

Homework Policy



Introduction

Homework can provide a valuable link between parents and their child's school. It can be used as an opportunity to reinforce what a child has learned during the day. It can also help develop a child's concentration skills.

In St. Luke's School, we believe that homework must be meaningful in order for it to be beneficial to the child. As a school, we must be able to stand over what we give for homework and why we are giving it. With this in mind, and through consultation with parents, children and teachers, the staff at St. Luke's School have worked to develop the following policy in the hope of providing clear guidance in how we approach homework as a school. We are grateful to all parents, pupils and staff who engaged with the consultation process.

We are mindful of the need to review this policy regularly in light of updated research, changing family and pupil experiences and to ensure that any homework given is necessary and of real value. We understand and accept that pupils nowadays live very different lives to those of years ago. In many families both parents work long hours, children are involved in a wide range of after-school activities, and family time is limited and precious. However, we are also conscious of the current and future needs and aspirations of our pupils.

The Department of Education does not issue specific guidelines on homework but does recommend having a published homework policy. To this end, the staff have worked collaboratively to draw up this draft policy. We have read and taken on board the views of parents, pupils and teachers. It is clear from our surveys that views on homework vary widely and depend on children's ability, time and home life. We are aware that the research on homework is not definitive. Therefore following wide consultation, we have concluded that there is a necessity to reduce the amount of homework and to ensure that what is given is of value.

Why do we give homework?

- To provide a link between parent and school
- To reinforce what the child learns during the day
- To develop a child's concentration skills, independence and a work ethic (vital for senior primary and secondary school).
- To provide achievable targets for each child to fulfill at home with minimal stress or disruption to home life.

How often?

- Homework is given Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays but not on Fridays.
- Written homework is given on 3 nights in 1st- 5th Class.
- In preparation for secondary school, homework is given on 4 nights in 6th Class.
- Written homework is no longer given in infant classes.
- Sometimes children are given homework off as an acknowledgement of a special occasion or for other reasons. This is at the discretion of the class teacher or Principal
- Extra homework will not be given as a 'punishment'
- Homework will not be given for the first two weeks of September and written homework will not be given for the month of June

How much time should my child spend on homework?

Different children will complete similar homework over different lengths of time. Homework should never cause stress, worry or conflict at home. If this is the case, we strongly recommend that parents contact their child's teacher and a plan will be created based on the child's needs.

It is quality, not quantity of homework that matters. The following can be used as a guideline:

Junior Infants	10-15 minutes (reading practice each night, Mon-Thurs)
Senior Infants	15-20 minutes (reading practice each night, Mon-Thurs)
1 st /2 nd Class	10- 20 minutes (reading practice each night, Mon-Thurs) 10 minutes spellings & tables 10 minutes written work
3 rd /4 th Class	30-40 minutes (reading, spellings, tables, litriú, 1/2 written piece)
5 th /6 th Class	40-50 minutes (reading, spelling work to include written work of spellings/Look, Say, cover, write and check, technique/dictionary work associated with new spellings/focus on vocab of spellings. Table work using table cards. Irish reading/Irish verb learning work/Irish spellings and written practice of Irish spellings. SESE learning work – counties/capital cities etc. Longer term written tasks such as creative work and project work, typing homework

What will my child get for homework?

Infants:

The children in St. Luke's School learn to read in Junior Infants. With this in mind, infants will have only reading/sounds homework as our focus will largely be on the development of literacy skills. Your child will have reading for homework every night (Mon-Thurs) and it is hugely important that a parent/interested adult listens to your child read each night. With support from home, books can be changed regularly and children move through the levels quite quickly.

Reading will begin in Junior infants with a sound book. Word ladders to practice blending are sent home in November. By the end of senior infants they will be getting a new reader several times a week (depending on ability and length of book).

Parents may sometimes feel that reading is not 'real' homework. However, there is a really strong correlation between reading (which supports word recognition, comprehension, vocabulary, thinking skills and creativity) and academic success. The work that parents invest in supporting their child's reading in the infant classes will pay dividends as their child moves through the school. Struggling readers will be fully supported as part of the school's Early Intervention programme.

Communication between Parents and School

Each teacher has a preferred method of communication and sends a 'Classroom Routines' explanatory note at the beginning of the year to explain their 'system'. However, below is a guideline of what you can expect.

Junior Infants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homework in Junior Infants does not start until after the October midterm break. Sound book is sent home as soon as the first sound is learned, usually the first full week in September. • Homework folder in the bag. The teacher will also send out occasional notes if they feel something needs further explanation.
Senior Infants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Readers – Listen to your child read. Allow the child to sound out words (do not 'jump in'). The main focus of homework in Senior Infants will be on these 'Oxford Reading Tree' readers. Focus should be on enjoyment, a sense of achievement and reading with accuracy and fluency. • Sight word sheet – this sheet has 'high frequency' words (frequently used words your child will read on a regular basis) and 'context words' taken from the story. Both are important. Your child may take some time to read these with fluency. Sounding them out is a vital part of the reading process. Listen to your child each night and initial the sheet. • Tricky Words– this is a collection of words that need to be learned using the 'look and say' method ie if your child sees them regularly, they will become familiar and can be read instantly. • The children will have a homework folder where they will keep their readers/sight words etc.
1 st & 2 nd Class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading, spelling and tables x 4 nights • 1 written piece Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday (3 nights)
3 rd & 4 th Class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading, spelling and tables x 4 nights • 1 / 2 written piece x 3 nights

5 th & 6 th Class	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reading, tables, spelling and learning x 4 nights• 2 written x 3 / 4 nights• In order to foster independence and prepare children for secondary school, the teacher will not contact parents of 6th class pupils about homework unless there is a problem. If homework is causing issues at home, please contact the class teacher.
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Differentiation

There is no one size fits all when it comes to homework. Pupils who find set homework too challenging, and where differentiation is warranted, may receive reduced homework. This is at the discretion of the class teacher.

Monitoring/Correcting Homework

- Class teachers and Special Education Teachers or volunteer parents will aim to listen to your child read every day in Junior Infants, Senior Infants and 1st class. Pupils in 2nd and 3rd classes will be heard reading twice weekly. When a pupil receives a Reading Licence (usually in 4th Class), this is recognition that the pupil is now a fluent reader, does not need to be heard reading aloud, and is tasked with choosing their own books to read for pleasure.
- Homework completed is monitored. All homework should be completed unless the child has a note from the parent.
- Ideally, teachers like to check written homework on a daily basis. However, this is not always possible but homework will be corrected within a reasonable timeframe.
- 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.

This is a pilot policy and will be reviewed during the 2023-2025 school years.

Ratified by the Board of Management on: 31/1/23

Signed:  (Chairperson, Board of Management).

Date: 31/1/23 (Review Year: 2025)