***Policy on Homework***

***Saint Michael’s N.S.***

***Castletown Geoghegan***

**Homework Policy**

As a general guideline all the children in the school are given homework each night. Naturally the amount of homework varies according to the different classes. Parents are asked to ensure that their children complete their homework. In the event of the homework not being attempted or completed, teachers may insist that the homework is completed by the child during break or the following night. Repeated failure to attempt or complete homework will result in a serious breach of the Code of Discipline and will be dealt with accordingly (please see Code of Behaviour and Discipline).

**Why give homework?**

* To reinforce what a child learns during the day.
* To develop a child’s concentration skills and develop a work ethic.
* Homework is meant to be achievable by the child i.e. it provides an opportunity to practice work already undertaken in the classroom. It is normally prepared by the class teacher in the classroom. However, sometimes with senior classes, some homework is designed to challenge children’s ability and provides opportunities for creativity.
* Children are expected to do their homework to the best of their individual ability – no more, no less.

**How often is homework given?**

* Homework is generally given on weekdays.
* Homework at weekends is at the discretion of individual teachers but generally there is no weekend homework. However, there are two exceptions:
  + if homework has been neglected during the week or poor behaviour
  + in the senior classes some project work may be undertaken at weekends.
* Sometimes at the discretion of the teacher or the principal children may be given homework off as a treat to acknowledge some achievement or special occasion.
* Please note extra homework may be sometimes given during the week or at the weekend if a child has not done homework during the week or made a satisfactory effort to complete the work. Also untidy work presented may warrant same.

**What is the content of homework?**

* Ideally homework will contain a balance between reading, learning and written tasks.
* This balance is not always possible and may vary from day to day. Homework devoted to reading and learning is as important as written work.
* Homework will regularly contain:
  + reading
  + spellings
  + tables
  + written work in both English and/or Irish
  + mathematics

Sometimes homework will contain such items as

* + learning by heart e.g. poetry/filíocht
  + prayers
  + drawing/colouring
  + collecting information/pictures
  + use of internet
  + typing
  + local knowledge
  + finishing work begun in class

Children often feel that reading and ‘learning by heart’ is not real homework. Parents can play an important role in listening to reading and item to be learned.

**How much homework? (Time)**

The following are guidelines for time spent at homework. Different children will complete the same homework in different time spans. Time spent will vary from day to day and also at 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 on which we try to operate.

* Junior Infants 0 - 10 minutes
* Senior Infants up to 20 minutes
* Rang 1 25 minutes
* Rang 2 30 minutes
* Rang 3 40 minutes
* Rang 4 50 minutes
* Rang 5 1 hour
* Rang 6 1 hour 10 minutes

**How much help should parents give?**

Parents should try to help their children with homework by:

* Providing a suitable place and time for them
* Preventing interruptions or distractions such as TV, play stations, other children, etc.
* Children should do written homework themselves and parents should only help when the child is in difficulty.
* If a child has difficulty with homework, the parents should help the child to overcome the difficulty with further examples without actually doing it.
* Shared reading is not homework in the regular sense and is simply meant to be an enjoyable exercise between parent and child. If it’s not enjoyable, shared reading should not be done.

**How often should parents monitor homework?**

* Parents should check and/or sign their child’s homework journal every evening.
* The journal or homework notebook is an important record of the child’s homework. It is also a valuable means of communication between parents and teachers.
* Parents should ensure that the child records the homework neatly and ticks each item of homework when completed.
* Letters to parents or items of information are folded and placed in the current day of the homework journal. Please check the journal for such notes on a regular basis.

**How often do teachers monitor homework?**

* Ideally teachers like to check homework on a daily basis. However, with large class numbers, it is not always possible to check every item of each child’s homework every day.
* As children get older and learn to work independently some items of homework are checked less for their full content but always that they are completed.
* Some items of homework (and class work) may be checked by the children themselves under the supervision of the teacher. In like manner, children may check other childrens’ homework (and class work). This can be a useful part of the learning process for children.

**When should parents communicate with teachers about homework?**

* When their child cannot do homework due to family or any other mitigating circumstances.
* When their child cannot do homework because he/she cannot understand some aspect.
* If the time being spent at homework is consistently longer than the recommended guidelines for that class.

**When should homework be done?**

* Each family situation is different; both parents working, child minders, etc. Ideally homework should be done in a structured manner and at a set time each evening before any television is watched and soon after school while the child is still fresh. However, some children need a break before starting homework.
* Homework should never be left until morning time before school.

If homework is constantly a stressful experience between parent and child something is wrong! This leads to poor learning and defeats the purpose. Should this happen on a regular basis parents should contact their class teacher.

**Remember:**

* Homework becomes a habit.
* It should not be constantly stressful for children or parents.
* Tensions will arise at times.
* Homework is for the child.
* Pride should be taken in its completion.
* Feel free to contact the teacher.
* It is important.

**Conclusion:**

This policy and guidelines have been prepared based on the conditions and attitudes in the school at the time of writing. It may be altered, revised and updated to comply with any changes in conditions, legal requirements or any recommendations from the Board of Management.

Ratified by the Board of Management on: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Principal