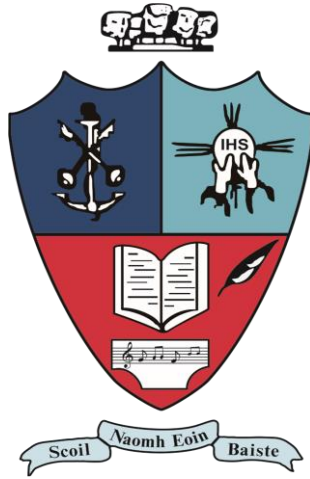


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St. John the Baptist Junior Boys' School Homework Policy

Introduction

This policy was updated in response to teacher, parental/guardian and pupil experiences of homework. Parents/guardians of all year groups were asked to complete an anonymous online survey on homework in April 2023. This was followed by a 'no written' homework trial over a period of three weeks in May 2023. Parents were again surveyed on their experiences of the trial in June 2023.

Staff engaged in collaborative discussion on the current Homework Policy (last updated January 2013) and were surveyed on options arising from the results of the parent/guardian survey.

All pupils from First and Second Classes were surveyed on their experiences of homework in June 2023.

All responses from all surveys were collated and these collated responses form the basis for this updated Homework Policy.

Rationale

The purpose of this policy is:

- To explain and communicate the School's vision in respect of homework.
- To promote positive home/school communication.
- To maximise the benefit of homework to each child's learning.
- To promote consistency and a uniform approach to homework assigned by teachers in each class level.
- To enable children to develop a sense of responsibility and independence.

- To develop and encourage the habit of independent study.
- To enhance self-esteem through the provision of a work menu that is doable.

General Recommendations

Every year at the end of September, there will be a parent/guardian information meeting for each year group which outlines curriculum content, homework and expectations for the year.

- Homework is not given as a sanction (In exceptional circumstances, when classwork is consistently not being completed by the pupil in school, the teacher may assign this to be completed at home)
- Pupils in 1st and 2nd Classes have a Homework Journal in which homework should be written, ticked off when completed and signed by the parent/guardian.
- Teachers will differentiate homework as appropriate for pupils with specific needs.
- Homework is given from Monday to Thursday. There is generally no homework given at weekends.
- The following time allocation is laid down as a guideline in Cúraclam na Bunscoile (Department of Education 1998):
 - Junior and Senior Infants: 10 to 15 minutes
 - First and Second Classes: 20 to 30 minutes
- Junior Infants and Senior Infants are assigned oral homework ONLY.
- First and Second Classes are assigned a mixture of oral homework, written homework and projects to be completed over the week.
- Where a pupil receives homework from their SET teacher, the class teacher and the SET will collaborate in relation to the nature and type of homework the child is to receive. Homework should NOT exceed times stated above.

Composition of Homework

It should be noted that homework time devoted to reading and learning is as important as written work.

Junior and Senior Infants

*To be completed **daily** from Monday until Thursday*

- Reading, sounds, blending lists
- Fun-books, library books: to be read and discussed with the child
- Sight words

- Nursery rhymes and songs learned in school
- Recount news of the day in order to encourage active listening and elaborating and fostering 1:1 time with your child.
- A trip to the library with your child
- A task of individual homework may be given to a pupil with specific needs where the class teacher deems it appropriate.

First and Second Classes

- Homework will be assigned on a **Monday** will a **completion deadline** for the **Friday** of that week. (*this is in an effort to create more school/home life balance for the families in our school*)
- It is recommended; however, that pupils engage in some level of **reading every day**. (Bedtime reading, shared reading, reading aloud, paired reading)
- Homework for the week will include: Reading, Tables, Spellings for Me, Mental Maths
- Occasionally other kinds of written/oral work – SESE, SPHE, RE, Gaeilge
- Differentiation for children with specific needs where the class teacher deems it appropriate.
- Some work learned by heart occasionally – a poem, a prayer or a song.
- No **written homework** to be assigned in the week before the Christmas holidays, the week before the Easter holidays and in the month of June.
- Homework will be assigned as normal outside of these times, including the weeks leading up to mid-term breaks (Hallowe'en, February mid-term etc.)

If homework is causing undue discord at home, we ask parents/guardians to contact the class teacher.

Guidelines for Parents/Guardians

- Establish a set routine and time for your son to do his homework (please see below)
- Try to allow your son to work independently as he should be able to complete most of his homework with minimal support.
- Supervise your son's homework, checking the homework when it is completed.
- Sign completed items of homework in the Homework Journal.
- Forward a note to the teacher if homework has not been completed due to unforeseen circumstances.
- Remember that time devoted to reading and learning is as important as written homework.

- Please let your son's class teacher know if homework needs to be differentiated.

Creating the Homework Habit

Family situations, each one unique, undoubtedly influence a child's approach to homework and learning. Parents can help children develop good working habits.

Please show your son that homework is an important priority, and you value its worth by offering the following kinds of support:

- Sit down with your son and together schedule a time for completing homework assignments. Homework habits are more easily formed if children work at the same time each day.
- Help your son choose an appropriate study location – a quiet place, a desk or table for written work or a comfortable chair for reading.
- Provide your son with good lighting and necessary materials such as pencils, colours, erasers etc.
- Ask your son to describe the assignment before beginning and later show you the completed work or summarize what he has learned.
- If your son does need help, look over the material before you begin so you are familiar with the assignment.
- If your son becomes frustrated, put the assignment away for a while.
- Please be available to check whether the assignment has been completed.
- Praise effort: praising effort (rather than praising ability) has been proven to build a child's resilience so that they keep trying when things are hard.
- Where possible, help your son relate homework assignments to everyday life and skills.

Leisure Time Reading

A survey from the DES (2005) highlights the importance of cultivating the habit of independent reading. Leisure time reading is essentially an out of school activity, but we can foster and develop this habit in our children by doing the following:

- Encourage your son to choose books independently.
- Talk to your son about their choice of books and be aware of what they are reading in their spare time.
- Join a public library.
- Continue reading aloud with your son as long as he considers it an enjoyable activity.
- Let your son see you reading.

Reading introduces us to diverse worlds and thoughts and gives children the opportunity to confront powerful emotional experiences in a safe environment. Reading allows us to share in the experiences of others and learn from them. The

cultivation of a regular reading habit privileges a child with a life enriching habit that will prove both pleasurable and valuable.

Role of Teachers

- Assign appropriate homework with regard to the recommended time tariffs.
- Teach the children how to do homework.
- Work in-class on children's study habits, self-regulation, ability to focus and ability to avoid distractions.
- Explain the homework clearly and check that children understand what is required.
- Review homework and provide feedback to pupils.
- Monitor homework to help identify pupils' strengths and needs, especially children with additional difficulties.
- Communicate with parents/guardians.

Success Criteria

The success criteria of this policy will be determined by feedback from parents, pupils and teachers through the following:

- Feedback from parents sought at parent/teacher meetings during the First Term of the academic year.
- In general, where pupils are handing in satisfactory exercises and assignments, reading and memorizing activities are well practised, this will be interpreted as reflecting positively on this policy.
- Similarly, where the results of the regular class assignments are satisfactory this will also reflect positively on this policy.

Board of Management Ratification

This policy is hereby ratified by the Board of Management of St. John the Baptist Junior Boys' School, Clontarf, Dublin 3.

Mel Ferguson

Chairperson

4/9/23

Date

Fiona Sheridan

Principal

4/9/23

Date

APPENDIX

Survey Responses to Current Homework Provision

Parent/Guardian Responses

How important do you think homework is in your son's learning?

- Extremely Important: 26.07%
- Of some Importance: 56.41%
- Of little Importance: 13.25%
- Of no Importance: 3.42%
- Not at all Important: 0.85%

Do you know how to support your son with his homework?

- Yes: 94.44%
- No: 5.56%

Are you generally available to support your son with his homework?

- Yes: 83.69%
- No: 16.31%

Can your son complete homework without help or supervision?

- Yes: 20.09%
- No: 39.32%
- Sometimes: 40.60%

What is your son's attitude to homework?

- Very positive: 11.11%
- Positive: 27.25%
- Neutral: 36.75%
- Negative: 22.65%
- Negative: 22.65%
- Very negative: 2.14%

On average, the amount of time my son spends on homework is:

- Too much: 15.95%

- Just right: 78.02%
- Too little: 6.03%

My son finds the level of challenge with his homework:

- Too hard: 2.56%
- About right: 82.91%
- Too easy: 11.54%
- Not sure 2.99%

What do you see as the positives of giving homework?

- It helps to develop independent learning: 17.83%
- It reinforces work done at school: 47.39%
- It raises attainment: 1.74%
- Parents are informed about schoolwork: 23.04%
- It prepares children for the future: 10.00%

What do you see as the negatives of giving homework?

- Children have worked hard enough at school: 51.20%
- Homework cuts into family time: 47.85%
- It can be a cause of anxiety: 40.67%
- I don't always know how to support my son's homework: 13.88%
- It leaves less time for other activities: 47.37%

In response to the 'No Written Homework' Trial

How have you found your son's attitude to homework during the trial?

- Interested and less pressurised: 25.95%
- Lacking motivation: 26.72%
- Much happier and compliant: 22.90%
- None of the above: 24.43%

Would you be in favour of:

- Having no written homework for the school year: 25.76%

- Having partial written homework for specified parts of the year: 49.24%
- Having written homework always: 25.00%

Pupil Responses:

Homework is important:

- Yes: 87%
- No: 13%

The homework I get is:

- Too Much: 21%
- Too Little: 8%
- About Right: 71%

The homework I get is:

- Too Hard: 1%
- Too Easy: 24%
- About Right: 75%

Which types of homework do you need to become a better learner? (*pupils had more than one choice*)

- Spellings: 45%
- Writing: 40%
- Maths: 52%
- Reading: 50%
- Projects: 50%
- Active Homework: 44%

I know how to do my homework:

- Always: 48%
- Most of the time: 40%
- Sometimes: 12%
- Never: 0%

I get help with my homework:

- Always: 1%
- Most of the time: 15%
- Sometimes: 52%
- Never: 32%

My parents have to tell me to do my homework:

- Always: 16%
- Most of the time: 12%
- Sometimes: 27%
- Never 45%

How would you prefer your homework to be assigned?

- Daily: 36%
- Weekly (on a Monday to be completed for Friday): 64%

Which of the following would you prefer?

- Only written Maths homework: 40%
- Only written Spellings homework: 11%
- A little written (maths and spellings) homework and oral homework every day: 49%

Teacher Responses:

- Week on/Week off homework: 0.05%
- 2 Weeks off homework before Halloween/ Christmas/ Easter: 25%
- No homework in June: 50%
- Assign homework on Monday for Friday of that week: 70%
- No written homework: 20%
- Weekly Projects: 15%