



St. Raphaela's Primary School

Homework Policy

Purpose:

At St Raphaela's Primary School, we give homework for the following reasons:

- To reinforce what the child has learned during the day
- To provide a link between teacher and parent
- To develop the child's concentration skills and develop a work ethic

Aspirations:

Homework is meant to be achievable by the child and to reinforce work already done. The teacher normally prepares it. However sometimes with senior classes, some homework is designed to challenge children's ability and provide opportunities for creativity. For instance senior classes can be given project work to research over a number of weeks. Children are expected to do their homework to the best of their individual ability, no more and no less.

Homework is given on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, but not on Fridays, with the following exceptions: -

- If homework has been neglected during the week.
- In senior classes, some project homework may be undertaken at the weekend.
- Extra homework may be given during the week or at the weekend if a child has not completed their assigned homework, made a suitable effort or presented untidy work.
- Sometimes, at the discretion of the class teacher or principal, children are excused from homework as a treat or as an acknowledgement of some special occasion.

Content:

Ideally, homework will contain a balance between reading tasks, learning tasks and written work. This balance is not always possible and can vary considerably from day to day. However, it should be noted that homework devoted to reading and learning is as important as written work. Homework will regularly contain reading, spellings, tables, written work, pieces to be "learned by heart", 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/Guardians can play an important role in listening to reading and items to be learned ensuring this work is done well. We feel that parents must listen to their child reading aloud every night. Homework will be differentiated for children with individual learning needs.

Time Guidelines:

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 only.

Junior & Senior Infants: Up to 20 minutes

Rang 1 - 2: Up to 30 minutes

Rang 3 - 4: Up to 50 minutes

Rang 5 - 6: Up to 1 hour 15 minutes

Parental/Guardian involvement:

Parents/Guardians can help their children with homework by providing them with a suitable place and time to do their homework and by trying to prevent interruptions or distractions, like T.V. or other children. Children should do written homework themselves and Parents/Guardians should only help when the child has difficulty. In line with our Internet Usage Policy, we remind parents that children should not have unsupervised access to the internet.

If a child has difficulty with homework, the Parents\Guardians should help the child to overcome the difficulty with further explanation or examples, but not by actually doing the homework for the child. In this case the parent should write a note to the teacher explaining the problem. Parents should encourage their children to read every night. They can read their class reader,, Literacy Links reader or their library book. Indeed older could even read some of the newspaper with help as appropriate.

Monitoring Homework at Home:

Parents/Guardians should check that the homework is done in full, and then sign a child's Homework Journal every evening. The pupil's journal is an important record of the child's homework. It is also a valuable means of communication between Parents\Guardians and teachers. Ideally, all written messages to your child's teacher should be put in the Homework Journal in the "Friday" or "Comment" sections of a particular week.

Additional pages are also available at the end of the journal. Please check that your child records homework neatly in the correct page and ticks each item of homework when completed. St. Raphaela's N.S. notices and other letters to Parents\Guardians are folded and placed in the current day of the Homework Journal or in the homework folder.

Parents are asked to check each child's journal for such notes on a regular basis

Monitoring Homework at School:

Ideally teachers like to check homework on a daily basis, however with large class numbers it is not always possible to check each child's Homework Journal every day. As children get older and learn to work independently, some items of homework are checked less often e.g. every second day or once per week. Sometimes, under the direction of the teacher, children themselves may check some items of homework or class work. This can be a useful part of the learning process for children.

Communication about Homework

In the relevant section of the Homework Journal parents should inform his/her child's teacher when:- a child cannot do homework due to family circumstances or a child cannot do homework because she/he cannot understand some aspect. We also ask parents to inform us if the time being spent at homework is often longer than the recommended amount of time.

Doing Homework:

Each family situation is different but, ideally, homework should be done before any television is watched soon after school while your child is still fresh. Some children, however, need a break before starting homework. Nevertheless homework should never be left until morning time before school Remember, if homework is a stressful experience between parent and child, something is wrong! This leads to poor learning and defeats the purpose of this policy. Should this happen on a regular basis, parents are asked to contact the class teacher, by making an appointment through the office.

This policy was agreed by all members of staff and ratified by the Board of Management in April 2008. It will be reviewed in 2011.