

Scoil Dean Cussen

Homework Policy

Rationale

Homework fosters independence, self-reliance, self-esteem, co-operation and responsibility and lifelong learning. It is an essential part of primary education as it re-enforces what children learn in school. It provides a link between teacher and parent and encourages parental involvement in their child's education.

In general, homework is meant to be achievable by a child working on their own to the best of their ability. Younger children, however, will obviously need more support than older children. It is normally based on what has been taught in class.

Parents'/Guardians' role

Ireland's Constitution states that parents are the child's primary educators. Children spend significantly more time at home than at school therefore support from home is vital for a child's development during primary school.

Children need to know that their parents think homework is important. If they know their parents care, children have a good reason to complete assignments and turn them in on time. There is a lot that you can do to show that you value education and homework.

Homework can bring together parents, children and teachers in a common effort to improve student learning. Helping your child with homework is an opportunity to improve your child's chances of doing well in school and life. By helping your child with homework, you can help him/her learn important lessons about discipline and responsibility. You are in a unique position to help your child make connections between school work and the 'real world' and thereby bring meaning and fun to your child's homework experience.

Homework should be enjoyable and should promote learning as an enjoyable experience.

Parents/Guardians should

- Encourage a positive attitude towards homework in all subjects from an early age.
- Encourage children to work independently as far as possible. Resist over-helping.
- Encourage children to organise themselves for homework. Have all books and materials to hand. The pupil should have the Homework Journal open to tick off work as it is completed.
- Agree a suitable time for doing homework, taking into account of age, the need for playtime, relaxation and family time.
- Monitor how long their child is spending at homework. Set clear but realistic starting and finishing times to keep children focused and to avoid homework 'dragging on' all evening.
- Providing a quiet place, suitable work surface, free from distractions, interruptions and TV.
- Encourage good presentation and neatness within a reasonable time.

- Ensure they read with/to their child/ren regularly, in a relaxed atmosphere where the emphasis is on enjoyment.
- Sign the homework diary checking that all homework is complete.
- Check that the child has all necessary books, homework journal, copies, pencils, mathematical equipment, dictionary, PE clothes, if needed for the next school day.
- Communicate difficulties to the teacher using the homework journal.

How often is homework given?

Homework is usually given on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays but not on Fridays with certain exceptions:

- If homework has been neglected during the week, without explanation from parents.
- In senior classes some project work may be undertaken at weekends.
- Children may bring library books home to read for enjoyment at the weekends.

Sometimes, at the discretion of the class teacher or the principal, children are given 'homework off' as a treat, as a reward or as acknowledgement of some special occasion.

Homework Content

Usually, homework contains 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, pieces to be 'learned by heart', drawing/colouring, collecting information/items and finishing work started in class. 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 more beneficial if carefully planned by teachers and if it has direct meaning to students. It should be a positive experience, not a punishment exercise.

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 may 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:

- Infants Up to 20 minutes
- 1st & 2nd 20 to 30 minutes
- 3rd & 4th 30 to 40 minutes
- 5th & 6th 40 to 50 minutes