

# Homework Policy

"Each Loreto school aims to set each student on a pathway to personal excellence, recognising different aptitudes and gifts."

*Continuing the Journey .... A Loreto Education*

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Assessment Policy, the Code of Behaviour, Internet Acceptable Use Policy, Whole School Inclusion Policy.

## 1. The purpose of Homework

- It reinforces skills and understanding that students develop during the school day.
- It encourages independent thinking and self-directed learning. Students who complete homework regularly will gain the self-discipline and motivation, skills that are intrinsic to their futures as life-long learners.
- It encourages self-directed learning. Formative feedback on homework enables students to foster the essential skill of recognising areas for improvement and identifying elements of success in their own work.
- It gives students the opportunity to extend the learning they undertake during the school day, e.g. through additional reading.
- It allows parents to play a central role in their daughters' learning. Assigning homework to be completed outside of the school day ensures that parents are informed about the work that students are doing.
- It allows students to form positive working habits outside of the school day which are crucial for exam preparation.
- It fosters research skills which are an integral aspect of self-directed learning. These skills are an essential aspect of the classroom-based assessments which students complete in 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Year and are a crucial component of life beyond secondary school.

## 2. The role of the Journal

- Each student is expected to keep a record of all homework in her Journal, which is given by the school to the students specifically for this purpose.
- Journals are regularly monitored by subject teachers and the Year Head.
- Journals are available to all teachers and parents/guardians, should they wish to communicate with each other.
- A class teacher will communicate initially through the Journal if a student fails to complete their homework. These written communications should be acknowledged by a parent/guardian's signature.
- Parents/guardians are advised to check the Journal weekly to achieve an understanding of the homework that is being assigned and to alert them to any issues surrounding the completion of that homework.

## 3. Time spent on Homework

The amount of time spent on homework will vary according to each individual student's ability and will fluctuate throughout the school year due to house and state examinations or curricular requirements. If the following guidelines are adhered to, students can be confident that they are spending a sufficient amount of time on homework.

- Homework should be completed within the timeframe identified by the class teacher and should be of the highest possible standard.
- Students are expected to routinely revise all content that was covered in class.
- It is advised that students spend some time during each homework session consolidating their knowledge of the material that they encountered during that school day.
- If a student feels that she does not have an understanding of the topics covered in class, she should repeat her revision and seek additional clarification from her teacher on any areas of concern.
- At the end of each week, students should be confident that they have the required understanding of the week's content in each subject area.

Students should not be employed in part-time work during the school week.

#### **4. Responsibilities of the Student**

- It is the responsibility of the student to record all homework in their journal.
- The school expects that all homework be completed on time, presented on time and to the best of the student's ability in a neat and tidy fashion.
- If a student has been absent, the onus is on the student to establish what homework has been set and to complete it within a reasonable time frame agreed with the subject teacher.
- It is important for students to alert the teacher if they do not understand the homework that has been assigned before they leave the classroom.
- Meeting homework deadlines may not always be easy for students. They will not be excused from homework but are encouraged to inform the relevant subject teacher if they need extra help with strategies to manage the difficulty or amount of homework assigned.
- If no homework has been set, then students have an obligation to revise material they have recently covered in class to ensure that they fully understood it.
- It is the responsibility of the student to keep a copy of all completed written homework for the duration of the academic year. Some of these pieces are necessary for the classroom-based assessments which students will complete in 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Year.

#### **5. The role of Parents/Guardians in supporting Students**

- Parents/guardians are encouraged, as far as possible, to provide a peaceful, suitable place in which students can do their homework free of distractions and interruptions.
- A regular time should be set aside for homework.
- Students may attend after-school study in Loreto Abbey Dalkey.
- It is the parents'/guardians' responsibility to inform the relevant subject teacher of any reasons why a student was unable to complete a homework assignment. A parent/guardian should communicate this through the student's journal.
- If a parent/guardian feels that his/her daughter is struggling with the amount of homework or degree of difficulty of same, he/she should communicate this to the relevant subject teacher.
- Parents/guardians are expected to check the Journal every week and should sign notes from school personnel.
- Parents/guardians may communicate with the subject teacher at parent/teacher meetings regarding homework.
- For students with special educational needs, the continuing involvement of parents/guardians is particularly valuable.
- Computers and iPads are an integral part of today's educational experience and the Internet will play an integral role in homework. Parents/guardians are encouraged to monitor their daughter's use of the Internet. See the school's "Acceptable Use Policy" document.

## **6. Study Skills**

Students should have frequent and increasing opportunities to develop and consolidate their competence as independent learners. With this in mind, the following supports are offered:

- Intensive study skills programmes are organised for 3rd, 5th and 6th years.
- The Guidance Counsellor, the Learning Support team and the SPHE department address study skills for 1st and 2nd year students.
- Each individual class teacher provides regular guidance on study methods within his/her own specialist subject area.

## **7. Appropriate tasks for homework**

The range of tasks which are appropriate for students of various ages are many and varied. Classroom teachers will assign exercises through a broad selection of activities and methodologies. Such activities include but are not limited to;

- Written assignments
- Learning assignments
- Reading
- Drill practice
- A visit to a location which links to the curriculum
- Projects
- Watching a television programme
- Research tasks

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.

All tasks should have a clear objective, linked to study programmes. Teachers are encouraged to check that their overall homework programme is balanced in the type and scale of tasks manageable for students. This balance is not always possible and can vary considerably from day to day.

## **8. Special Educational Needs**

In setting homework for students with special needs teachers are encouraged to balance the right of students to share fully in the work of the class, including homework tasks, with their individual learning needs. Subject teachers will collaborate with the Learning Support team to ensure class tasks are manageable, and individual skill practice can be incorporated without overloading the student.

Where possible teachers will guide the gifted student in furthering their learning and research.

## **9. Feedback for Students**

Effective marking and feedback are fundamental to helping students make progress. Teachers check homework in a timely manner.

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
- Students write out answers in the form of a test

- Comment only marking 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 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 outlook of the Junior Cycle Framework (2015) and the completion of classroom-based assessments in 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Year. Thus, a consistent emphasis on facilitating developmental feedback is a central feature of how homework is monitored and corrected by teachers.

## **10. Feedback to Parents/Guardians**

Reporting is a crucial part of the relationship between school and parents/guardians. The following supports are offered to parents:

- Traditional school end-of-term reports that take the form of a grade or mark and a comment for each subject that acknowledges the efforts made and points to how improvements may be made where necessary.
- Parent/teacher meetings offer a valuable opportunity to present a more comprehensive assessment of progress.
- Parents/guardians are always welcome to contact teachers to discuss progress.
- As well as focusing on progress achieved, these meetings provide an opportunity to nominate areas that need specific attention and to indicate what needs to be done by teacher, parents and students to improve student performance.
- The Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement will provide information on classroom-based assessments and extra-curricular pursuits in addition to grades in state examinations. It will function as an additional and important element of feedback for parents/guardians and students.

## **11. Arrangements for monitoring and evaluating homework policy**

The effectiveness of this homework policy needs to be monitored and evaluated. It is envisaged that each subject department monitors homework within the department at subject department meetings. In addition to monitoring arrangements the homework policy needs to be reviewed within three years to assess its effectiveness. The key criterion should be the extent to which the policy is contributing to the progress students make at school and their attitude to learning.

Signed:



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Chairperson

Date: 17<sup>th</sup> April 2018