

## **HOMEWORK POLICY**

Homework can be defined as work done outside of class time to consolidate the work done in class. It consists of written assignments, the learning of work done in class, practical work and e-learning.

The school aims to provide a caring and just environment where the professionalism of the staff and the individuality of the student is recognised. The school needs to be a place where the student feels at ease, affirmed, accepted and listened to. This gives hope to the student and helps her to develop into an adult who is content and happy.

In order to achieve these aims, the school expects students to apply themselves fully to their homework. This will help to consolidate the student's learning and to prepare them for class tests. Homework should be completed on time and to the best of the student's ability.

Students who miss classes as a result of matches, medical/dental appointments are expected to find out from their peers what homework was set and to complete it on time.

All homework, written and learning should be recorded in the student's journal. This practice is checked intermittingly by Year Heads.

Students are encouraged to spread their homework evenly over the school week, in an effort to prevent the risk of overload on any given night. Year Heads work closely with their year groups in viewing the master timetable with their students in an effort to help them balance their workload over the course of a week. Subject teachers are mindful of the workload on a given day. Teachers liaise with the Year Head of first year students, in particular with regard to the timing of significant assignments such as class tests in an effort to stagger the workload.

It is also the practice for teachers of junior cycle students, particularly those in first year to allocate five minutes at the end of class to allow students to begin their homework with a view to the teacher being able to help those who need guidance.

Both subject teachers and/or Year Heads use opportunities regularly to discuss the relevancy of homework with their students.

This work is supported by the Guidance Counsellor who delivers a study skills/time management programme to year groups every year. Subject teachers also provide study tips in their own specific areas. Guidelines are given to support a revision programme with a view to students preparing for Christmas, Easter and summer exams. This may also include a subject-specific plan for revision for sixth year students.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

Students will:

- Record all homework in student diary
- Complete homework assignments neatly, accurately and on time

Subject teachers will:

- Assign homework that is relevant to current work in class.
- Ensure that homework is monitored and feedback is given and recorded

Parents/guardians will:

- Provide suitable conditions in the home for homework to be done
- Monitor their daughter's homework and encourage good practice

### **Supervised Study**

The school aims to support the student in her learning by providing supervised study for all year groups with the exception of fourth year. It was felt that the nature of fourth year would lend itself better to work outside a supervised setting.

Third, fifth and sixth year students have access to study five days a week for three hours a day. Saturday study is provided for sixth years from January onwards.

First and second years have a Homework Club three days a week, for an hour and a half.

All students are encouraged to avail of these facilities at a nominal cost. The fee is absorbed by the school for those students who would benefit from the discipline of the learning environment and who might not otherwise participate.

The school also provides, on request a facility for sixth year students to work in study groups. It is felt that this practice enhances teamwork, fosters independent learning and is a preparation for third level.

Parents are offered general guidelines with regard to the amount of time needed to spend on homework at the beginning of every year, however, the ability of the student and her application to her work will be determining factors in the length of time needed to complete the work.

### **Guidelines**

The following are the recommended guidelines per school day on homework and revision:

1 <sup>st</sup> year.....	1 - 1.5 hours
2 <sup>nd</sup> year .....	2 hours
3 <sup>rd</sup> year .....	2.5 hours
4 <sup>th</sup> year .....	2 hours
5 <sup>th</sup> year .....	3 hours
6 <sup>th</sup> year.....	3-4 hours

## **Failure to do Homework**

All students are expected to complete their homework assignments in order to ensure that maximum learning can take place. If there are strong personal reasons why the student cannot do homework regularly, a parent/guardian should make contact in person/by phone with school management and provide an explanation.

Students are strongly discouraged from working part time, particularly in 6<sup>th</sup> year. Parents/guardians are asked to support the school in that part time jobs held by students should not interfere with total application to homework and exam preparation.

A pattern of frequent excuse notes from parents/guardians may be investigated by a Year Head and the necessary steps taken to rectify the situation.

Homework will not be set during holiday time and tests will not be scheduled immediately after school breaks with the exception of pre exams for state exam students where the mid term break is deemed to be an opportune time to revise.

**Ratified by the Board of Management of St. Mary's Secondary School  
November, 2008**

*The homework policy will be reviewed in December 2009.*