

HOMEWORK

Parents and teachers are fundamental partners in the child's education. Homework is an integral link in the chain of partnership and communication between school and home. School management believes that it is in the best interests of the child to give the opportunity of homework as they believe that it is an integral part of a child's education – forming and shaping learning habits for life.

The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA), believe the following about homework:

- It offers an opportunity for a more meaningful dialogue between home & school. Homework helps students to construct knowledge, develop deeper understandings and connections amongst the concepts to which they have been introduced, and provides an opportunity for them to apply the skills they have acquired. It helps students to develop and sustain good study habits. It fosters positive values such as self-discipline, responsibility, and an interest in learning, which will benefit them throughout their lives.
- The NCCA recognise four types of homework assignment:
 - Preparation
 - Practice
 - Extension
 - Creative/enrichment

The purpose of homework at St. Matthew's N.S. is:

- To consolidate/reinforce the skills or concepts being learnt in school
- To keep parents in touch and involved in their children's work
- To develop and encourage the habit of independent study
- To enable children to develop a sense of responsibility and independence
- To enhance self-esteem and independence through the provision of a work menu that is do-able
- To promote consistency and a uniform approach to homework across all classes
- To assess the child's ability to complete a task in isolation from the support of his/her class teacher
- To further develop the partnership between home and school by communicating the content of work the child is covering and the progress he/she is making

A HOMEWORK SAMPLE

Please note, as a part of a child's homework, they should make sure that they are prepared for the next school day – sharpened pencils, all items returned into folder/school bag etc.

The majority of homework set from Monday to Wednesday tends to be either preparation or practice homework. This preparation/practice enables the teacher to build on and extend concepts in the classroom when the child has access to them. On a Thursday, the teacher will endeavour to give a different homework task, for example an art or History/ Geography/ Science activity; perhaps homework will be an oral presentation or a physical activity.

The class teacher will always endeavour to differentiate homework tasks - challenge the individual child who is finding the concept easy and support the child who is struggling. If a parent feels that their child requires further extension or support, they should speak to the class teacher.

Learning/Reading Homework

Please be aware that the learning and reading homework tasks are as, if not more important than written tasks. Equal time should be given to these.

This is a sample of what homework may look like in a classroom.

Junior Infants	Weekly <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sightwords, Dolch words & individual reading • Sound Copy • 1 task – English/Maths/Creative/Motor skills etc
Senior Infants	Weekly <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sightwords, Dolch words & individual reading • Sound Copy • 1 or 2 tasks – English/Maths/Creative/Motor skills etc • Spellings (after Christmas)
1st & 2nd Class	Daily <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maths/English/SESE/learning poetry/Other Task • Individual Reading (Reader, Sightwords & Dolch words) • Spellings • Mental Maths • Tables (addition/subtraction/fraction facts etc)
3rd & 4th Class	Daily <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English/Irish/Maths/SESE/learning poetry/Other Task • Spellings • Mental Maths • Irish Spellings & vocabulary • Individual Reading • Tables (multiplication/division/fraction facts etc) • Project Work – other tasks will reduce in line with project work.
5th & 6th Class	Daily <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 or 2 English/Irish/Maths/SESE/learning poetry/Other Tasks • Spellings • Mental Maths • Irish Spellings & vocabulary • Individual Reading • Tables (multiplication/division/fraction facts etc) • Project Work – other tasks will reduce in line with project work.

SPELLINGS

Please note, learning spellings are as important as the written and reading task. The method for learning spellings is Look, Say, Cover, Write Check

TIME

The length of time spent doing homework tasks is at a parent's discretion, as we understand that each home is different. We do however recommend the following homework times in order that the child reaches their full potential.

- Infants 10 – 20 minutes
- 1st & 2nd Class 20 – 30 minutes
- 3rd & 4th Class 30 – 40 minutes
- 5th & 6th Class 40 – 60 minutes

If a child is struggling with homework or if parent believes that a child requires additional extension homework or if there is conflict/tension with homework, the parent should speak to their child's class teacher so that a solution may be found.

THE HOMEWORK JOURNAL

First Class – Sixth Class

The homework journal is a key element in the homework process and it is vital that children learn to use it correctly as it is key forming future study and organisational habits.

- It should be recorded neatly and accurately. In younger classes, the teacher will support this.
- It should be signed by a parent/guardian Monday – Thursday.
- The date should be recorded each day
- It should be used as a means of communication between the parent/guardian and teacher.

GUIDELINES FOR TEACHERS

- Homework should be meaningful for the teacher and student, it should be an integral part of the subject being taught and given in order to consolidate a concept – not as an exercise in isolation.
- Homework should serve to reinforce work done in class and that it should act as a bridge between the work one day and the next.
- Homework should never be given unless the teacher has thoroughly prepared and explained what is to be done.
- Homework must be consistent in volume – a small amount and given in such a way as to form a pattern for the children so that they are more likely to remember it.
- Feedback should always be given to a child regarding homework. This is extremely important if it is an ongoing task such as a project or a write a book activity.
- Check that homework is being done and give extra help where difficulties occur. Likewise, extend the work of the child who is finding the tasks too easy.

EXPECTATIONS OF PUPILS

- Return their homework on time

- Complete & present their homework to the best of their ability
- Give equal time to study tasks, learning spellings, tables and written tasks, as learning is as important as writing.
- If homework has not been completed, pupils must bring a note to school explaining why the task is incomplete.

GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS

The school encourages the active involvement of parents in enabling their child to take responsibility and work independently. Parents are encouraged to:

- Establish a set routine and time for your child to do his/her homework (please see below)
- Supervise children's homework, checking and signing the homework journal daily on completion
- Be a resource for your child, but don't hover over him or her with constant advice or do their work for your son/daughter. Remember that sometimes the best help is a hug, a smile, or a word of approval.
- Forward a note to the teacher if homework has not been completed due to unforeseen circumstances.
- Remember that time devoted to reading and learning is as important as written work.
- If homework causes stress or worry to the child, parents are encouraged to convey these anxieties to the class teacher.
- Please sign the homework diary. This acts as a means of communication between class teacher and parent.

Please Note:

- Shared reading is not homework in the regular sense and it is simply meant to be an enjoyable exercise between parent and child.
- Homework is not linked to behaviour but occasionally pupils are rewarded with reduced homework.

CREATING THE HOMEWORK HABIT

Family situations, each one unique, undoubtedly influence a child's approach to homework and learning. Parents can help children develop good working habits. Please show your child that homework is an important priority and you value its worth by offering the following kinds of support.

- Sit down with your child and together schedule a time for completing homework assignments. Homework habits are more easily formed if children work at the same time each day.
- Help your child choose an appropriate study location – a quiet, distraction free place, a desk or table for written work or a comfortable chair for reading.
- Provide your child with good lighting and necessary materials such as pencils, coloured pencils, paper and a dictionary.
- Ask your child to describe the assignment before beginning and later show you the completed work or summarize what he or she learned.
- If your child does need help, look over the material before you begin so you are familiar with the assignment.
- If your child becomes frustrated put the assignment away for a while.
- Please be available to check whether the assignment has been completed.

- Praise your child for completing homework.
- When possible, help your child relate homework assignments to everyday life and skills.

In general, be encouraging and supportive, your attitude is contagious.