

Scoil Mhuire U.R. 11894I

Homework Policy

The process of planning for a school is a work constantly in progress, comprising research, practice and evaluation at all times. The initial stage of drawing up or customising the curriculum to suit our own needs was perhaps the most valuable and while we have updated the programmes since then, we have not completely deleted all of our original work. Rather we have sought to develop each of our policies and subject programmes, to create a framework from which each teacher can draw, a rich source of topics and methodologies rather than a rigid programme from which no one can deviate. Our approach has been that we must first and foremost value and acknowledge what is already established good practice or content and not bring in change merely for the sake of change.

We hope in this way to remain responsive to the needs of each child, the dynamics of each class group, the talents of each teacher, the current events of each year and the rich tapestry of life as it affects Scoil Mhuire.

The Cuntas Miosuil remains the tool with which we plan for each year and avoid unnecessary overlap and repetition.

In this way we hope to keep adding to or altering our Plean Scoile through constant evaluation and enthusiastic teachers meetings, thereby maintaining an energy and freshness in everything we do.

Purpose:

At Scoil Mhuire, 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 may 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, eg, nature, art, science
- activity to do with Wellbeing, SPHE and PE
- 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
- by trying to prevent interruptions or distractions:
 - like T.V.
 - computer games
 - mobile phone
 - 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 or arrange a meeting to explain the problem.

Parents should encourage their children to read every night.

They can read their:

- class reader
- Guided Reading book
- Literacy Links reader
- library book.

Indeed older children 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. Scoil Mhuire GNS 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, even with the Aladdin system and emails there may still be hard copy notes in the schoolbag.

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 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 as they learn to edit their own work.

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
- 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 or to be done in a hurry in the car. Scoil Mhuire GNS recognises the demands of the busy family and especially the demand on parents, but homework is a vital link between home and school and also a special opportunity for parents and children to spend time together and for parents to stay in tune with their child's development in language, literacy and numeracy along with all the other developments and interests of each child.

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 2015 and again in 2018

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____

Ms. J Henry
Chairperson.