



Maryfield College

HOMEWORK POLICY

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Ratified by the BOM March 2006

In Maryfield College we believe that it is through our relationships with others that we grow to our full potential. Therefore we aspire to create an educational environment where pupils come to learn and to understand themselves, their abilities and their world. In this environment they learn to take responsibility for themselves and others and so can become independent adults. All the partners in education believe that homework is an essential part of the learning process.

A written Homework policy is needed to ensure that school values and principles are reflected in all our procedures. The policy supports parents in their responsibilities regarding their daughter's progress in school it sets out guidelines for pupils. It is useful to teachers to ensure best practice in the marking and setting of homework.

The goal of the policy is in short to maximise the benefits from homework for both teachers and pupils. It has been developed in consultation with all the partners in the school; Staff, Parents and Pupils.

WHY HOMEWORK?

- Homework reinforces new concepts taught in class.
- It is a vital link between home and school
- It helps pupils prepare for the next lessons
- It gives an opportunity to practice newly-acquired skills
- It helps retain and gain a deeper understanding of work covered in class
- Revision is made easier
- It can be tailored to the needs of individual pupils



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- Completed homework provides valuable feedback to teachers about
- the progress of pupils and their own delivery of a topic.

What is homework?

Homework takes different forms and these include

- Short written answers to be completed each night
- Short exercises aimed at practising new skills/applying new concepts
- Writing answers in workbook
- Drawings, diagrams or maps
- Longer written answers which may be completed over longer time frame
- Essays
- Project work that may extend over a few weeks
- Practising or completing art work
- Researching
- Memory work involving recapping and learning material covered in class
- Gathering materials ideas for art/home economics



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Getting organised

All the partners in education agree that it is essential for pupils to keep a homework journal. Most students feel that this is the key to being organised. Pupils must have their journal on their desk for every class and should record homework both written and memory work for all their subjects. Before a student leaves school she should check the journal to make sure she has all the books she needs to complete her homework.

It is agreed that teachers need to write homework on the board, to allow time in class for pupils to record the homework in the journal and to explain the requirements of the work. Teachers may also use the journal to communicate feedback both positive and negative to parents.

Homework assigned over a long time frame should be started the day it is given to avoid congestion and panic later on.

Parents need to provide a quiet space in the home where a student can work; ideally a desk and chair in a room with good lighting, heating and ventilation. Distractions like TVs CDs mp3 players, iPODS etc should be discouraged. Mobile phones should be on silent. Parents can monitor the students by examining the journal and in doing this take an active part in their daughter's homework. Junior pupils, especially, benefit from guidance in areas like time-management, presentation, memory work. Senior pupils appreciate interest rather than specific involvement by their parents in the work.

Maryfield College also offers for a small fee supervised study facilities. Demand for places is strong so priority is given to exam classes.

Written work

Written work should be presented as neatly as possible and completed within the stated time frame. It should carry a title and date. Teachers differ in how they request homework to be completed. For example some teachers ask for a special homework copy while others might prefer the answers on loose leaf A4 sheets. Whatever the requirement it must be made clear to the pupils. Pupils in turn should make every effort to present homework in the required way.



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Memory /Learning work

This is as important and often more important than written work. Every subject teacher requests that this is done in preparation for the next class. Students often leave this to last and find it more challenging than written work. In SPHE classes students are helped to develop strategies and skills that can be used in doing this type of homework. The school also organises Study Skills seminars for 2nd and 5th Year pupils. Parents can help students in checking their recall of material that was covered in class. Teachers usually spend some time at the beginning of a class period questioning all or some pupils on the previous day's material. All these strategies help to re enforce and develop understanding.

Feedback

One of the benefits of homework is that it gives feedback to pupils and to teachers on progress. Homework (written or oral) allows teachers assess their own delivery of a topic and the progress of their pupils. Pupils can also learn from feedback and assess their own progress.

Feedback by teachers takes the form of

- General comments for all the class to clarify or to re-present an element of the material or to correct a mistake made by a large number
- Comments at end of work or in margin
- Written correction of error especially in language homework
- A grade written at the end work.

Teachers at all times try to encourage effort and let pupils know what is good about their work while at the same time indicating where improvement is needed. Pupils should try to learn from the homework feedback so that they develop what is good and not repeat mistakes the next time.



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Time spent on homework

It is difficult to prescribe exactly how long students should spend on homework. It varies from pupil to pupil, from subject to subject and from day to day. The following is a guideline only but may be of benefit to parents. Spending too long is as much a reason for concern by parents as spending too little time. Above all it is the quality of the time spent which determines the benefits of homework.

Year Group	Time (Homework and Revision)
1 st Year	1 to 2 hours a night
2 nd year	2 hours
3 rd Year	2 hours and more as exams approach
4 th	Varies too much
5 th Year	2.5 to 3 hours
6th Year	2.5 to 4 hours and more as exams approach

Sometimes teachers ask students to start their homework before the end of class. This is beneficial as it allows time for student to ask questions and clarify what is to be done. First year pupils often do some of their written homework in the library at lunchtime.