Be aware of their son's deadlines for CBA's, projects, etc.
- Make it clear to pupils that they value homework and support the school in explaining how homework can help them progress at school.
- Provide quiet, heated, and well-lit area to complete homework/study with access to a Wi-Fi enabled device when necessary.
- Establish a definite time for doing homework.
- Refrain from doing homework for students.
- Discourage students from engaging in part-time work during term time.
- Attend Parent Teacher Meetings. If problems arise during the school year, make an appointment to meet the teacher to discuss.
- In circumstances where homework is not submitted for a genuine reason, a note of explanation in the Journal is required from the parent/guardian.
- Parents/guardians will be notified if a student's homework performance does not meet the school's expectations.

Students

- All students must have access to their up-to-date login and password details to their Microsoft 365 account. Failure to do so will incur a sanction.

- Students will record and ensure their understanding of the homework tasks and demonstrate a commitment to spending an allocated time doing the tasks set.
- Complete and return all homework within the allotted time. Incomplete homework is never acceptable.
- Undone or incomplete homework must be completed for the following day, regardless of other sanctions being given.
- Seek immediate help from teachers if assigned homework is not understood.
- Always do homework on the night it is assigned.
- Remember that learning assignments are real and valuable homework.
- Prepare a study plan and allow time for revision
- Eat well, do some physical exercise, get some fresh air, and get enough rest.
- Copying homework from another student is counter-productive and is regarded as a serious matter by the school. The same applies to allowing another student to copy your homework.

Evaluation of this Policy

Homework Policy should be promoted throughout the school, and its implementation and effectiveness should be reviewed regularly. This is to ensure that the principal, teachers, parents/guardians, and students are completely clear about what is expected of in terms of homework and how it should be organised, managed, and promoted.

After School Homework Support.

We have two after school homework groups which operate Monday – Thursday during term time.

- The Homework Club is for junior class students who may need help doing their homework. Volunteer teachers supervise and support this hour long (4.15-5.15 pm) after school activity and there is no charge. The coordinator is Ms Egan and students must speak with her before joining.
- Night Study is a two-hour period of supervised, silent study and homework. Mr. White is the Night Study Coordinator and applications are available from him. There is a charge for Night Study.

Positive Rewards System

All junior students who have not been given detentions/suspensions during the school year are rewarded at the end of the school year. This is usually in the form of a fun day trip.

All students who have not had any *No Home Works* entered on their Behaviour Tab will be put into a draw and one, possibly more, from each class will be drawn out to win a prize.

In addition, each May an Awards Day is held, which rewards the best student in every subject in each class. A student who would be nominated for these awards would have submitted their homework on time and to a high standard, according to their ability. These awards are an especially important part of our school year and held in a year group Assembly, where each

student in the school is aware of the importance of doing their best and the high regard in which it is held by the school.

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**This Policy was approved by the Board of Management, the Staff the Parents' Council**

**And signed by the Chairperson of the Board:**

*Anne Ahern*

**Chairperson of the Board of Management**

**on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2024**