



*The Sisters of Charity*  
*Mount Carmel Secondary School*  
*Homework Policy*

**Rationale**

For the purposes of this policy, homework is defined as “any task assigned to students by school teachers that are meant to be carried out during non-school hours”<sup>1</sup>. Homework is an integral part of the learning process and learning continues through the completion of homework. Homework plays an important part in helping students to develop to their full potential and should be a positive experience.

**Objectives:**

- To promote homework in the school community
- To ensure a consistent approach to the setting of homework on a whole-school basis
- To promote the development of independent learning and a good work ethic among students
- To offer guidelines to teachers on the setting of homework
- To provide information to parents on the issue of homework
- To clearly define the responsibilities of students regarding the completion of homework

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<sup>1</sup> Cooper, H. M. (1989). Homework. White Plains, N.Y.: Longman.

**Homework is valuable for the following reasons:**

- It helps students to progress through learning outside the classroom.
- It allows students to develop the practice of independent learning without the constant presence of the teacher or other students and the external discipline of the timetable. This way of working is vital at the later stages of secondary education and thereafter.
- Homework can provide the quiet conditions needed for creative and thoughtful work of all kinds.
- It enforces valuable practice of skills learned in the classroom and helps the absorption of classroom learning.
- It allows students to use materials and other sources of information that are not always available in the classroom.
- It involves parents/guardians and others in students' work for their mutual benefit.
- It encourages opportunities for long-term research and other work.
- It forms an important part of students' notes.
- It gives students valuable experience of working to deadlines.
- It forms a link with the study techniques crucial to success at secondary school.
- It enables teachers to evaluate students' work and to assess its standard.
- It can help with preparatory work for the next day's class and provides students with an opportunity for self-assessment.
- Learning is strongly reinforced if students revise in the evening what was learnt during the day.
- Schools which set and correct homework regularly achieve better examination results.

**The Nature of Homework**

- The school operates a system whereby subject teachers set homework to all class groups on a regular basis. The nature of the homework will vary between year groups, different classes and topics of study.
- Homework may be assigned to a class or group within a class or individual student according to student needs. It may be short term (i.e. due for the next class) or long term e.g. the writing of an essay or the completion of a project.

- Homework assigned should increase incrementally as the student advances from year to year.
- Marking homework forms an integral part of assessment. Teachers aim to return marked homework to the students as soon as possible (normally within one week), to reinforce that topic of work while the exercise is fresh in the students' minds.
- To achieve their full potential, students must be prepared to spend time studying and revising as well as doing their homework.
- Homework may involve the following:
  - Reading/writing/spelling/learning/summarising.
  - Accessing the internet to research or discover further information on a study topic.
  - Carrying out a project. This may involve research, collection of information for an individual or group project.
  - Observing/recording.
  - Making a model to exemplify an item of work.
  - Watching a TV programme related to a study topic.
  - Completing an exercise to practise, reinforce or apply aspects of the class work, e.g. writing up practical work or notes.
  - Revising or taking notes on material covered in class that day.
  - It can also include online homework through our school platform Microsoft Teams.
- The task selected by the class teacher will be commensurate with the ability of the students. Where appropriate, for differentiation purposes, teachers may ask students to complete alternative tasks.
- Given the nature of Transition Year, homework is assigned as required by individual teachers. Homework is necessary to facilitate the completion and consolidation of TY modules. The amount of homework given may increase throughout the year due to requirement to complete a student portfolio. Transition Year students are asked to pay particular attention to keeping their e-portfolios up to date.

- Leaving Certificate Applied students are expected to do homework tasks on a regular basis. Based on the design of the LCA course, there may be a particular emphasis on non-written homework tasks. It may include research tasks, sourcing work/practical achievement task placements and/or revise material for their task interviews and oral assessments.
- JCSP students, who do not study French, have one/two timetabled curriculum support classes per week. These classes will be used to assist students with their learning and may be used to facilitate questions about homework.
- Students may receive no written homework in non-examination subjects such as Choir, S.P.H.E., Guidance, P.E. and Senior Cycle R.E. however this is at the teachers' discretion.
- All students are encouraged to use some time during weekends for self-directed learning.

### **How long should Students spend on Homework?**

Homework allows for the reinforcement of learning and gives students opportunities to achieve success upon completion. It is our experience that students who pay full attention to homework do better in exams than those who do not. As part of the students' daily routine, we suggest that the following average time limits are guidelines for students and parents alike:

<b>1<sup>st</sup> Year</b>	1 – 1.5 hours
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Year</b>	2 – 2.5 hours
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Year</b>	2.5 – 3 hours
<b>Transition Year</b>	1 – 2 hours
<b>5<sup>th</sup> Year</b>	3 – 4 hours
<b>6<sup>th</sup> Year</b>	4 hours upwards

#### **How the School helps Students to organise their Homework**

- Students are given a homework journal at the

beginning of the year. They must record homework on the page assigned to the day when it was set and should note the day when the homework is due. Students are expected to plan their homework so that assignments do not accumulate.

- Teachers try to make sure that instructions concerning homework are clear to everyone in the class, and that all students have plenty of time to record what is expected. While overseeing the recording of homework by students in their homework journal.
- Students may reasonably expect that homework set will be corrected by the teacher either in class or at home. Homework taken from students to be corrected outside of class should, under normal circumstances, be returned in a timely manner and where at all possible within one week of collection offering appropriate formative feedback.
- Homework may be assessed by a variety of means. Marking/grading may not always be appropriate and feedback to students on how to improve their work may involve focusing on specific aspects of the assignment.
- Class Tutors periodically check that homework details are filled in the homework journal for students.
- Supervised access to the school library and computer rooms for internet use and digital project work is available to all students.
- When students are having problems with poor organisation or completion of homework, the teacher may use the journal as a communication with parents and may ask parents to sign that homework has been completed. Parents should check students' journals on a regular basis and sign notes written by subject teachers.
- After school study is available to students who apply for places in September and January.
- Homework club is available to 1<sup>st</sup> year students. There are also homework clubs in the local area which students may like to attend. Parents and students may contact the Home School Community Liaison Officer for further details.
- Pastoral Care Personnel (Tutors, Guidance Counsellor & Curriculum Support Teachers) aim to:
  - Guide students in homework and study skills.

- Identify students experiencing difficulty with completing their homework.
- Provide support and guidance, especially for those experiencing difficulty with completing their homework.
- Liaise with subject teachers, especially in relation to consideration for students with special educational needs.

### **Suggestions for Students organising Homework**

- All homework and related instructions should be carefully recorded in the Student Journal, the due date noted, and when the work is completed a tick should be entered.
- Ask questions, when necessary, to clarify the assignment requirements.
- When absent from class due to school activities ensure that set work is obtained from a student who was present.
- Ensure that all necessary books, copies etc. are gathered before leaving school.
- Find a quiet place and establish a homework routine; preferably have a desk that can be left set up.
- Design a personal homework timetable (see sample in student journal). This timetable should allow for short breaks as well as allocating some time for study and general revision.
- Try to avoid all obvious distractions, television, radio, mobile phone, social media etc.
- When possible, homework should be completed early in the evening rather than late at night.
- Try to complete homework (or at least begin it) on the night it is set, even though it may not be required immediately.
- Carefully plan the completion of long-term projects preferably identifying intermediate goals and associated dates.
- Take notes when studying, highlight key areas, design mind maps etc. These will be useful later for revision.
- Where the homework involves solving problems, study the examples given in class first, before attempting the problems.
- When content such as vocabulary, grammar, definitions, diagrams or formulae have to be memorised regular self-testing is advised. Flash cards may aid quick recall.

- Make sure all written work is neat, tidy and clearly legible.
- When homework is completed, timetable and schoolbag should be checked to ensure that all books and materials are ready for the next day.

### **How Parents/Guardians can help with Homework**

- Encouraging a positive attitude is most beneficial and parents/guardians can play a major role in this.
- Help your child organise his or her time to best advantage so that things are not left to the last minute or forgotten. Parents/guardians play a crucial role in shaping good attitudes and habits in relation to homework.
- Try to make sure that there are suitable working conditions at home, where possible or encourage the use of after school study/homework club.
- To encourage full attendance in school as this leads to more successful outcomes with regards to homework
- Take a positive and active interest in your child's work at home rather than just insisting that it is done.
- Valuable learning comes from attempting as well as completing work. Students benefit from parental support and encouragement in persevering with difficult assignments.
- Perhaps your child seems to be doing too much, or not enough, or is finding it too easy or too difficult. Contact the subject teachers or the Year Head if there are problems with homework that you cannot resolve.
- Check that homework details are filled in clearly and regularly in the homework journal; a space is provided for your weekly signature.

### **Failure to hand in Homework**

- Parents/guardians will be informed when their child does not complete homework, communication made through the homework journal which parents/guardians are asked to sign on a weekly basis.
- Students will be given a penalty sheet where they fail to complete a homework task.
- On the third occasion where a student does not complete a homework task, this will be recorded on the official school records system.

- Non-completion of homework on a repeated basis may lead to a student being disciplined on a Disciplinary Card (See Code of Behaviour)
- Teacher discretion may be used in relation to disciplinary measures for infringements of this Homework Policy.

## **Rewards**

Positive recognition of homework completed to a high standard may include, but is not limited to:

- Positive teacher comments in the student's journal.
- Stars in journals (Junior Cycle only).
- Positive postcards posted home.
- Positive teacher comments on the official school recording system.

Teacher discretion may be used in relation to rewards.

## **Ratification and Communication**

When the Homework Policy has been ratified by the board of management, it becomes the school's agreed Homework Policy. It should then be dated and circulated within the school community. All teaching staff must be familiar with the Homework Policy and put it into practice in accordance with the specified implementation arrangements.

Parents/guardians and students should be informed of the Homework Policy from the time of enrolment of the student.

## **Monitoring the Implementation of the Policy**

The implementation of the policy shall be monitored by the Principal, Deputy Principal and Year Heads.

- Subject Departments will review implementation of this policy at Subject Planning Meetings.
- Principal and Deputy Principal will discuss this policy with staff at Staff Meetings.
- The Principal will report to the Board of Management.



### **Reviewing and Evaluating the Policy**

The policy should be reviewed and evaluated at certain pre-determined times and as necessary. On-going review and evaluation should take cognisance of changing information or guidelines and feedback from parents/guardians, students, school staff and others. The policy should be revised as necessary in the light of such review and evaluation and within the framework of school planning.

**Ratified by BOM May 27<sup>th</sup> 2021**