

# Mary, Mother of Hope Senior National School

## Homework Policy

### Rationale

This policy was drawn up in order to have a consistent approach to homework amongst the teachers in the school and as a way of effectively communicating the school's approach to homework to parents.

### Aims

The aims of the policy are: To enhance children's study and concentration skills

- To enhance pupil learning by consolidating the work done in school.
- To encourage consistency throughout the school.
- To promote a similar approach to homework across all class levels.
- To encourage positive home-school links.

### 1) Why give homework?

- Homework reinforces what the child has learned during the day and is, therefore an essential part of the learning process.
- Homework provides a link between teacher and parent
- Homework helps 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. 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- and all homework assigned should be attempted.

### 2) 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 may be undertaken at weekends
- Sometimes, at the discretion of the class teacher or the principal, children are given "homework off" as an acknowledgment of some special occasion. In addition, homework passes are given to children who have not missed a day in any month, in accordance with the school's attendance policy.
- 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.

### 3) What is the content of homework?

- Homework will contain a balance between reading tasks, learning tasks and written tasks. It should be noted that homework time devoted to reading and learning **is as important as** written work, and should therefore be completed with equal care.
- Homework will regularly contain reading, spellings, tables, written work, pieces to be "learned by heart", drawing/colouring, collecting information or items and finishing work started in class.
- Children often feel that reading and "learning by heart" is not real homework. Parents have an important role in listening to reading and listening to items to be learned to help ensure that this work is done well.

#### 4) 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:

3 <sup>rd</sup> class	Up to 40 minutes
4 <sup>th</sup> class	Up to 40 minutes
5 <sup>th</sup> class	Up to 50 minutes
6 <sup>th</sup> class	Up to 1 hour

Homework is given from Monday to Thursday. Normally 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.

#### 5) How much help should parents give?

Parents should try to help their children with homework by:

- Providing them with a suitable place and time to do their homework
- Preventing interruptions from other children or distractions, such as t.v.
- 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.

#### 6) The Homework Journal

- Each child has a homework journal. The journal offers parents and teachers an invaluable way of communicating between home and school. As with all books and copies, the Homework Journal should be kept neatly and free of any scribbles/drawings or other such marks.
- If parents wish to communicate with their child's teacher, the Homework Journal should be used. (additional pages are available at the end of the journal for this purpose)
- Parents are asked to check the journal each day for notes from the teacher.
- School notes 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
- It is a requirement of Mary, Mother of Hope Senior National School that parents will be asked to inspect the homework that their child has completed and to sign the child's homework journal on a daily basis. Teachers will check homework journals on a daily basis. If parents do not sign the journal, teachers will make contact with the parents, to address the matter.
- Parents should check that children record their homework neatly in the correct page and ticks each item of homework when completed.
- Parents should also make sure that their children get into the good habit of putting their books away at the end of their homework and checking their bag to ensure that they have all the equipment and books they need for the next day in school.

#### 7) 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 class-work ) may be checked by children themselves under the direction of the teacher. This can be a useful part of the learning process for children.

**8) When should parents communicate with the teachers about homework?**

- When your child cannot do homework due to family circumstances. Parents are discouraged from writing notes excusing their children from homework because of after school or other leisure activities.
- 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.

**9) When should homework be done?**

- Each family situation is different - both parents working, child minders, etc. Ideally, homework should be done soon after school, before any television is watched, 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

**10) Failure to complete homework**

Failure to complete homework assigned will be regarded as a breach of the school's Code of Behaviour and will be treated in accordance with that code.

**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.**

***This policy will be reviewed on a regular basis.***