

Mercy College Woodford



Homework Policy

Statement:

Homework fosters independence, self-reliance, self-esteem, cooperation, responsibility and lifelong learning. It is an essential part of post-primary education as it reinforces what students learn in school. It can also play an integral role in helping students to prepare for forthcoming classwork and in revising work already covered during class time. Learning is a lifelong skill. Many strategies can be employed to improve learning and stimulate thinking. Homework reinforces and extends classroom learning.

This policy is a guide for students, teachers and parents/guardians on how to improve classroom learning and fulfil students' true potential, while being cognisant of teacher and student wellbeing. It is intended to foster self-discipline, independent learning and encourage students to take responsibility for their own learning. A homework policy is necessary to ensure that there is a reference point for parents/guardians, teachers and students. It provides transparency and accountability, clarifies procedures and complies with the Education Act 1998.

Relationship to School's Mission/Vision/Aims:

This policy is consistent with the Mission Statement and aims of Mercy College, by providing for the academic development of the students, while allowing for the spiritual, social, personal and physical development of the student. Mercy College Woodford is committed to the holistic development of all students and we believe that effective homework has a very positive impact on students' education.

Rationale:

In Mercy College Woodford, homework is regarded as an integral component of the teaching and learning process and serves as an essential support to classroom instruction. Students' academic achievement is enhanced through the purposeful setting and regular assessment of effective homework. Accordingly, subject teachers plan and design homework as a meaningful extension of classroom learning and as an integral part of the topics taught. It should be manageable and mindful of student wellbeing.

Scope:

The homework policy applies to all students in Mercy College Woodford and outlines the important role teachers and parents/guardians play in supporting the completion of productive homework by all students. This policy acknowledges the special role of parents/guardians in the education of their child. This policy was reviewed by the school community in Mercy College Woodford, inclusive of all relevant stakeholders.

Definition of Homework:

Homework is defined as the time students spend outside the classroom in assigned learning activities. It is not restricted to written work. It may take several formats: oral, aural, research, reflections, portfolios, performance, project work or revision (this is not an exhaustive list).

A variety of homework assignments are set by teachers.

These include but are not restricted to:

- Reading / pre-reading activities
- Task that pre-teaches a topic(s)
- Researching / sourcing and analysing materials
- CBA preparation
- Essay work and revision topics
- Oral / aural / written work
- Exam paper practice
- Reflection tasks
- Revision of classwork: written work and/or oral work
- Short revision work
- Development of oral and aural skills
- Watching educational documentaries and and/or television programmes
- Preparing for debates, role-plays etc.
- Projects
- Listening to a podcast

It should be noted that no category of task should be prioritised over another e.g. time devoted to learning is as important as written work. As homework is designed to reinforce the learning completed in class, it forms an integral part of students' study. If students have completed their homework to the high standard and ensured that they understand the material, they have engaged in meaningful study.

Purpose of Homework:

Homework practice is a crucial link between teaching and learning. It acts as a bridge from one day to the next.

- The completion of homework helps teachers and students assess learning and progress.
- Homework reinforces and consolidates the work covered in class.
- Homework fosters self-discipline and self-motivation in students, which will be beneficial throughout a student's career and develops the Junior Cycle key skill 'Managing Myself'.
- Homework allows students to develop the practice of working independently and to take responsibility for their own learning, thus fostering lifelong learning skills.
- Homework contributes towards building personal responsibility, accountability and self-discipline to complete assignments independently with deadlines and consequences.
- Homework offers opportunities to develop meaningful links between parents/guardians, teachers and students through journal correspondence.

Time Allocation for Homework:

The amount of time spent completing homework will vary depending on the nature and the number of class periods per week allocated to that specific subject. The staff at Mercy College Woodford advise

that homework is completed as soon as practicably possible. This is particularly important when several days may lapse in between classes due to the timetabling.

As students vary in ability levels and in the time taken to complete homework, it would be impossible to precisely indicate the amount of time that should be spent by each individual student in the completion of homework and revision daily. As part of a student's daily routine, however, we recommend the following average time for students' completion of homework in each year group:

Year	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	5 th	6 th
Average Time	1 hour	1.5 hours	2 hours	3 hours	3 hours

- Exam classes may be assigned homework and/or revision work over the holiday periods and mid-term breaks.
- Students are expected to do extra revision and study in addition to completing their homework in preparation for school-based exams and state examinations.

Transition Year: Students will be assigned key tasks and assignments by their teacher, each with a specified deadline. Learning during Transition Year may take place in a variety of formats and settings and is regarded as equally important as learning in any other year group. Homework may be assigned where appropriate and will reflect the flexible task-based nature of the Transition Year Programme. Time spent on homework may vary depending on the task and stage of learning.

Leaving Certificate Applied: Students will be assigned key tasks and assignments by their teacher, each with a specified deadline. Learning in the LCA programme takes place through a range of practical, vocational, and classroom-based formats and is regarded as equally important and valid as learning in any other programme. Homework may be assigned where appropriate and will reflect the task-based nature of the LCA Programme. Time spent on homework may vary depending on the task and stage of learning.

Homework Considerations:

- Students will be given direction and help in homework/study skills.
- Every effort shall be made to allow students to write down homework in each class.
- Students with additional needs will be given special support and consideration and possibly differentiated work.
- A variety of homework formats may be used to support differentiation.
- Homework is to be done carefully and consistently, taking into account student's ability.
- Copied or carelessly done work is unacceptable.
- It is recommended that homework is completed at a reasonable hour before student is too tired.
- Weekend or evening jobs are discouraged during exam years.

- If for any valid reason or in exceptional circumstances a student has been unable to do homework, an explanatory note/letter in the student diary from parent/s is expected.
- Parents will be informed if students do not attempt homework.
- It is recommended that students do homework on the night it is assigned to maximise benefits to students.
- Where appropriate, Google Classroom or google Drive may be used to share learning resources.
- It is the policy of the school that all students have a homework diary which shall be used as a means of communication with regard to homework and other issues between school and parents.

*See Appendix 1 for study tips

Feedback for Students:

Effective marking and feedback are fundamental to helping students make progress. A variety of methods are used to correct homework depending on the content and length of the assignment. Approaches include but are not limited to:

- Teacher correction
- Class correction
- Class discussion
- Peer-assessment
- Self-assessment under the direction of the teacher
- Formative feedback whereby the teacher identifies what the student has done right, what weaknesses there are in the students' work and what the next steps should be to improve performance or understanding.

In line with Assessment for Learning, teachers will utilise the correction of homework to help students to recognise the standards they are aiming for, will involve students in assessing their own learning when appropriate and will provide constructive feedback which helps students to recognise what they must do to address any gaps in their knowledge or understanding. This formative approach to feedback is integral to the Junior Cycle Framework and Senior Cycle Reform and the Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice.

Roles & Responsibilities:

<p>Student</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do homework, present it properly and co-operate with the teacher in this regard. • Bring student diary to each class and place it on desk. • Record assigned homework in the diary. • Pay attention in class in order to gain the understanding and knowledge required to complete assigned tasks. • Produce homework to meet agreed deadlines. • Make every effort to find out what homework was given and complete it, if absent from class.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete all homework to the best of their ability. • All work completed at home must be authentic and reflect the student's own ability. Students are not permitted to use any forms of AI to complete their work or assignments unless specifically instructed to do so by a teacher. • Report to the teacher/year head/Students' Council if the amount of homework is inconsistent or considered to be unmanageable. • Produce a note from parent/guardian on entry to class on the occasions when the student fails to complete assigned homework. This can be recorded in the student's diary. • Record the subjects for each day of the coming week in their homework journal at the weekend. • Failure to attempt or complete homework without reasonable explanation should be recorded by the class teacher in the student's diary and parents signature requested. A sanction may be applied by the class teacher. If the problem persists, the class teacher will bring it to the attention of the Year Head. • Students in Junior Cycle should get their diaries signed at the end of the week by a parent/guardian (every Friday). Senior Cycle students should take autonomy for their own learning and independently record homework in their journals.
Parent/Guardian	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide the necessary support & encouragement for the completion of homework. • Provide suitable conditions for homework. • See that a genuine attempt is made on homework and that homework is completed. • Contact school if there are difficulties with homework. The school diary may be used for this communication. • Check homework diary on a regular basis and sign it weekly. • Ensure that if a student is absent, he/she makes every effort to keep homework and notes up to date. • Ensure that the subjects for each day of the coming week are recorded in the homework diary. • Sign diaries of a junior student weekly. • Sign any notes as they occur. • Inform the subject teacher if their child experiences ongoing difficulty in completing their homework. • Attend parent-teacher meetings, and to make an appointment to meet teachers if there are issues that need to be addressed.
Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow students sufficient time to record the assigned homework. • Allow students to seek clarification if necessary. • Assign and review homework. • Assign meaningful & worthwhile homework. • Consistently set homework or revision daily. • Provide feedback to students and parents. • Check and correct homework. • Provide expectations & success criteria to the students. • Provide appropriate and effective feedback to promote learning.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure students have a sufficient level of understanding. • Use the homework diary as a communication tool. • Provide appropriate scaffolding of the homework and provide guidelines on the successful completion of the homework. • Explain specific study methods suitable to their subject area.
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Evening Study:

Study is an integral and intrinsic part of a student’s schedule. It is an opportunity to revise material covered in class, complete assigned homework and prepare for upcoming assessments. Supervised evening study provides students who wish to engage in further learning with the opportunity to study in a supervised space free from unnecessary interruption and disturbance. Evening study is offered to all students in the school on a paid termly basis. Attendance is recorded and the schools Code of Behaviour must be adhered to.

Non-compliance with Homework:

A high priority is placed on the value of homework in a student’s education and teachers expect homework to be completed in the allocated time. If homework is not submitted to the teacher (and no note of explanation from a parent/guardian has been provided), the following may be applied (the list is not exhaustive):

- A verbal reprimand.
- A note written in the student’s journal (to be signed by a parent/ guardian).
- A penalty exercise may be given to the offending student.
- Lunchtime detention.
- Afterschool detention.
- Referral to the year head.
- Discussion with parents/guardians via telephone, letter or a meeting in the school.
- Meeting with Deputy Principal and/or Principal.

Implementation Procedures:

- Each class teacher shall provide students with guidelines and expectations of students’ homework and support the development of effective homework and study skills as outlined in Appendix 1.
- Students will be advised on the importance of homework, the time management in relation to homework by year heads and in SPHE class.
- Teachers should give clear instruction (preferably at least five minutes before the end of class) to help students understand what is required of them.
- Students must write down homework in homework diaries.
- Students must make every effort to do the assigned homework and present it on time.
- Failure to complete homework will require an explanatory note from a parent/guardian in the students’ homework diary.

- Failure to attempt, or complete, homework with a reasonable explanation should be recorded by the class teacher in the students' diary and parents' signature requested. A sanction may be applied by the class teacher.
- If the problem persists, the class teacher will bring it to the attention of the Year Head. The year Head should speak to the student regarding homework and will monitor progress. Year Heads may bring homework journals to Parent/Teacher meetings as a consultative document.

Success Criteria:

- Homework is submitted on time.
- All students are completing homework to their best ability and adhering to teacher guidelines.
- Students achieve their potential in assessments and State Examinations.
- Parents are monitoring and supporting students in completing homework.
- Teachers report a visible improvement in students' homework.

This Homework Policy was approved by the Board of Management on 5/2/2026.

It will be reviewed periodically.

Signed: Paul Walsh 5

Mr Paul Walsh

Chairperson to Board of Management

Appendix 1: Study Tips

- Homework involves both written and learning work.
- Record both in student diary and tick off when completed.
- Start homework as early as possible in a quiet room, free from distractions, e.g. TV, I-pods, mobile phones. No music while studying.
- Work at a desk while studying or doing homework, never on a bed.
- Avoid pre-study delaying tactics, e.g. getting something to eat/drink/making a call.
- Start at planned time. For the first two weeks be very strict with yourself to get the routine going.
- Vary starting subjects, those you find difficult should be first or second.
- Ensure that homework for the following day is completed first.
- Structure breaks and get some fresh air. An outdoor activity is recommended.
- Mix learning and written work throughout.
- Keep actively involved as you work by:
 - Writing out notes/words on study copies
 - Summarising paragraphs in one's own words
 - Reciting or stating points aloud (close book)
 - Drawing what you have learned
 - Making up a work search
 - Testing yourself/getting a parent to do so
 - Using post-it notes on wall
- Have a reward system e.g. when homework is completed, do something enjoyable.