

## *Homework Policy of Knockminna N.S.*

### **Introduction:**

Following feedback from a school questionnaire on uniform, homework and healthy eating in January 2004, a homework policy was drawn up outlining detailed procedures with regard to homework in our school. Another questionnaire was drawn up and made accessible to parents online in 2018. Some amendments were made to the original policy when feedback was collated.

### **Rationale:**

A homework policy is deemed necessary in our school as homework practices seem to vary greatly from one child to another and from one family to another. The views of the current cohort of parents on homework were needed to inform school policy-making in an effort to streamline these practices and define procedures and expectations.

### **Relationship to Characteristic Spirit of the School:**

In keeping with the school mission statement, the staff wish to have a well ordered environment in which the pupils can work, where all the partners involved are aware of what procedures are expected of them. Homework is viewed in Knockminna N.S. as a way in which close contact and partnership is maintained between school and home.

### **Aims:**

1. To have clear procedures regarding homework
2. To have a uniform school approach to homework
3. To keep parents in touch with and involved in their child's school-work so that progression and/or difficulty may be observed or detected.
4. To create good home/school links.
5. To cultivate in children the concept of individual study and increase their awareness of the role that they themselves play in their own education and progress.

### **Why should homework be given?**

A high percentage (69.1%) of the parent/guardian body of the pupils of Knockminna N.S. who filled our questionnaire expressed the opinion that homework is beneficial. Of the 69 respondents; the following is the breakdown of how these parents see homework as beneficial:

- 80% say that it forms good habits
- 74% say that it links school and home

- 70% say that it develops study skills
- 62% say that it reinforces learning
- 62% say that it develops concentration
- 8% see other benefits such as, it being good for parents and children to sit down together; allowing parents to follow progress and highlighting when children are struggling in a particular area and need help

**Procedures to be followed:**

1. Homework will be based on school work and not given in isolation. It is given in order to refresh, revise, consolidate and extend (particularly at senior level) what has been taught at school.
2. The teacher will explain the work to be done.
3. Homework should be consistent and form a pattern so that children know what is expected of them on a daily basis.
4. 97.1% of questionnaire respondents agree that our policy of no homework on the weekend should remain in place. Homework, therefore, is given from Monday – Thursday inclusive. Weekends are free except for correction work or catching up on incomplete or missed school work.
5. There are a two exceptions to the free weekend policy and these include:
  - Some project work may be undertaken at weekends.
  - Weekend homework may be given as a sanction
6. Parents are encouraged to monitor their child’s work to ensure that the standard of work is consistent with school work. Parents are also encouraged to check and/or sign their child’s homework notebook on a daily basis to ensure that the child is doing all the work assigned by the teacher.
7. Parents’ help is invaluable with regard to hearing reading or learning tasks which are given as homework. Help should not be given by parents to the children when doing written tasks except when there is difficulty and then providing direction and more examples only, not by actually doing the task for the child. In the event of the child still unable to complete their homework, a note should be sent to school explaining the incomplete task.
8. Notes should be sent to the school explaining incomplete homework e.g:
  - due to family circumstances
  - child not understanding some aspect of the assigned work
  - much longer time being spent than is recommended for the child’s particular class level

9. Teachers will try to correct homework on a daily basis but as children progress through the school, homework may be checked less often i.e: every second day / every week. This will arise particularly where homework is given in a subject area which will not be taught again for a number of days e.g.: history/geography. Children themselves may engage in self checking of homework under the direction of the teacher.
10. The school advises parents and children that homework should be done completely free from distractions and it is also recommended that it be done as early as possible in the evening.
11. On occasion, at the discretion of the class teacher or the Principal, children may be given 'homework off' as a treat, reward or acknowledgement of some special occasion.
12. Taking into consideration the responses of those who completed the recent questionnaire, the following are the newly amended times which the school suggests that children should spend on homework:

Jun & Sen Infants	10 - 20 mins
1 <sup>st</sup> & 2 <sup>nd</sup> Class	20 - 30 mins
3 <sup>rd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> Class	30 - 45 mins
5 <sup>th</sup> & 6 <sup>th</sup> Class	45 - 60 mins

This will be adjusted to suit children with individual needs or difficulties. The school advises that children at the senior end of the school would become accustomed to spending this amount of time on homework and study as the demands on them will increase when they move on to post-primary school and they should have good habits formed by that stage.

### **Content of Homework:**

- a) Ideally, homework will contain a balance between reading tasks, learning tasks and written tasks. This balance is not always possible and will vary from day to day and week to week. Parents and pupils are made aware that time devoted to reading and learning is as important as written work.
- b) Quality rather than quantity of homework is advocated.
- c) A large percentage of parents report that they regularly see their children doing reading, written work, maths activities and spelling. Homework will however, contain some of the following elements at various times : - reading, literacy activities, spelling, written work, tables, numeracy activities, memorisation, physical education, drawing/colouring, research, collecting information/items, corrections, catching up on missed work and finishing school-work.

- d) Homework will be differentiated so that it is achievable for each child at their own particular level to allow self-esteem to build.

**Resources:**

- Homework notebooks
- Textbooks and reference books
- Photocopied materials
- Spelling books/lists
- Table books/sheets
- drawing/colouring materials
- literacy/numeracy activities

**Roles and responsibilities:**

It is the responsibility of the class teacher, the Principal, the B.O.M., the pupils and the parents of the pupils in the school to see that this policy is implemented.

It is the responsibility of the class teacher and Principal to monitor the success of the implementation in the following ways:-

- smooth homework procedures in place
- close liaison between home and school
- equal emphasis being placed on non-written as on written work
- children actively involved in their own educational progress

**Review:**

This policy will be reviewed if circumstances change or as the need arises.