

Scoil Naomh Eltin

Homework Policy



Introductory Statement:

Scoil Naomh Eltin's Enrolment Policy was formulated during in the school year 2014/2015 involving consultations amongst staff, parents and Board of Management members.

Homework fosters independence, self-reliance, self-esteem, co-operation, responsibility and lifelong learning. It is a significant part of primary education as it re-enforces what children learn in school. It provides a link between teacher and parent and encourages parental involvement in a child's education.

Rationale:

Scoil Naomh Eltin's Homework Policy can be attributed to the following

1. Further strengthening of home –school links
2. Reinforcing the learning experience of the child during the school day
3. Ensuring clarity as to the recommended time to be spent on homework

Relationship with the characteristic spirit of the school:

Scoil Naomh Eltin's Attendance Policy is linked to its Vision and Mission Statements :

Vision Statement:

In Scoil Naomh Eltin, we are committed to nurturing the full potential of all who work and learn in our school community in a positive, inclusive, safe and happy environment.

Mission Statement:

In our School Mission Statement we commit ourselves to:

- Provide a comprehensive, inclusive and accessible education of the highest quality, which will enable all our pupils to develop to their full potential as persons – spiritually, socially, morally, physically and academically.
- Create a pleasant and orderly environment in which children feel happy and secure, self-esteem is fostered, make progress in their school work and the uniqueness of each child is recognised and valued.

- Welcome and respect diversity of belief and ethnicity
- Provide a general, balanced education dedicated to the development of the whole child so as to prepare him/her for the demands of further education, life and the rapidly changing society in which we live.

Aims:

Why give homework?

1. To reinforce all that the child learns during the school day
2. To provide a link between teacher, parent and child
3. To develop a child's concentration skills and work ethic
4. To develop independent work habits

What is expected?

Children are expected to do their homework to the best of their ability – no more, no less. In general, homework is meant to be achievable by a child i.e. it provides an opportunity to practise work already understood. It is normally prepared by the teacher in class. However, some homework is designed to challenge children's ability and provide opportunities for creativity. This may arise more frequently in the senior classes.

When is homework given?

Homework is given from Monday to Thursday but normally not at weekends. There are some exceptions

- a) Homework may sometimes be given at the weekend if a child fails to do his/her homework, presents incomplete or untidy homework
- b) In senior classes, project work may be undertaken at the weekends
- c) Sometimes children are given 'homework off' as a treat or a reward in acknowledgement of some special occasion
- d) Homework is not given on the feast day of Naomh Eltin, December 11th.

What is the content of homework?

- a) Typically homework will contain a balance between reading tasks, learning tasks and written activity
- b) This balance is not always possible and can vary considerably from day to day. However it should be noted that homework time devoted to reading and learning is as important as written tasks

- c) Homework will regularly contain reading, spellings, tables, written work, pieces to be memorised, drawing/colouring, collecting information/items and finishing work started in class
- d) Children often feel that reading and memorisation work is not 'real homework'. Parents can play an important role in listening to reading and checking memorisation work, ensuring that all work is done well.

How much time should be spent on homework?

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 year. It is important to remember that it is the quality and not the quantity of homework that matters. The following are guidelines only.

Junior Infants:	10-20 minutes
Senior Infants:	10-20 minutes
First Class:	20-30 minutes
Second Class:	20-30 minutes
Third Class:	30-45 minutes
Fourth Class:	30-45 minutes
Fifth Class:	45-60 minutes
Sixth Class:	45-60 minutes

The upper time limit at each class level indicates the maximum amount of time that a child should be expected to spend at his/her homework. If the upper limit is regularly exceeded and/or homework is becoming a very stressful and upsetting experience for the child, parents are encouraged to discuss the matter with the child's teacher. This can be done by appointment (see Home-School Communication Policy).

How much help should parents give?

- a) Parents should try to help their child with homework by
 - 1) Providing them with a suitable place and regular time to do their homework
 - 2) Preventing interruptions and distractions
- b) Children should do written homework themselves and parents should only help when the child is experiencing difficulty

- c) If a child has difficulty, the parents should help the child to overcome the difficulty with further explanation or example, but not by actually doing the homework for the child. In this case the parent should write a note to the class teacher explaining the problem
- d) Shared/paired reading is not homework in the regular sense and it is simply meant to be an enjoyable experience between parent and child
- e) In general, parents are encouraged to talk positively to their children about homework and to emphasise the value of the homework activity.

How often should parents monitor homework?

- a) Parents should check and sign their child's Homework Journal every evening, from Monday to Thursday. At Infant level, Homework Folders are used rather than Homework Journals.
- b) The pupil's Homework Journal is an important record of the child's homework. It is also a valuable means of communication between parents and teachers. Ideally, all written messages for a child's teacher should be put in the Homework Journal. A note is expected from parents if full homework is not completed by the child
- c) Parents should check that their child records homework neatly in the correct page and ticks each item of homework when completed
- d) Family Notes and other documentation to parents are placed in the current week of the child's Homework Journal.

How often do teachers monitor homework?

- a) Typically teachers check homework on a daily basis
- b) As children get older and learn to work independently, some items of homework are checked less often e.g. every second day or once a week
- c) Some items of homework may be checked by children themselves under the direction of the teacher. This can be a useful part of the learning process for children
- d) A teacher will place a note in the Homework Journal if homework is not completed and in the absence of a note from parents.

What happens when homework is not done?

When homework is not done regularly, the teacher arranges to meet with child and parents with a view to clarifying the situation. If the problem continues, then the matter is brought to the attention of the Principal who will contact the parents and arrange a meeting to discuss how the matter can be resolved.

When should parents communicate with the teacher about homework?

- a) When their child cannot do homework due to family circumstances.

- b) When their child cannot do homework because she/he cannot understand some aspect of it.
- c) If the time spent at homework is repeatedly longer than the recommended amount of time.

Homework and the Weight of Schoolbags:

Pupils should only bring home the books needed for their homework so that the weight of each child's schoolbag is kept to a minimum.

Children attending Resource, Learning Support or EAL Teacher:

Children may have certain items of homework set by the Resource Teacher / Learning Support Teacher/EAL Teacher, in agreement with the class teacher.

When should homework be done?

Each family situation is different. The best timing of homework will be decided within each family. Ideally, homework should be done earlier rather than later. However, it should also be noted that some children need a break before starting homework. Homework should never be left until morning time before school.

Remember: If homework is regularly a stressful experience for the parent and child, the matter needs to be reviewed. Alternative arrangements within the home setting might be considered and contact with the class teacher might also be of benefit. Teachers in Scoil Naomh Eltin appreciate the considerable efforts of parents with their child's homework and understand the commitment it requires in busy families, especially when a number of children need to have homework supervised and checked.

Success Evaluation of Policy:

Indicators of the success of the policy are:

- Feedback from teachers, pupils, parents, Home/School Community
- Satisfactory homework exercises and assignments submitted by pupils.

Review of Policy:

This Policy is subject to review at the discretion of the Board of Management and will be kept under on-going review.

Availability of Policy:

This Homework Policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website (www.scoilnaomheltin.ie) and a copy was provided to the Parent Association.

Ratification of Policy:

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on Tuesday, September 30th 2014.

Sr. Mary Donovan
Chairperson, Board of Management