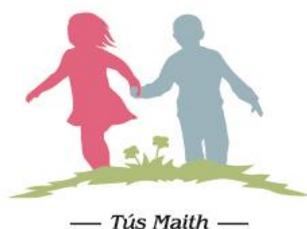


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## **HOMEWORK POLICY**

December 2009

## **THE PURPOSE OF HOMEWORK**

In St Attracta's Junior School we regard homework as valuable for the following reasons:

- ❖ It allows pupils the opportunity to revisit, revise and consolidate skills learned in class
- ❖ It can help pupils make more rapid progress in learning
- ❖ It provides a link between home and school
- ❖ It gives pupils the valuable experience of working to a deadline and completing tasks within a given timeframe
- ❖ It provides an opportunity for independent study and learning
- ❖ It helps develop in children a good work ethic.

It also enables teachers

- ❖ To monitor pupil progress with a view to improving standards
- ❖ To provide pupils and parents with clear and relevant feedback
- ❖ To suggest strategies for improvement and for goals to be achieved
- ❖ To seek extra resources to support pupils most in need of help.

Homework, along with schoolwork, teacher observation, diagnostic and standardised testing provides an overall picture of the child's progress and development as s/he advances through school. This enables the teacher and principal to maintain standards throughout the school, to strive for excellence and to ensure that all children achieve their full potential.

## **THE NATURE OF HOMEWORK**

Normally homework is given on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, leaving the weekend free for children and parents to relax. The nature of the homework varies from class to class, but a gradual progression in the variety and amount of homework given will take place from Junior Infants to Second Class.

Teachers, in consultation with parents, the learning support teacher and the resource teacher take the needs and abilities of children with learning difficulties into account.

|  |
|--|
| Homework in <b><i>Junior Infants</i></b> includes, rhymes to say, learn and read; work based on the 'Jolly Phonics' programme in use in the school, sight vocabulary and reading.  |
| Homework in <b><i>Senior Infants</i></b> includes more advanced phonic work, sight vocabulary and reading. Occasionally children and parents will be asked to discuss a topic in S.E.S.E. or S.P.H.E.  |
| In <b><i>First and Second Class</i></b> spellings, tables and reading will form an integral part of homework. Written work and /or research in the areas of maths, English, SESE and SPHE will be included from time to time. Occasionally, it will be expected that certain prayers, songs and poems will be committed to memory. |

In ***St. Attracta's Junior School*** we place a huge value on literacy, therefore, outside the time spent on homework children and parents are encouraged to read for a short time each night and to participate in the **C.A.P.E.R.** project when it runs in the school.

Homework will only be given in the areas already covered, taught or discussed in school and should therefore be within children's capability.

The nature of homework will inevitably change during such times as Christmas, Communion, Book Week, the week of Parent Teacher Meetings, etc.

## **TIME SPENT ON HOMEWORK**

Just as the amount of homework varies from one stream to another, so too the time spent on homework will vary from class to class and from pupil to pupil.

The following are guidelines for time spent on homework. Different children will complete the same amount of homework in different times.

|                        |                   |
|------------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Junior Infants:</b> | Up to 15 minutes. |
| <b>Senior Infants:</b> | Up to 20 minutes. |
| <b>First Class:</b>    | Up to 30 minutes. |
| <b>Second Class:</b>   | Up to 40 minutes. |

Some children may find it difficult to concentrate for the length of time outlined above so parents may decide to divide the work up into smaller units.

It may be helpful to the teacher if the parent records the length of time it takes to complete homework each night. This gives the teacher an idea of the range of time it takes the class to complete the homework given and how individual pupils are performing within that range.

If a child has given of his/her best and is still struggling, parents are advised to tell the child to stop. They are then advised to write a note in the homework notebook to let the class teacher know of the difficulty being encountered.

### **GUIDELINES FOR PUPILS**

- ❖ When you are in First and Second Class and you are taking down homework from the blackboard, take it down carefully.
- ❖ Listen carefully to the teacher when the homework is being prepared.
- ❖ Remember to bring home the copies and books you need to do your homework.
- ❖ Don't forget to learn your tables, spellings, poems or prayers that may be marked for homework.
- ❖ When you have written work to do, write carefully and tidily.
- ❖ Remember to read aloud to an adult every night that reading is marked for homework.
- ❖ Take care of all your books and copies – don't scribble or draw on covers.
- ❖ Never eat or drink or have food or drink near your work in case of accidental spillages.
- ❖ Have your homework signed by a parent.

### **GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS**

- ❖ Take a positive and active interest in your child's work rather than just insist that it be done. In the early years it may be necessary to sit with the child while he/she completes certain tasks. This can be encouraging.
- ❖ Establish a routine. Be firm but flexible!
- ❖ Try to ensure that homework is done as early as possible, to allow for playtime.
- ❖ Try to ensure that the child works in a quiet, well-lit room without distraction. Turn off the television, play station, radio etc
- ❖ When doing written work, make sure that the child sits at a table or a desk where there is plenty of room.
- ❖ Make sure that the child has the basic equipment to complete work, such as, copies, pencils, erasers, markers or colouring pencils.
- ❖ If you see areas that require improvement, identify them and work on one area at a time.
- ❖ Do not accept untidy or incomplete work.
- ❖ Give children as much responsibility as possible – allow them to think for themselves.
- ❖ Praise and encourage the child when the work is done.
- ❖ Please sign the homework when it has been completed and checked by you.
- ❖ We strongly recommend that every child's homework be completed with a familiar adult present from start to finish. Where adults other than parents/guardians are supervising homework, we urge all parents/guardians to keep in touch with, and be familiar with the homework their child is completing every night.

### **FAILURE TO DO HOMEWORK**

If homework is not done on a given night children will be asked to do the work the following night.

Homework repeatedly not done or signed will be investigated.

If there are good reasons for not doing the homework, a written note from parent to teacher is required by way of explanation.

Homework missed due to illness or absence does not normally have to be completed.

The class teacher will contact the parent if problems persist. Likewise, parents are encouraged to contact the class teacher if the child is experiencing problems at home with homework.

### **MARKING HOMEWORK**

Marking homework forms an integral part of the teacher's assessment and we aim to respond to homework regularly and in a way that is helpful to pupils.

While each teacher will have his/her own ideas and considerations about marking homework, we aim to mark homework in a simple, positive and child friendly way. Personal effort rather than perfection will be considered although pupils will always be encouraged to aim for the highest standards possible. Completed exercises are returned to children as soon as possible to maximise the benefit to them.

### **OTHER WAYS IN WHICH PARENTS CAN HELP CHILDREN TO LEARN:**

- ❖ Please participate in home school programmes such as, C.A.P.E.R.
- ❖ Read to your child and allow them to share their reading with you.
- ❖ Join the local library.
- ❖ Talk to your child about the work he/she is doing in school.
- ❖ Encourage children to use the Irish phrases they learn in school, by using any phrases you yourselves know.
- ❖ Watch children's television programmes with your child and talk to him/her about them.
- ❖ Visit local attractions such as, Marlay Park, St. Enda's Park, Airfield House.
- ❖ Attend talks in relation to educational matters organised in the school.
- ❖ Monitor the amount of time spent by children watching T.V., playing on play-stations etc.
- ❖ Ensure that children get to bed early on school nights.

### **USEFUL INTERNET SITES FOR PARENTS TO ACCESS FURTHER INFORMATION**

**[www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie)** (Department of Education & Science)

(Documents of interest to parents available in English, Irish, German, Latvian, Lithuanian, Polish, Russian, Spanish on the above site)

**[www.ncca.ie](http://www.ncca.ie)** (National Council for Curriculum & Assessment) The full primary school curriculum is available here.

**[www.newb.ie](http://www.newb.ie)** (National Education Welfare Board)

**[www.scoilnet.ie](http://www.scoilnet.ie)** (Portal for Irish Education)

***The Board of Management ratified this policy document on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2009***