

Our Lady Immaculate JNS, Darndale, Dublin 17

Homework Policy 2014

Rationale

Homework fosters independence, self-reliance, self-esteem, cooperation, responsibility and lifelong learning. It is an essential part of primary education as it reinforces 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. It is normally based on what has been taught in class. It can be used to practice what is done in school or can be designed to challenge children's ability and provide opportunities for creativity.

In Our Lady Immaculate Junior School we give homework for the following reasons:

- It reinforces and revises the work done in school.
- It creates a link between home and school and thus develops good communication between teacher, parent and child.
- It is good training for the child to work independently.
- It helps to bring problems and difficulties the child may have to light.
- It gives the child one-to-one attention with the parent.
- It creates an opportunity for children to show their parents what they know and what they are doing at school.

Monitoring and Support - 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.

Our recommended policy on homework acknowledges the importance of informal activity at home by including a list of activities that children do at home which help them cope better in school.

Recommendations for 4-6 year olds:

- learning to share
- learning to tie laces
- learning to zip coats/close buttons
- helping with household jobs
- learning basic manners, 'thank you', etc
- playing with water
- colouring, cutting, painting, jigsaws etc

Recommendations for 6-8 year olds:

- all of the above developed to a higher level
- taking responsibility for looking after his/her own things
- developing independence
- changing out of school uniform when he/she arrives home
- learning to tidy up and pack own bag
- colouring, using scissors, reading/counting/sorting games, jigsaws
- developing language through games i.e. I Spy
- learning/agreeing to turn off the TV

Children need to know that their parents think homework is important. If they know their parents care, children have a good reason to complete homework 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 to learn important lessons about discipline and responsibility. You are in a unique position to help your child make connections between schoolwork 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:

- Listen to and discuss your child's day with him/her.
- Agree a regular time for doing homework, taking into account the age, the need for playtime/relaxation and family time.
- Provide a quiet place, free from distractions and interruptions.
- Turn off the TV and computer games.
- Provide a suitable work surface, preferably a table.
- Encourage good presentation and neatness.
- Set a time limit.
- Encourage and praise.
- Supervise, even at a distance.
- Communicate difficulties to the teacher.
- Sign homework.

Parents/Guardians should avoid:

- starting homework too late
- pressurising or rushing your child
- getting angry or frustrated
- letting your child eat while doing homework
- doing homework for your child

If your child is having difficulty:

- Stay calm and try to find out the cause of the problem.
- Talk your child through the difficulty and reassure him/her.
- Stay within the set time limit.
- Make contact with the teacher discreetly by note or call to the school.

Monitoring and Support –Teachers’ role

- explaining homework to parents at beginning of school year
- explaining homework to the pupils
- preparing homework at appropriate level and differentiating according to level of abilities
- checking homework each day
- having a system of sanctions if the work is not done
- rewarding good effort
- encouraging children to do their best work
- contacting parents if there is a problem

If homework is frequently not done, the teacher contacts parents with a view to resolving the situation. If the situation continues, then the matter is brought to the attention of the Principal who will contact the parent(s)/guardian and arrange a meeting to discuss how the matter can be resolved.

How often is homework given?

Homework is given on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays but not on Fridays. However, children may bring books home to read for enjoyment at the weekend.

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, written work, 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 that is too hard, not based on school work, or too much of any subject is considered inappropriate.

Duration of homework

The following are guidelines for time spent on homework. Different children will complete the same homework in different lengths of time. Time spent will 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:

Junior Infants: 10-15 minutes

Senior Infants: 20 minutes approx.

First Class: 30 minutes approx.

Second Class: 30 minutes approx

Communication and Promotion of Homework Policy to parents

- Distribute the policy document.
- Inform parents of new pupils at May/June meetings.
- Outline/discuss homework policy at class meetings in September each year.
- Homework policy may be discussed at individual parent/teacher meetings.

Monitoring and Evaluation

- Feedback from parents.
- Feedback from staff at staff meetings.
- Homework policy to be reviewed by staff annually at beginning of school year.

This homework policy was initially prepared by the school staff followed by consultation and input from the Parents Association and the Board of Management.

This homework policy was ratified by the Board of Management on _____

Signed: _____

Chairperson, Board of Management