



Maryfield College Homework Policy

1. Introduction

Maryfield College is a voluntary secondary school founded by the Sisters of the Cross and Passion and under the trusteeship of Le Chéile Schools Trust. This Homework Policy has been developed following consultation between students, staff, parents, Principal and Board of Management.

This policy recognises the need for the school to have a policy document that ensures that the schools' values and principles as described in our mission statement are reflected in our rationale and procedures for assigning homework. The policy supports parents in their responsibilities regarding their child's progress in school and it acts as a guide for students regarding the expectations placed on them and responsibilities they have for completion of homework.

The overall aim of the policy is to allow for a shared understanding between teachers, students, and parents of the benefits and importance of homework, the variety of forms which homework can take, and the standards that are expected of students. This policy also advises students and parents on the actions to take when homework assignments are challenging for students.

Finally, this policy aims to align with the eight key skills of Junior Cycle. Effective procedures and practices for homework and learning allow all eight key skills to be developed. We pay particular attention to the key skill of Staying Well as it aims to develop student positivity about their learning and confidence.

This Homework Policy will be reviewed regularly, as directed by the Board of Management. In this policy document the term 'parent' is taken to include 'guardian'.

2. Our Mission Statement

We acknowledge 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 are taught to take responsibility for themselves and for their behaviour.

We, in the school community, are guided by the teaching of Jesus, who urged us to love God and one another as oneself, as a way of life that would bring us to self-fulfilment.

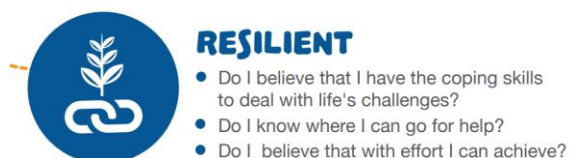
We teach and learn respect for one another and our world, accept our differences and acknowledge our interdependence. In doing so, particular attention is paid to those in most need of our help.

Maryfield College as a teaching and learning community recognises the interdependence of management, teachers, pupils, and parents in the process of forming happy, secure, well-educated, and productive young people. The school endeavours to ensure that it provides: a healthy balance between academic, social, and spiritual development in an environment that is welcoming and friendly, where a caring relationship is evident between staff, parents, and pupils, where each one is accepted, respected, and appreciated through a value system that embodies the teachings of Christ, based on the Christian ideals of freedom, truth, love, justice, and self-discipline.

3. Homework and Student Wellbeing

Being Resilient

One of the six indicators of Wellbeing as described by the NCCA in the Junior Cycle Wellbeing Guideline (2017) is being resilient.



- When students engage in homework and when they develop effective homework practices including perseverance, they are developing transferable skills that can allow them to deal with challenging situations that they may face.
- When students know how to and who to ask for help when they have difficulty, they become more independent and resilient.
- Encouragement and advice from teachers when acted upon can improve a student's self-efficacy and help develop a positive growth mindset that allows them to believe that with effort they can achieve.

4. The Rationale for Assigning Homework

- Homework is a type of formative (ongoing) assessment.
- It reinforces new concepts that are taught in class.
- It provides a connection between home and school. Parents can gain an insight into what their child is learning and how they are progressing.

- It helps students prepare for their next lesson and can give them confidence when they are prepared for the following day.
- It provides opportunities to practice newly acquired and developed skills and provides opportunities to experience achievement.
- It is necessary to ensure that students retain the knowledge they have learned in class and improves their ability to learn and retain information.
- It provides opportunities for students to gain a deeper understanding of work covered in class.
- It contributes towards ongoing revision of the curriculum and improves study skills.
- It provides an opportunity for students to develop their skill of being an independent learner.
- It encourages students to take responsibility for their own learning and be accountable for their contribution to the teaching and learning process in school.
- Good homework practice e.g time management, organisation and staying on task, when developed is a highly transferable skill.
- Engagement with homework provides opportunities for students to develop all the Junior Cycle Key Skills which are then transferrable to Senior Cycle.
- Completed homework provides valuable feedback to teachers on the progress their students are making, and their understanding of the topics being covered in school.

5. What is homework?

Homework can take many different forms. It can be described as any work assigned by the class teacher that is to be completed outside school time. It is an extension of work done in school. Homework may be differentiated across the class to provide tasks that meet the learning needs of each student.

Below are examples of the different forms that homework can take.

- Short written answers to questions
- Short/long exercises aimed at practising new skills and/or applying new concepts
- Completing questions in a workbook or textbook
- Completing digital assignments through Microsoft Forms or Microsoft Teams.
- Completing drawings, diagrams, or maps
- Creating mind maps
- Creating presentations
- Completing longer written answers which may be completed over several days or a week.
- Essays
- Project work or work for Classrooms Based Assessments completed within the window for completion as prescribed by the Department of Education.

- Completing written reflection tasks e.g. in Transition Year Journals and Junior Cycle Reflective Practice.
- Practising or completing artwork
- Researching
- 'Learning' homework and memorisation of material covered in class.
- Preparing for oral assessment in a language including creating audio recordings.
- Completing aural exercises.
- Preparing for practical music exams.
- Gathering materials for class, e.g. materials for art, ingredients for home economics
- Assigned reading.

This list is not exhaustive.

6. Advice for Students and Parents on Best Homework Practice.

The Homework & Learning Journal

Every student is expected to have their homework & learning journal for every class, and it should be on their desk throughout the lesson. The homework & learning journal allows students to record all homework assigned to them during a lesson and record the learning they have completed each day in class. By having their homework & learning recorded in their journal students can make sure that they have all the materials and books they need before they leave at the end of the school day. The Year Head for each year group may check homework journals as part of the school's pastoral care system.

It has been agreed that teachers shall write the homework for each class on the whiteboard before the end of the lesson or post the homework assignment on Microsoft Teams and guidance is given by teachers as to how to complete the homework. Time is given to students to take down their homework. The school encourage parents to check the homework & learning journal each evening and the completion of the work assigned; this is especially important for students in Junior Cycle. Parents are requested to sign and date the homework & learning journal at the end of each week.

Homework is assigned by most teachers on most days, however on occasion there may not be a need to assign homework. In this case students are advised to record what they have covered in class that day as a reminder of the lesson. Students who miss lessons because they are on school business e.g. competing with a sports team must find out what homework has been assigned in the lessons they have missed and make their best attempt at completing it. Students who are absent due to illness should make their best attempt to catch up on work missed.

Creating a suitable space in the home for homework to be done.

It is recommended that a space is provided for children to complete homework which is quiet, free from distractions, ideally with a desk and chair and good lighting. It is acknowledged that technology is now part of the teaching and learning process and the school uses the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) Microsoft Office therefore mobile phones, tablets and laptops may be used. We advise that parents discuss the use of mobile technologies for the completion of homework and agree on strategies that will prevent them from becoming a distraction e.g. use flight mode. Guidance on the appropriate use of technology in education is available to parents and teachers in the school Acceptable Usage Policy and Education Technology Usage Policy.

The school offers supervised after school study facilities for students in examination years which many students find beneficial. This service incurs a fee.

7. Completing Written Work

Written work should be;

- Presented as neatly as possible.
- Completed within the timeframe given by the teacher.
- **All written work should be titled and dated.**
- Teachers will differ in how they request homework to be completed. Some teachers may ask for a dedicated homework copy for their subject while others will request that homework be completed on loose pages or posted on Teams or OneNote. Teachers will make clear the requirement for handing in homework and in turn students should make every effort to present the homework in the required way.
- Written work must be completed in either blue or black pen, as this is the requirement for completing state exams unless otherwise directed by the teacher.
- **All written work must be each student's own original work; plagiarism will not be tolerated.**

8. Completing Memory/Learning Work

The completion of 'learning' homework or memory work is equally as important as written homework. Effective study skills techniques to help students' complete memory work are provided in school through the following: SPHE and Guidance classes, by individual subject teachers, by the SET and Guidance Departments. Students in 3rd and 5th Year also have study skills seminars provided by trained facilitators.

Parents, if possible, can help children with their memory work by checking student recall of material. Students may be expected to demonstrate their recall of material the following day in school. Teachers use the checking of memory work as a formative (ongoing) assessment strategy.

9. Teacher Feedback – Using Feedback Effectively

Teachers use homework as a formative (ongoing) assessment tool. Teachers can assess student progress and identify aspects of the course the student is finding challenging though the correction and checking of homework. Feedback is given in several forms.

- General comments to the class to clarify or revisit an element of the material covered or to correct common mistakes.
- Written, verbal, or recorded comments on individual pieces of work.
- Written corrections throughout a piece of work to correct mistakes.
- Grades or grade descriptors with accompanying teacher comments.

Teacher feedback includes praise for work completed as well as recommendations and guidance on how to improve. Students are encouraged to use this effectively and implement it in future assignments to achieve their potential.

10. Time Spent on Homework

Parents can expect their children to have homework to complete each evening. The amount of time spent on homework can vary as it will be dependent on the amount assigned on a particular day and the type of assignments that must be completed. Students will often have to include revision for a class assessment into their homework schedule also. When time allows students should complete all homework assigned each day that evening, in some instances homework may need to spread out over a few days.

Here we provide a guide for students and parents as to how long a student should be spending on homework in their given year group. Using this guide will allow both students and parents to identify if they are spending too long or not enough time on completing quality work to the best of a student's ability. Teachers may give students an opportunity to begin their homework at the end of class. This is done to allow students an opportunity to ask questions about their homework and allows the teacher to ensure that all students understand what must be completed.

Year Group	Time Spent on Homework and Revision
1 st Year	1 to 2 hrs
2 nd Year	2 to 2.5 hrs
3 rd Year	2 to 2.5 hrs + for revision for Junior Cycle Examinations
4 th Year	45 mins + (please see separate note on TY homework)
5 th Year	2.5 – 3 hrs
6 th Year	2.5 to 4 hrs, dependent on study plan and preparation for Leaving Certificate

Note: Homework can be assigned over a weekend and during holidays for all year groups.

11. Transition Year (4th Year) Homework

TY provides a bridge to enable students to make the transition from Junior Cycle to the more independent learning environment that is associated with Senior Cycle. While continuing to link with the key skills of Junior Cycle, Transition Year students are encouraged to develop a wide range of skills. Due to the variety of subjects and modules presented to students, homework and assessment may take many forms, for example:

- Written exercises aimed at practising new skills and/or applying new concepts
- Completing oral and aural tasks/assessments.
- Projects
- Posters
- Presentations
- Research topics
- Organise work experience & community action placements
- Completing documents and diary entries for work experience & community action placements
- Completing personal reflections from learning environments e.g. S.P.A.D journal, guest speakers, workshops
- Gathering materials for class e.g. art materials, ingredients for home economics, resources for class such as photos, earphones etc.

This list is not exhaustive.

12. Transition Year Journals

Students are required to have three reflective journals that are completed throughout the year: a Social Personal Academic Development Journal, a Community Action Journal, and a Work Experience Journal. These journals are assessed regularly and contribute to the end of year assessment for Transition Year. Engaging in this work provides an opportunity for students to develop skills which can influence their personal development and their orientation towards further study, adult life, and work.

13. Advice for Students – What to do if you find it difficult to complete homework

When homework is challenging the following strategies can be useful to help you.

3 Before Me – This describes doing 3 things before you go back to your teacher to ask for help or the correct answer.

- Ask yourself what you already know about this topic or subject that you have not already considered.

- Look something up in a book or using an online resource approved by your teacher.
- Then ask a friend or family member for help.

Follow these 3 steps before you return to the teacher for help.

Brain, Book, Buddy, Boss

- Brain - Think back over what I have done in class or what I know about this topic.
- Book - Can I look the answer up in my book?
- Buddy - Can I ask a friend for help?
- Boss - Go back to my teacher for help.

Both strategies are very similar and for the purposes of this policy we have created a step-by-step approach for students to use if they are having difficulty completing any task.

1. Ask yourself what I already know about this topic, what knowledge do I have that might help me complete the homework.
2. Look at the textbook for answers or use examples that are provided there to help you. Look up your class notes or resources provided by the teacher. Use a teacher approved online resource to help you.
3. Ask a friend for help either that evening or the next day in school. Please avoid using groups on social media platforms to connect with school friends about homework. Contact them individually instead.
4. Ask a family member to help you, an older sibling, or a parent.

If you were unable to complete your homework assignment you need to be specific about what you found difficult and be able to explain this to your teacher and show evidence of the effort you made to complete the homework. Making a genuine effort and communicating this to the teacher will help develop the Junior Cycle key skill of Managing Myself.

14. Advice for Parents

- Provide a quiet space for your child to complete their homework with a desk, chair and good light.
- Encourage an after-school routine that allows for homework to be completed at the same time each day when possible.
- Follow the guidelines given for the completion of homework. If you believe your child is spending too much or too little time on completing homework, please discuss this with the school.
- Be an encouraging and positive influence when it comes to homework. Students can respond positively when parents take an interest in their work. Ask to see the homework & learning journal and check that homework has been completed and sign their homework & learning journal once per week.

- Praise them for the work they have done and ask about the feedback they receive from their teachers.
- If your child asks for help, provide support and if possible, suggestions as to how to solve problems and complete answers and encourage them to try it themselves first rather than directly providing answers or solutions. See advice for students.
- Students have access to studyclix.ie and examinations.ie which provides solutions to examination questions, and they can often find solutions to problems in textbooks. These resources can be used as a self-assessment tool at the end of a homework assignment.
- Consider a reward system for younger students who find focusing difficult as a method of encouraging them to complete their homework.
- Encourage your child to inform their teachers if they had difficulty completing homework tasks and encourage them to seek help from their teacher.

This policy will be reviewed as part of the cycle for policy review agreed by the school's Board of Management.

Ratified by Maryfield College Board of Management on 9th June 2022.