

ST COLUMBA'S COLLEGE HOMEWORK AND STUDY POLICY 2018-2019



2018 EDITION

Scope:

Board of Management, Principal, Deputy Principals, Year Heads, Class Tutors, Teaching Staff, Administration Staff, Parents Council, Student Council, Parents/Guardians

Relationship to School's Mission Statement and philosophy of Education:

St. Columba's College is a Catholic Voluntary Secondary School in the trusteeship of CEIST and is committed to the pursuit of excellence in a caring environment.

Inspired by the vision of Catherine McAuley, St. Columba's College is committed to holistic development and to the achievement of the full potential of each student. The practice of doing regular homework is essential to such development.

Rationale:

The purpose of homework and additional study is:

To consolidate and reinforce skills and understanding developed at school.

To encourage students to develop the skills, confidence, self-discipline and motivation needed to study effectively on their own.

To extend school learning, for example through additional reading.

To encourage the involvement of parents in the management of students' learning and keeping them informed about the work students are doing.

The importance of the role that Parents/Guardians play in effective homework policy.

Parents/Guardians have an important supervisory role in ensuring that homework is carried out regularly and without distraction. Parents are asked to provide as quiet a setting as possible for students to complete homework assignments and revision work.

Students do well when parents take an interest in their homework. It is the encouragement that makes the difference.

Recommended Homework Times: (Draft)

Recommended time per day:

- 1st years - 1 hour
- 2nd years - 1 ½ hours
- 3rd years - 2 ½ hours
- Transition Year – As necessary for completion of assignments

- 5th years - 2 ½ hours
- 6th years - 3 hours

Definitions of Study and Homework

Homework:

Homework is any work given by a teacher to do at home. It will involve learning and/or writing. Homework is not optional and will be corrected or examined by the teacher.

The primary purpose of homework is to enhance and reinforce classroom learning outcomes, to develop skills in a subject, to track student progress, to revise lesson information, and to prepare for examinations.

The college places a high value on student involvement in extra-curricular activities (Eg. Sports teams, quiz teams, musical etc.) However, students who miss class because of such activities must catch up on assigned homework to fulfil teaching and learning objectives.

Types of Homework

- Memory/Learning
- Written
- Oral Practice
- Aural Exercise
- Practical
- Reading
- Project/Portfolio Work
- Practice Skills
- Problem Solving – differentiation of problems
- Study/Revision
- Research
- Review of work done (Reflective practice)
- Thinking
- Self-Assessment
- Preparation for next topic
- Sketching/Drawing
- Comprehension
- Vocabulary/Key Themes
- Opinion/Reaction Pieces
- Poster work

Study:

Study is extra work done by the student at home. It might be revision (looking back) or preparation (looking forward). It might not be examined or corrected by a teacher the following day. Study is more demanding because it is self-directed and requires self-discipline. The benefits may not be obvious until you do your exams. Study is a habit which must be learned and practised. Like everything else, the more it is practised, the easier it becomes.

It is very important that students should have frequent and increasing opportunities to develop and consolidate their competence as independent learners. These can be achieved through tutorials on study skills, target setting and mentoring schemes. Intensive study skills programmes are organized for Third and Sixth Years. The Guidance Counsellor and Learning Support teacher as well as the SPHE team address study skills for First and Second Year students. Each individual class teacher provides tips on the specific requirements within his/her own specialist subject area. Meeting homework deadlines may not be always easy for students. They will not be excused homework but may need extra help with strategies to manage it.

Both homework and study are necessary for good exam results.

Use of the school journal

It is essential that each student always has their school journal in class. All homework assignments should be entered into the journal at the end of each class. This journal is only for recording of homework and noting important dates. Parents are requested to check their child's journal and sign it on a weekly basis.

Feedback

Students look mainly to teachers for a response on the quality of their work. Effective marking and feedback have always placed demands on teachers, but both are fundamental to helping students make progress. Teachers check homework on a regular basis. A variety of methods are used to correct homework: e.g. Teacher correction, Class correction, Class discussion, Students exchange work for correction. Some items of homework (and class work) may be checked by students themselves under the direction of a teacher. This can be a useful part of the learning process for students. The school reports to parents on the

progress of students and indeed reporting is a crucial part of the relationship between school and parents.

Traditional school end-of-term reports that take the form of a grade or mark and a generalized comment for each subject can be reassuring and supportive for the parents of students. Parent/teacher meetings offer valuable opportunities for the school to move beyond the marks, as it were, and to present more comprehensive assessments of progress.

As well as allowing a focus on progress achieved, such meetings provide an opportunity to nominate areas that need specific attention and to indicate what needs to be done to improve student performance.

Feedback can be given in several ways:

- Spoken advice.
- Oral or written comments including comment only marking
- Constructive Criticism
- Mark and/or grade

Expectations:

Each of the partners in education has an important role in supporting the child's learning:

Parents/guardians can help by:

- taking an active interest in homework
- making sure that time is set aside for homework
- encouraging students to do their best and complete the work
- making a quiet place available, where possible, for homework to be done
- supporting teachers by signing the journal or the homework when asked
- communicating with teachers any concerns about homework
- alerting the school to any change in circumstances which should be considered when setting homework.

Teachers can help by

- explaining to students the benefits of homework
- ensuring that students and parents are aware of the school's homework policy
- setting a suitable amount of relevant homework
- providing homework that is related to classwork / revision
- giving students enough time to complete homework, taking into account other activities and homework set by other teachers
- marking homework promptly and appropriately

- keeping homework records and giving feedback to students
- alerting parents and caregivers to any developing problems concerning their child's homework

Students can help by:

- being aware of the importance of homework
- being aware of the school's homework policy
- being aware that homework is an essential part of the learning process
- completing homework within the given time frame
- ensuring the homework is of a high standard
- taking responsibility for their own work and seeking assistance when difficulties arise
- organising their time so that enough time is set aside to complete
- quality work/assignments
- using the Journal to keep records and make notes about homework
- using study skill seminars to full advantage by following the guidelines given
- availing of supervised study / extra classes in exam years.

Procedures

- Teachers assign homework during most lessons. The homework should be appropriate to the age, level and ability of students and may take a variety of formats
- Homework expectations will be clearly explained by the teacher and students will have an opportunity to clarify the homework tasks if in doubt
- The homework assigned will have an appropriate level of challenge for all students and have a clear purpose
- Homework must be written correctly by students into their homework journals which should be checked regularly by parents.
- Parents / guardians should check that homework is completed and sign the student homework journal weekly
- Homework must be completed by students. Students should apply their best effort to all homework.
- In case when homework is not completed a note from the student's parent / guardian is required in the student's journal and the teacher keeps a record of same

Sanctions

Where homework is not completed satisfactorily sanctions may be imposed. These will vary according to the age of student and the severity of the situation.

- If homework is not being done consistently, the class teacher must write a note in the homework journal to be signed at home by parents / guardians
- In the case of homework not being completed on three occasions in one subject, the subject teacher will put the student on a lunchtime detention.

- Where this problem persists, the subject teacher initially may contact the student's parent / guardian by phone to discuss the matter. The subject teacher may send a letter to the parents outlining the issue and request their assistance in the matter (template letters available)
- Further to this the Year Head may contact home to discuss the matter or arrange a meeting to deal with the problem
- It is the student's responsibility to ensure that homework is completed on time and brought to the relevant class. The student should ask for guidance / help from the teacher if needed
- The teacher keeps a record of all homework assigned, attempted, completed and work not attempted. The teacher gives quality feedback to each student (e.g. verbal / written feedback) to acknowledge the student's effort, what she has done well and also suggests how the homework might be improved.

Supports

St. Columba's College provides a number of supports to encourage good homework / study among students:

- * rewards and incentives for good work
- * Study Skills Workshop in Exam Years
- * after school study for Second to Sixth Years, supervised by staff teachers
- * Extra revision classes in school in Third and Sixth years (At teacher's discretion.)

Review:

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis in accordance with the school planning and development. ('Looking at Our Schools' 2016)

Signed: _____ (Principal)

Date: _____

Signed: _____ (Chairperson of Board of Management)

Date: _____

