



Knocknacarra Educate Together
National School

Homework Policy

This policy has been formulated by Knocknacarra ETNS to establish guidelines regarding the use of homework and to clarify roles related to its completion.

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Introduction:

This homework policy was completed in consultation with staff, the pupils of the school and the PTA and approved by the Board of Management of Knocknacarra Educate Together NS. Originally drafted in 2018, it was reviewed by all stakeholders in 2022.

Background:

The staff of Knocknacarra Educate Together NS views homework as an important component in supporting children's learning as well as providing continuity between home and school learning environments. Homework helps support learning by ensuring all stakeholders (children, parents and teachers) are aware of children's academic progress and skills development.

Rationale:

The primary purpose of homework is to revise, consolidate and reinforce what has been taught in class. It provides an opportunity to review aspects of the curriculum as well as provide an opportunity to reflect on experiences and knowledge developed during the school day. Therefore, homework should have a specific purpose linked to school learning. Ideally homework will review aspects of the curriculum using varied and relevant activities that are of high interest. Homework provides time for research or project work that might not be able to be completed in class. Also, homework plays a valuable role in mastering tables and spellings. In short, homework should take account of where the child's learning is at and should be at an appropriate level that reflects the work achieved at school.

An equally important role of homework is to involve parents in their children's academic development. Homework gives parents the opportunity to understand what is being taught in the school curriculum. It supports communication between home and school regarding the topics being addressed and likewise gives parents a sense of how their children are developing by providing direct evidence of their children's learning progress. Also, parents are able to provide 1:1 attention and support, facilitating children's academic development.

Finally, homework has an important role in developing good independent work habits. It develops the ability to self-direct learning, preparing children for secondary school and future learning experiences by establishing a homework routine and independent study skills.

Relationship to School Ethos:

Knocknacarra Educate Together NS seeks to enable the full development of every child, endeavouring to ensure the pupils of the school are given the opportunity to achieve their full potential. Homework is seen as an important way to develop the ability to work independently and to accept responsibility for personal learning and academic progress.

Policy Aims and Objectives:

- To enhance pupil learning,
- To reinforce concepts introduced in class in the home environment,
- To promote a similar approach to homework across all classes,
- To strengthen links between home and school and
- To establish the roles and responsibilities of teachers, parents and pupils regarding homework.

Policies and Procedures:

Use of the Homework Diary and Homework Folder:

Every child from Rang I-VI is given a homework diary at the start of each year. The cost of the homework diary is included in the school expenses charge. Homework is recorded in this diary. Parents are expected to check the work and sign the homework diary daily. For children in Junior and Senior Infants, the homework will be written out by the teacher. Each child is provided with a folder for bringing home and returning homework. Some teachers may use online platforms such as Seesaw to help facilitate homework, particularly reading in English and Irish.

Duration of Homework:

The amount of homework gradually increases as children get older.

Junior Infants	5-10 mins
Senior Infants	10-20 mins
1 st and 2 nd Class	20-30 mins
3 rd and 4 th Class	30-40 mins
5 th and 6 th Class	40-50 mins

Homework is assigned Monday to Thursday. There is no homework given at weekends. Teachers have discretion to not assign homework on special occasions on a whole-class basis. Homework may be modified to take into account specific family circumstances or to match the ability of individual children. The staff recommends that children follow a regular routine for homework. If homework is not completed within the allotted time, parents should write a note to the teacher in the homework diary.

Types of Homework:

Infants

Junior Infants begin homework in November. In the Infants classes, homework may include:

- Review of letter sounds and sight words
- Reading of levelled books
- One piece of written work per night in Senior Infants (Maths/English/History/Geography)

First to Sixth

Homework regularly includes:

- English reading (class novels or levelled readers as well as self-chosen books and occasionally History/Geography/Science passages) for 10 minutes
- Maths tables
- English spellings (which may include practising writing the words or using them in sentences)
- Irish litriú (spelling) from 2nd to 6th class, which takes the form of simple written exercises
- One piece of written work in any subject (maths, English, history, geography, etc.)
- Projects involving research/study over an extended period of time for senior classes.

In all classes as part of the Active School Flag, children are asked to do something on active one day per week (currently Thursday) instead of a written piece of work. Children will still do their reading, spellings, litriú and tables that day.

The time spent by parents in supporting reading is the single most valuable aspect of homework. This guided reading is best when it goes beyond just reading the words to include discussion of the story or subject (including visual aspects of the book). Therefore, reading is to be prioritised above all other types of homework. Reviewing spellings, litriú and tables is another important aspect of homework. Children should be capable of doing the rest of the homework largely independently, but adult supervision and monitoring is always beneficial. Problems encountered with homework, especially in maths and written work, are generally best made known to the class teacher rather than risking confusion because of different explanations from home and school. Teachers welcome feedback from parents and pupils regarding how long the homework is taking, and teachers will work with individual families to make adjustments to ensure the recommended amount of homework time is not exceeded.

After consultation with the pupils and parents of the school, a few key ideas emerge. Particularly as children get older, it is recommended that teachers introduce some level of choice related to homework to promote independence and maintain interest by varying the tasks. This may include offering choice regarding tasks as well as assigning homework on a weekly basis, allowing children in collaboration to decide when the work is completed. Equally, as part of a democratic school, teachers should regularly talk with children about their experiences with homework and honour the pupil voice by developing homework tasks that acknowledge the children's ideas and experiences at an age-appropriate level.

Older children have indicated a strong preference for open-ended, creative project-based work in a range of subjects, and therefore, this will be expanded. In order to not increase the amount of homework assigned, activities that help review spellings in Irish and English and maths tables may be incorporated during the school day in a democratic approach negotiated between the teacher and the pupils in the class.

Parents also expressed a desire to increase the use of digital technology to support homework, including the use of Seesaw and Google Classroom, particularly for Irish reading as well as other tasks. This will be explored in the coming academic year and included in the forthcoming School Plan.

Assessing Homework:

Teachers regularly check that work is completed. Any unfinished work will be expected to be completed. Assessment of all work completed by children is essential for monitoring the effectiveness of teaching as well as understanding whether children have a good understanding of a concept. This assessment of homework mirrors the type of feedback provided by teachers regarding tasks completed during the school day.

Feedback from teachers is an essential aspect of making homework, as well as all classwork, meaningful and purposeful. Such feedback acknowledges and affirms children's hard work, diligence and effort. Constructive feedback can help children understand what they do well and where they can improve. It also helps teachers to encourage children and communicate effectively expectations and suggestions for improvement.

Feedback can take on a variety of forms, bearing in mind that feedback should be age-appropriate and focused on improving student effort and achievement. Oral feedback can include public praise in front of the class, speaking to children individually and speaking to parents. Stickers, notes in copies and other written evidence are incredibly valuable, and while it is time-consuming, this type of feedback is very useful. Feedback must be provided on a regular basis. All feedback, whether oral or written, should be personalized and specific to the task and child's work as much as possible. Feedback should be clear, providing suggestions on how to improve work in the future.

As part of developing independent work skills, there is scope for peer and self-assessment to complement feedback provided by teachers.

Summary of Roles and Responsibilities:

Board of Management

- To review this policy on a regular basis.

Principal

- To ensure this policy is applied on a consistent and universal basis in the school.

Teachers

- To give relevant, meaningful and appropriate homework tasks, as far as possible.
- To ensure homework is relevant, varied and of an adequate amount.
- To explain homework tasks clearly.
- To monitor the taking down of homework.
- To check homework consistently.
- To address difficulties children are having with homework tasks.
- To provide verbal and written feedback as much as possible.
- To follow up on incomplete or poorly completed work

Parents

- To supervise and provide assistance, as required, by providing children with some individual attention as far as possible.
- To listen to children reading and showing an interest in their reading by asking questions.
- To provide help with the learning of tables and spellings.
- To liaise with teachers about difficulties or problems related to homework completion.
- To make sure their child does homework to the best of their ability.
- To sign the homework diary.
- To discover and observe children's abilities and areas of difficulty
- To encourage and reinforce a good attitude towards presentation.
- To take an interest in the child's abilities and school day.
- To ensure sufficient time and an appropriate environment are provided.
- To respond when opportunities present themselves to fill gaps in learning.
- To help guide independent research activity.

Children

- To carry out and complete the tasks to the best of their ability.
- To make a genuine effort and to be actively involved in their learning.
- To practice skills and concepts they have learned in class
- To return the work to the teacher in a timely manner.

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- To inform the teacher of any areas or tasks for which they need clarification or extra assistance.
- To write homework down and bring home all necessary materials including books, copies and worksheets.
- To ask their parents to sign their homework diaries.
- To become confident readers and independent learners.

Implementation and Review:

The policy will be reviewed as required and formally in 2025.

Ratification and Communication:

This revised policy was ratified by the BoM on the date below. It is posted on the school website in due course.

Paul Adams, chairperson

Date of ratification

DRAFT 2.0