

Homework Policy

1. **Title of Policy:** Homework – Parents Version.
2. **Scope (whole-school):**
3. **Relationship to School's Mission/Vision/Aims:**

This policy is consistent with the Mission Statement and aims of the school, by providing for the academic development of the students, while allowing for the spiritual, social, personal and physical development of the student.
4. **Rationale:**

In Mercy College, Woodford, homework is seen as an essential part of the teaching and learning process and, as such, is a vital support to work done with pupils in the classroom. Pupils' academic achievement will be enhanced by the setting and regular marking of homework. Thus the subject teachers in this school plan and design the work to be done at home as an integral part of the topic being taught in the classroom.
5. **Goals of Homework Policy:**
 - To revise and reinforce work done in class.
 - To ensure that teachers take consistent approaches to the setting and reviewing of homework.
 - To assess/evaluate progress of students.
 - To ensure that students organise and make the proper use of their time and to develop good study habits.
 - To avoid work overload and stress on students.
 - To encourage students to work independently by doing research on their own, so as to enhance student achievement and prepare them for further education and for life.
 - To encourage parents to take an interest in and share responsibility for their child's work and progress.
6. **Policy Content:**

Homework consists of written and revision work and, possibly, project work. (Students will be informed of the DES guidelines with regard to the deadline dates for the submission of project work. It should be noted that teachers may draw up their own deadlines in advance of those set by the DES guidelines, to allow teachers to correct submissions).

 - A balanced approach is necessary between homework, extra-curricular and leisure time.

Students are encouraged to draw up a study timetable (see Appendix 1). The length of time required will vary with class and subject level. Subject Departments will make recommendations with regard to appropriate time to subject allocation. The following recommended time spent on homework should serve as a guideline:

1 st Year	_____	2 hrs
2 nd Year	_____	2.30 hrs
3 rd Year	_____	3 hrs
TY Year	_____	Projects and homework as assigned
5 th Year	_____	3 hrs
6 th Year	_____	3+ hrs

- Students will be given direction and help in homework/study skills (see Appendix 2). Every effort shall be made to allow students to take down homework in each class and in particular last class in the evening.
- Students with special needs will be given special support and consideration.
- 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 students are too tired.
- Weekend or evening jobs are discouraged particularly during exam years.
- If for any valid reason or in exceptional circumstances a student has been unable to do homework, an explanatory note/letter would be appreciated from parent/s.
- Parents will be informed if pupils do not do homework.
- It is recommended that students do homework on the night it is assigned to maximise benefits to students.
- It is the policy of the school to provide students and parents/guardians with a recommended timetable for each year group (see Appendix 1).
- From Second Year onwards, and in particular students who propose to take Higher Level in a subject, it is expected that they do written assignments of longer duration at weekends.
- 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.

Roles and Responsibilities in developing and implementing the policy:

Board of management shall –

Ensure that the policy is developed and evaluated from time to time
 Approve the policy
 Consider reports from the Principal on the implementation of the policy
 Review the policy

Principal, Deputy Principal shall –

Establish the structures and procedures for the implementation of the policy
 Monitor the implementation of the policy
 Review the policy and reports to the Board of Management

Teaching Staff shall –

Develop and implement the policy

Assign and review homework
Provide feedback to students and parents

Special Needs Assistants shall –

Oversee recording of homework in students' diary
Ensure relevant books are taken home
Assist with homework under the guidance of a teacher where time permits

Parent(s)/Guardian shall –

- 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 journal may be used for this communication
- Check homework journals on a regular basis and signs 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 journal

Student shall –

- Do homework, present it properly and co-operate with the teacher in this regard
- Bring journal to each class and places it on desk. When homework is assigned, student must record it in the journal.
- 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
- Report to the year Head/Students' Council if the amount of homework is inconsistent or considered to be unmanageable
- Produce a note from parent/s on entry to class on the occasions when the student fails to complete assigned homework. This can be recorded in the student's journal
- 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.
- Ensure that all books and copies required for the following day are in the schoolbag.

7. Implementation Procedures:

- Each class teacher shall provide students with guidelines and expectations of students' homework. Junior students will be advised on the importance of homework, the time management in relation to homework. (SPHE, Year Heads)
- Teachers should give clear instruction (preferably 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.
- An appendix will be provided, giving guidelines on the amount of time students should spend on homework at junior and senior level.

8. Success Criteria:

- Homework is handed in 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.

9. Monitoring Procedures:

The Principal, teachers, Special Needs Assistants, parents, students and the Board of Management will analyse and assess the effectiveness of the policy. The monitoring will take place on a regular basis. The Principal will report to the Board of Management on an on-going basis.

10. Review Procedures (who will do what, when):

The Principal and the Homework task group will review this policy every year. The review will take into account any issues raised throughout the year by the on-going monitoring process.

The review team will determine what changes (if any) have to be made to the policy.

11. Timeframe

This policy will come into force in September 2011.

**Appendix 2
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.
- Vary starting subjects, those you find difficult should be first or second. Ensure that homework for the following day is completed first. 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
- 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.
- Structure breaks and get some fresh air. An outdoor activity is recommended.
- Have a reward system e.g. when homework is completed, do something enjoyable.
- Get parents to sign the diary at the end of the week.