

Review was adopted by the Board of Management on 27/5/09.

Homework Policy

This is a policy drawn up to help parents in this school understand what happens here regarding homework. This policy is reviewed regularly in consultation with parents, teachers and children. The last review took place in 2008/2009.

Introduction

As parents you are the primary educators of your children. You have taught them all they know before entering school – how to eat, how to speak, how to play with others etc. Your job does not end when your child goes to school, you still have a major and very important influence on your child's education and growth; nowhere is this more evident than in the child's homework. Homework is an important link between home and school. There is universal agreement on the point that where parents take an interest in, and offer practical support for their children's homework, then a greater degree of progress is achieved. When the child is aware that parental interest and supervision is constantly expressed in his/her work, then that child will take greater pride in what he/she is producing and efforts become more pronounced. As a result, the child learns more effectively, is more confident, is more content and develops a higher level of self worth.

On the other hand, where parents fail to play an active part in the child's work then it has continually been shown that the child loses interest and performs erratically. Where homework is poorly done, or even worse, not done at all on a regular basis, then this portrays a poor image of the school/child/parent partnership. In cases like this the child will certainly fall behind in his/her work and may be unable to reach full potential. Listed below are some guidelines on how to approach homework, the amount of homework children will receive and what happens in school regarding homework. Please read the guidelines carefully.

An Ghaeilge and Homework

We understand that sometimes parents may not feel confident in their Gaeilge when helping their children with homework. We have certain measures in place to help you.

- Homework in Naíonáin Bheaga is written in both Gaeilge and English.
- Children's homework is always prepared with them in school so therefore your child should know what they have to do themselves.
- Some text books are available to buy in English from bookshops or on loan from the school to help you to understand your child's homework.
- Irish classes are available to parents to improve their Gaeilge.
- Use your Gaeilge at every opportunity available.

School Homework Diary/Dialann Obair Bhaile

When pupils from Rang a hAon to Rang a Sé return to school in September, each pupil should have a school homework diary/Dialann Obair Bhaile. The diary is available for purchase from the administration office in the school. The diary contains many of the school policies such as code of discipline and behaviour, anti-bullying policy, etc. These are for parents and children to reference as necessary. There are also sections in the diary where notes of absence and notes regarding uniforms may be signed by parents. It is school policy that all pupil absences are explained in writing by parents.

Approaches to writing of homework in school:

Infant Classes

In Rang na Naíonáin Bheaga homework is sent home each evening with an explanation of what and how it is completed. **In Rang na Naíonáin Mhóra**, the homework is laid out for the week and all homework is sent home on Mondays. Parents must be on hand to help children with their homework in infant classes. Homework should be signed when complete and returned to school each day.

Rang a hAon – Rang a Sé

The children write their homework in the diary every day.

Parents sign the children's homework diary every night after checking that all homework has been completed. **Teachers will check for parental signature each day and if homework is signed it is taken as an assurance that parents are happy that children have put their best effort into the completion of homework.**

Children are expected to develop a habit of presenting their work neatly with appropriate headings for Day/Date and each subject area covered in all homework copies.

If there is a problem either the parent or teacher can write a note in the diary thus providing an important means of communication between home and school. Any confidential information should be written in a letter enclosed in a sealed envelope. If a child's homework needs to be discussed then a parent or teacher can make an appointment to discuss the matter. Meetings with teachers should be arranged with due notice out of courtesy and to allow proper dialogue to take place.

Workbooks

In the Junior end of the school and occasionally in the Senior end, the children may sometimes have part of their workbooks assigned for homework.

In those instances the same rules apply as in the case of the homework copy, i.e. all work is to be thoroughly done, neatly presented and appropriately dated/signed by a parent once the assignment has been fully completed.

Important points regarding homework

1. All homework should be done in a quiet room, where interruptions such as television, small children or visitors are eliminated or kept to a minimum.
2. The child should have an appropriate chair and table. It is not acceptable for children to do homework in a car or on a bus.
3. When oral work (reading, poetry, spelling, etc.) is assigned as homework parents should ensure they hear children read aloud, this is necessary for all classes from Naí Bheaga to Rang a Sé.
4. Spelling and tables should be practised and learnt by heart each evening. The look, say, cover and write method should be used to learn spellings and tables. A written practice test should be assigned before a test.
5. Pupils should have all pencils, books etc., prepared before starting homework.
6. Parents are expected to supervise homework especially in infant classes.
7. Please ensure that your child has completed all tasks on the homework list before you sign the diary.
8. **Put everything back in the schoolbag.**

Approximate homework times and tasks

These are approximate times, obviously it will vary from child to child. If you find your child is constantly spending a lot more or a lot less time than indicated below, please make an appointment to discuss this with the **class teacher**. Occasionally teachers will ask parents to write how long it takes children to complete homework.

Infants: 10-15 mins.

Reading, writing/maths/colouring.

Library books will be sent home during the year as Gaeilge and in English. A letter of explanation with guidelines will be sent home when the children receive their first library book, however it should be borne in mind that it is not necessary for children to read each and every word. These are books that parents and children should enjoy together.

1st and 2nd classes: 20-30 mins.

- (a) English and Irish reading, poetry sometimes to be learnt by heart.
- (b) English or Irish writing.
- (c) Spellings from Fallons Spelling List and Litriú from Bunlitriú.
- (d) Maths.
- (e) Tables to be learnt by heart.

Spellings, tables and litriú will be introduced gradually in Rang a hAon. The class teacher will assess when to introduce each of these. An explanation will be sent home with the children on how to help pupils learn them by heart. It is envisaged that there will be a Spelling, Litriú and Tables test every Friday by the end of Rang a hAon.

3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th classes: 40 mins.

- (a) Irish and English reading, poetry sometimes to be learnt by heart.
- (b) Maths.
- (c) Spelling and Litriú from the lists.
- (d) Irish and English writing including grammar work.
- (e) Religion.
- (f) Tables to be learnt by heart
- (g) Work not completed at school.

Home Reading (Junior Infants – Sixth Class)

Oral Work

This is an essential and highly important element in the Homework Programme and sufficient time should be apportioned to it either at the beginning of the Homework Session or at the end. **Again, you should agree upon this with child. All oral work requires active parental involvement throughout its duration. Parents should ensure that they hear all this work practised aloud.**

Examples of the type of oral work regularly assigned are:

- (a) Spellings
- (b) Reading from school textbooks
- (c) Tables
- (d) Poetry
- (e) Grammar

Library Books, Extra Reading and Reading Buddies

Extra reading helps to improve their reading overall. It is imperative that the children in this school read books other than school texts. Extra reading is considered part of homework and each child is expected to read his/her extra books every night. Library books will be sent home during the year as Gaeilge and in English. In infant classes a letter of explanation with some guidance on how to 'read' the books will be sent home when the children receive their first library book. However, it should be borne in mind that it is not necessary for children to be able to read each and every word in infant classes. These are books that parents and children should enjoy together and children will learn by enjoying them with you.

How it works

- Children are given books from the school library. These books are provided with funding from the Parents Council and from the Department of Education.
- Each child is expected to read a few pages each night. It is helpful if parents listen to their child read aloud.
- There is a special list that parents sign. Please ensure that your child is actually reading all pages listed.
- The teacher checks reading of extra books each day at school, co-operation between parents and the school is essential.
- We also ask that children look after all their school books. Graffiti, deliberate damage or destroying of books or copybooks will not be tolerated. We understand that accidents happen and we ask the children or parents to tell the teacher so that books can be replaced if needed.

School Expectations

We at Gaelscoil an Eiscir Riada expect that the entire programme for homework be completed neatly and in full every night. Where a child has not completed his/her work to the required level of satisfaction, then the class teacher shall have to take appropriate action and impose certain sanctions, i.e. the child may be asked to re-do part, or all of the Homework Programme again. In a situation where a child repeatedly fails to complete the work prescribed, then this shall be viewed as a breach of conditions as set out in the school code of discipline and more serious action will be taken. Both the principal and parents shall be notified and certain privileges may be removed from the child until such time that his/her efforts improve accordingly.

We realise that sometimes there is a perfectly plausible reason as to why the full programme for homework is not completed. In this regard only those explanations written and signed/dated by a parents shall be accepted. This explanation may take the form of a note written in either the Homework Diary or Homework Copy. No other excuse on the part of the child can be accepted.

When a child consistently falls behind in his/her schoolwork, or for a variety of reasons does not complete the daily class workload, then we contend that this child take the work in question home to be completed. In this case, the work shall be continued in the copy in which it had been started earlier in the day.

In general, this school will not assign homework at weekends, except in certain circumstances which are laid out below....

- (a) In cases where a child has lost a good deal of ground on the work of his/her classmates during the week, then this child shall be assigned work over the weekend in an effort to catch up.
- (b) As the situation arises, the school has decided to assign weekend homework as a sanction against those whose behaviour has fallen way below the standards we have set and expect in the Gaelscoil.
- (c) In the interest of continuity, the teachers in the Junior classes particularly stress that parents adhere to habits set all week whereby the early reader is afforded the time and opportunity to read with/for Mum and Dad. Such reading exercises will be assigned for the weekend by the teachers in question on the Friday afternoon.

Absent Pupils

Where a child is absent from school for a long period of time through sickness etc., the school would like to advise parents to contact the relevant class teacher so that a programme of work can be drawn up for the absentee.