

# HOMEWORK POLICY



## Introduction

Ardscoil Mhuire is an all-girls voluntary secondary school under the trusteeship of CEIST.

Ardscoil Mhuire aims to provide a Catholic environment where all persons are respected and assisted to reach their full potential. The school aims to provide a holistic education for all our students, in line with the spirit and ethos of the Mercy tradition.

This policy is a guide for students, teachers and parents/guardians on how to improve classroom learning and fulfill students' true potential. 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 Mission Statement

The school's mission statement states:

*"In this school we aim to provide a Christian environment where each person is valued and assisted to reach their full potential".*

To achieve our Mission Statement a commitment to the completion of homework is essential to enable staff to assist students reach their full potential. This commitment will as a consequence foster and enhance a student's confidence, independence and self esteem.

## Policy Rationale

Homework is an integral part of the learning process and should be given and corrected on a regular basis. It is an aid which reinforces the learning that has already taken place in the classroom and is effective in developing and fostering a closer relationship between learning in school and at home.

Home 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. Assessment for learning helps students to manage their learning. Study and revision embed that learning.

## **Goals of Homework Policy**

Ardcoil Mhuire aspires to provide a just and caring environment in which we can learn and grow to our full potential. To fulfill the Mission Statement the school adopts a caring, pastoral approach which aims to ensure a healthy and supportive learning environment. The Homework Policy is integral in achieving this goal.

To protect and enhance this approach the school asserts its right to expect high standards of effort from students when completing homework assignments.

In accordance with its Mission Statement Ardcoil Mhuire supports the idea of appropriate and relevant homework. Ardcoil Mhuire believes that homework which is graded according to ability, will help students learn and grow to their full potential.

Homework provides a valuable re-enforcement of class and other school work. It provides an opportunity to aid memory and to review work already taught. Diligent attention to homework will help students to prepare for in-school assessments and examinations as well as State examinations. Homework will also help students identify learning problems and can lead to subsequent classroom questions and reinforcement. Homework helps to introduce students to independent learning thus facilitating the transition from primary school to secondary school and from secondary school to third level education.

It is essential to recognise that homework is for the benefit of the students as it fosters student learning. Students who do not do homework or who make inadequate efforts will be disadvantaged in their learning and will not make as much progress as those students who engage with this process.

## **Rationale for Homework**

Participation and engagement with homework enables students to:

- Consolidate and reinforce what has been learned in the classroom.
- Practice existing concepts and skills.
- Ensure that there is an understanding of new concepts.
- Develop work and study skills.
- Focus on the Junior and Leaving Certificate examinations.
- Adequately prepare for class.
- Facilitate and prepare for classroom based assessments.

Homework practice is a crucial link between teaching and learning. It also acts as a continuum of learning from one day to the next. Homework serves a number of valuable purposes:

1. Enhancing learning

- Completing homework activities reinforces key learnings in the classroom. It improves student's understanding of material and work covered in class.
- Homework is an opportunity to develop exam style answers, challenging individual learning.
- It helps to build and promote confidence within students allowing them to take ownership of their own learning.
- It provides a basis for assessing if the material covered has been understood.
- Homework allows students to complete unfinished class assignments.
- Provides students with the opportunity to reflect on their learning experiences.

2. Enhancing academic performance

- Homework is a teaching tool which embeds the learning in the classroom while also preparing students for assessment. This forms a crucial part of exam preparation.
- It provides students with opportunities to develop their powers of concentration while also improving their organisation and time management skills.

3. Enhancing home and school links

- Homework provides opportunities to develop links between parents/guardians, teachers and students.
- It provides parents/guardians with opportunities to monitor their child's learning and progress.

### **The Homework Policy aims**

- To enhance the students' educational experience.

- To foster student self-discipline and self-motivation.
- To develop the students goal setting, planning and organisational skills.
- To encourage independent learning and creativity.

Within the overall context of the school's mission statement, the Homework Policy aims to support students, throughout their time in Ardscoil Mhuire, so that they learn and grow to their full potential.

**The objectives of this Homework Policy enable students to achieve the following outcomes**

- Learn and grow to their full potential.
- Feel part of a safe and inclusive learning environment.
- Value the importance of homework as part of their learning.

**Whole School Overview**

Ardscoil Mhuire wishes to emphasise that for homework, to be effective, it should be completed at home, in a homework club or during supervised evening study. Work copied from other students is of little value, as is work done in a rushed manner or left incomplete. Students should be aware of this and make a serious effort to complete and present homework on time and in the proper format. Parents/Guardians should also be aware of the importance of homework and ensure that students comply with the homework code.

The growing awareness of AI generated work has become an issue in recent years. While the value and educational benefit of AI should be acknowledged, it is important to emphasise that student dependence on it will not achieve quality learning. Homework should reflect the students' own creativity and work.

Many forms of homework may be assigned to students. Essentially homework will consist of written work and work to be read, studied, prepared or practiced. The amount of homework may vary from subject to subject.

Students may be asked to:

- Do written questions or prepare for verbal questions
- Re-read material previously taught in class or material related to that previously taught - prepare material for future class work.
- Do research and record the results
- Learn and prepare material for oral, aural or other work
- Do project and research homework
- Do questions from previous examinations

- Do revision work
- Practice diagram and/or art work
- Analyse maps, documents or pictorial material
- Summarise material
- Development of oral/listening skills
- Drafting/Writing of essays/articles/speeches/short stories/dialogues/poems
- Learning by rote
- Listening to and/or viewing radio or TV programmes/use of internet/YouTube clips etc
- Drawing and illustrating
- Making notes
- Reviewing
- Reading for pleasure
- Reading for information and memorising
- Preparation of presentations
- Practice of exam techniques
- Research/Project work
- Revision
- Visits to relevant museums, art galleries, theatre and other places of interest and relevance to subject related assignments.

This list is indicative and is not intended to exclude other forms of homework.

## **Differentiation of Homework**

Classes in Ardscoil Mhuire are of mixed ability. Teachers utilise a differentiated approach to teaching classes and setting homework. Homework is an extension of the lesson and is integrated into the plan for each lesson. In the coming academic year, work will be undertaken on how to effectively differentiate homework across each subject.

Differentiated homework involves varying the amount and/or difficulty of homework based on the ability of each student. It is important to note, however, that not all tasks lend themselves to differentiation so not every piece of homework requires variations.

Differentiated homework allows students to be focused on the same learning intention and class content but activities are varied based on the individual student's ability.

Why differentiated Homework?

- Differentiation is at the core of teaching and learning in Ardscoil Mhuire and as a result, should be reflected in homework, where possible.
- Differentiating homework caters to the varying needs of students in a classroom and provides them with effective personalised learning.
- Delivering differentiated homework activities can help improve completion rates of homework.
- Differentiation promotes an inclusive and personalised classroom i.e students' learning styles are catered to, mixed ability classes can progress at their own rate and those students with Special Educational Needs are involved in home learning so that all students can learn effectively.
- Students with learning needs/difficulties should be set homework appropriate to their ability.
- Differentiation of homework is the setting of homework tasks which match the current stage of student development and ability.
- This is particularly important in a mixed ability class setting, but it applies equally to class settings where students are grouped according to their ability level in a particular subject.
- Ideally, written homework would include graded questions incorporating those which all students must do and more challenging questions which students should be encouraged to attempt.
- Homework should be varied and manageable. It should include challenges and aim to build confidence. As confidence grows, students should be able to cope with increased depth and challenge in a wider range of questions and assignments.
- If homework is set to target all abilities appropriately, students will experience success and challenge in relation to it.
- Students with learning needs and those for whom English is not a first language should be assigned homework which is appropriate to their stage of development.
- Teachers should consult the SEN register and EAL files and consult with the SEN team for information on the most appropriate homework to assign.

## **The recommended time per day for Homework and Study**

The amount of time spent completing homework will vary depending on the nature and number of class periods per week allocated to that specific subject. The staff at Ardscoil Mhuire advises that homework is completed as soon as practicably possible. This is particularly important when several days may lapse between classes. Students are advised and strongly encouraged to complete their homework as early as possible.

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 limits for students' completion of homework in each year group:

<b>At least</b>	
First Years	1.5 hours - 2 hours
Second Years	2 hours - 2.5 hours
Third Years	3 hours - 3.5 hours
Fifth Years	3.5 hours - 4 hours
Sixth Years	4 hours - 4.5 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.

### **Study Guidelines**

- Study should be a routine practice, as much as possible, whereby students' study in the same place and at the same time each evening.
- Students should devise a timetable and decide on the length of time to be allocated to each subject.
- Students should use their journal and/or Google classroom. These resources should contain all details of homework.
- It is recommended that students study in a suitable place with:
  1. A table or some level work surface
  2. A warm and comfortable environment
  3. A good solid chair
  4. A quiet environment
  5. Good lighting
  6. Appropriate equipment e.g. pens.

Developing the habit of effective study enables students to:

- Prepare for State Examinations
- Develop revision skills which reinforce and consolidate work preparation in class.

### **Procedures**

- ✓ All students are required to do homework.
- ✓ All students must have a homework journal in which to record homework to be done on a daily basis.
- ✓ Homework comprises written, learning, project work (research from magazines, the internet, news, television, library.) Visits to businesses, museums. Planned revision and other assigned work.
- ✓ Students who are absent from class should make an effort to obtain homework from someone in their class.
- ✓ Students, who fail to do or produce homework or who fail to have essential class materials, will receive a homework memo. Receipt of a homework memo will be recorded on VShare.
- ✓ In the case of First Year students only, once a homework memo is given the letters HM, together with the teacher's initials, must be recorded in the side column of the school journal. This is in addition to recording the homework memo on VShare.
- ✓ It is essential that parents/guardians encourage and assist their daughter to develop a regular pattern of homework and study.
- ✓ Parents/Guardians will provide, in so far as possible, a suitable study area where there are no distractions such as TV, Mobile Phone and other electronic devices, visits from friends, computer games. Essential equipment e.g. pens, ruler etc and good lighting for study purposes is available.

### **Recognition of underlying roles in approaches to homework**

- Homework is an integral part of learning. It is the combined responsibility of the pupil, subject teacher and the parent/guardian.
- The teacher will set homework tasks suitable to the level and ability of the student, in order to reinforce the content of the lesson. The duration of the task should be appropriate to the level and ability of a student.
- Parents/Guardians should ensure that the student completes all homework to the best of her ability.
- The school will endeavour to assist students develop a good attitude and approach to study and homework.
- Students will record all homework in journals and will complete all homework on time and to the best of their abilities.

### **Roles and Responsibilities in relation to developing and implementing the Homework Policy**

### **The Board of Management**

The Board of Management manages the school in accordance with the Education Act (1998). The Board of Management has a responsibility to:

- Ensure that the educational provision and practice of the school is to the highest possible standard.
- Ensure the policy is regularly developed and evaluated
- Approve the policy.
- Receive reports from the Principal in the implementation of the policy.

### **Senior Management**

The Principal controls the internal organisation and management of the school, and exercises supervision over teaching and non-teaching staff.

The Principal and Senior Management team has a responsibility to:

- Ensure that the Homework Policy is implemented fully. This includes managing the process of planning in cooperation with the guidance counsellors, school staff and other school partners such as parents/guardians.
- Monitor student progress through the role of the Class Teacher and Year Head.
- Provide support through workshops, where appropriate.
- Provide students with a clear understanding of homework and expectations in relation to homework.
- Provide advice and guidance for students through the Career Guidance Counsellor and SPHE classes.
- Provide an Afterschool Study facility for all students, as per the Department of Education Guidelines.
- Provide Study Skills advice/workshops for all students.

### **Year Head**

The Year Head has the overall responsibility for a Year Group in helping students to achieve their full potential and holistic development of each pupil.

- Ensure that each student uses their homework journal to record homework.
- In the case of all students, inform parents when their daughter receives three homework memos.
- Provide the name(s) of the students who have received five homework memos to senior management
- Senior management informs parents, when their daughter receives five homework memos.

### **Subject Teachers**

The subject teacher is key in helping students to achieve their full potential and assists identifying students and giving support. Subject teachers have a key role in providing support

to students and information and advice relating to their subject disciplines and related careers.

Subject teacher has a responsibility to:

- Ensure that each student is allocated relevant homework in written, oral and practical form.
- Write assigned homework on the board a minimum of 5 minutes before the end of class.
- Explain the homework to students
- Remind students to record the topic/classwork that was completed in class should no written homework be assigned.
- Provide appropriate scaffolding/differentiated homework for students.
- Check and correct homework and provide appropriate and effective feedback to promote learning.
- Set meaningful and worthwhile homework, relating to the topic(s) covered in class to reinforce learning.

All teachers may consult with the SEN Co-ordinator on the needs of an individual student and/or refer the student to the SEN Coordinator/ Guidance Counsellor when their expertise is required with due regard to confidentiality.

### **Parents/Guardians**

This Homework Policy adopts the legal definition of parent as set down in the Education Act, 1998. The policy recognises that parents play a pivotal role in developing, promoting and supporting the growth of their child both at home and in school. Parents play a vital role in shaping their children's attitude to school. A supportive home environment shapes attitudes that promote the holistic development of the child. Parents are further encouraged to involve themselves in positive participation in school life in order to facilitate the development of mutual and beneficial links between school and home.

Parents/Guardians have a responsibility to:

- Assist students to establish a homework routine
- Ensure their daughter completes all homework to the best of her ability.
- Encourage and support their daughter in the completion of the assigned homework.
- Provide a quiet and appropriate environment conducive to undertaking quality study and homework. If it's not possible to provide at home, after school study is available to all students in the school from Monday to Friday inclusive.
- Check homework each night.
- Inform the teacher of any difficulties by means of a written note in the school journal or through the School App. .
- Communicate, via the School Journal/School App, all other issues pertaining to the completion of homework.
- Sign their daughter's school journal on a weekly basis.
- Ensure that part-time jobs held by students do not interfere with the completion of

homework and revision.

## **Students**

This Homework Policy seeks to meet the needs of all students and their right to participate in and benefit from the education process. It aims to get students to focus on their personal responsibility for their own behaviour and to experience the value of being a responsible and participatory member of the school community. Students have an important part to play in creating and sustaining a positive atmosphere of mutual trust and respect that nurtures teaching and learning.

### **Students have the responsibility to:**

- Develop good work habits in terms of organisation and presentation.
- Follow direction from teachers in relation to undertaking homework.
- Ask the teacher for clarification if unsure how to complete the assigned homework.
- Record all homework in the school journal.
- Record homework that spans over several days (e.g. project or essay). The homework should still be written into the journal each day, i.e. students should write 'continue with project work'.
- Find out homework when absent from class due to extra-curricular activity.
- Check Google Classroom on a daily basis
- Complete homework to the best of their abilities.
- Submit homework on time.
- Attempt all the assigned homework.
- Share their journal with their parents/guardians to communicate homework received and completed.
- Get journals signed at the end of the week by a parent/guardian (Students in Junior Cycle). Senior Cycle students should take autonomy for their own learning and independently record homework in their journals.
- Have the necessary materials, books and copies with them for the completion of homework.

### **Evening Study:**

- Study is an integral and intrinsic part of a student's routine. It is an opportunity to revise material covered in class, complete assigned homework and prepare for

upcoming assessments.

- Supervised 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.
- After school 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.

### **Implementation Procedures:**

1. Pupils record all homework/work covered in class in their School Journal.
2. Teachers allow time, at an appropriate period during class, for same.
3. Parents and teachers check homework.
4. Class Teachers and Year Heads regularly monitor School Journals for homework entries and parents/guardians signatures.
5. Subject departments and class teachers illustrate learning strategies relevant to their subjects.
6. Study support is also provided.

### **Success Criteria:**

There is a genuine attempt made by the pupil to complete the homework to the best of his/her ability and to submit the work at a pre-agreed time.

### **Monitoring Procedures:**

1. Parents to check homework each night.
2. Subject Teacher to monitor homework in each class.
3. Parents to inform the teacher of any difficulties by means of a written note.
4. All communication pertaining to homework issues are made via the School Journal.

### **Review and Audit**

- Homework is checked and corrected in class.
- Copies/work submitted are corrected
- In House Exams
- Regular Class Assessment. These should be signed by parents/guardians and returned to the teacher for record purposes.
- State Exams for Exam Classes.
- Parent Teacher Meetings
- Parents are informed by school reports and parent teacher meetings.
- Reports are reviewed by school management prior to being dispatched to parents.

## **Home School & Community Liaison Co-Ordinator**

In line with the vision and values of the HSCL scheme, the HSCL Coordinator shall encourage, support and facilitate partnership between parents and teachers to enhance the education of children through building bonds of trust between home and school. By working with staff to develop an understanding of educational disadvantage the HSCL shall promote innovative approaches and methodologies to address it.

A focus of the work of the HSCL is to actively develop and promote parental involvement as an integral part of the SSE / DEIS planning process and in their work, to support the development, implementation and review of the whole school.

The HSCL will also support the establishment and further development of links between primary schools, parents, families, schools and communities to support children across the education continuum.

## **School Completion Programme**

The School Completion Programme (SCP) was set up as part of Department of Education and Skills (DES) DEIS Strategy - Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools.

Its aim is to increase the numbers of young people staying in primary and second level school and in doing so improve the numbers of pupils who successfully complete Senior Cycle, or the equivalent.

In Ardscoil Mhuire, the SCP co-ordinator and SCP team/project workers focus on targeting and providing supports to young people identified to be most at risk of early school leaving and includes:

Identifying and supporting children at risk of not reaching their potential in the educational system because of poor attendance, participation and retention via initiatives such as:

- o after school supports
- o mentoring programmes
- o therapeutic interventions
- o summer activity programmes

## **Care Team**

The School Care Team is made up of Senior Management, Guidance Counsellor, HSCL Officer, SCP co-ordinator and SENc Coordinator. The Team meets regularly to review the needs of students. The Team strives to provide a response to students needs and is a forum for sharing information and concerns in a safe and confidential setting. What is discussed at Care Team

Meetings relating to individual cases is confidential to the team and any follow up required is decided upon and assigned to a member of the team.

## **Related Policies**

This policy document may be read in conjunction with the following:

- Guidance and Student support Plan
- Special Educational Needs (SEN) Policy
- GDPR Policy
- Mission Statement
- Code of Behaviour
- Wellbeing Plan

Signed: Sr. Ena Quinalan

Date: 3rd June 2025

