



St. Peter's National School
Maynooth Road Dunboyne Co. Meath A86 RX96 Tel: (01) 8026741

Homework Policy

The purpose of Homework provision is to foster independence, self-reliance, self-esteem, co-operation, responsibility and lifelong learning. Homework provides an opportunity for reinforcement of what children learn in school and scope for discussions at home around new learning. It encourages parental involvement in their child's education and provides a further opportunity to strengthen the home-school learning link.

In general, homework is meant to be achievable for the child working independently and to the best of his/her ability. However, there is also times when homework will require a parent to "work with" their child to complete a task. Homework is normally prepared by the teacher in class. It can be used to practice what is done in school or can be designed to challenge children's ability and provide opportunities for creativity.

Why give homework?

- To re-enforce learning
- To provide a link between teacher and parent
- To develop concentration skills and work ethic
- To provide an opportunity to celebrate and practise new skills
- To encourage independence skills appropriate to a child's developmental stage
- Homework is meant to be achievable by a child, i.e. it provides an opportunity to practice topics already covered.
- Children are expected to do their homework to the best of their ability – no more, no less.
- Homework should be a positive experience – strong communication between home and school is of the utmost importance to ensure that this is the case for each child when completing their homework.

Homework Policy Review

In January, 2023 the staff of St. Peter's National School began a review process of the school's homework policy. This involved consultation with the staff, parents and pupils. Staff reviewed the current homework practices in the school and questions for parent and pupil questionnaires were devised at an initial meeting. Parents completed an online google form questionnaire on their experiences of homework. They completed one questionnaire for each of their children enrolled. The purpose of this was to reflect the individualised nature of the homework experience for each child. Children in J1-6th class also completed a google form on their experience of homework. The findings of these questionnaires were discussed and inform this updated policy. They are summarised below.

Findings - Parent questionnaire:

44 responses were submitted (some families submitted multiple responses where siblings were concerned). 62% of families responded to the survey.

- 74% of respondents recorded a positive response to their child's experience when completing their homework.
- The responses appear to reflect individual abilities observed in school.
- Responses indicate the homework is understood by all and that expectations are clear.
- 93% responded that homework is mainly academic.
- 82% would like active homework.
- 80% would like mindfulness homework.
- Parents identified project work, creative writing, SESE areas and soft skills as other areas to develop through homework.
- Majority of parents reported positively on Mathletics being used as a homework programme.
- Majority of parents reported positively on Reading Eggs being used as a homework programme but less positive experiences were reported from parents of children in the senior classes.
- Parents identify maths, reading and project work as the most beneficial homework assigned.
- Parents responses on 'the most challenging aspects of homework' varied, including handwriting, Gaeilge, Maths tasks and spelling. The responses reflect children's individual abilities.
- Parents identified News2Day, cooking and soft skills as areas that would be beneficial for homework.
- 86% of parents report homework to be balanced in terms of written and learning activities.
- 80% of parents report homework is appropriately differentiated for their child.
- Parents would like to be aware of how homework is being monitored by teachers.

Findings – Parent questionnaire Sonas and Spraoi

6 responses were submitted. 50% of families in Sonas and Spraoi responded.

- All responses stated that Seesaw was a useful communication tool
- Responses stated they love seeing photos of the children's day in school
- 5 out of the 6 respondents were confident in the use of Seesaw
- All responses indicated they would like 1 homework task set a week, reflective of their child's current IEP targets.

Findings – Pupil questionnaire:

All children in JI-6th class completed this survey – 74 children in total

- Mental Maths, reading and Spellings for Me were noted as popular activities by the children.
- Reading Eggs, Spellings for Me and Gaeilge Learning homework were noted as the most challenging.
- Art, history, Geography, science and active homework were all noted as activities the children would like to do as part of their homework.
- 87% of the children responded that they would like active homework as part of their homework.
- 61% of the children responded that they would like mindfulness homework as part of their homework.
- 60% of the children responded that they found Reading Eggs beneficial as part of their homework, there was a significant difference between the positive responses from the Junior end compared to the senior end.
- 72% of the children responded that they found Mathletics beneficial as part of their homework.

Staff responses:

- Children in 3rd-6th class had very negative views on Reading Eggs but the Junior children really enjoy it.
- Staff need to link in termly with the parents in Sonas and Spraoi to ensure they are familiar and confident with Seesaw and to check if they need support in any aspect of navigating Seesaw as a communication tool.

- An outline of homework being provided at the beginning of the week is viewed as very positive and provides families with autonomy and flexibility over when to complete homework, rather than the daily provided homework.
- Staff recognised the desire for more creativity in homework experiences in both parents and pupil responses. The reviewed policy takes this into account.
- Staff recognise parents desire for increased opportunities for differentiation – the reviewed policy highlights the possibilities for differentiation in the completion of homework.
- Homework is currently perceived to be mainly academic – staff would like to add in other types of homework in responses to the questionnaires and to keep it a positive experience for all.
- The use of Reading Eggs will continue in J1-2nd class as it is noted as a very positive programme by both parents and pupils but it will be discontinued in the senior classes 3rd-6th class
- A new literacy app to be researched and trialled for the senior end of the school.
- Parents need to be encouraged to communicate their child’s experience of homework so that appropriate differentiation can be provided if necessary to cater for areas that are challenging.
- Outline how homework is being checked in school and how often in the updated policy.

How often is homework given?

- Homework is given on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays.
- If homework has been neglected during the week, without prior explanation, teachers will make contact with home to discuss this.
- Sometimes at the discretion of the class teacher or the principal, children are given “homework off” as a treat or as acknowledgment of some special occasion.

Homework will now be set in blocks. In certain blocks the homework will be assigned and focused on supporting the teaching and learning in school. During other blocks, the homework will focus on choice and providing children with increased opportunities for creativity.

The schedule for this is as follows:

Month	Homework Type
September/October	Assigned Homework
November/December	Choice Board and Project work focused
January – April	Assigned Homework
May/June	Choice Board and Project work focused

What is the content of homework?

- Ideally homework will contain a balance between reading tasks, learning tasks and written tasks. This is the case for during assigned homework months and choice board months.
- This balance will be maintained as much as possible but will vary depending on the topics covered and class level/child’s ability.
- It should be noted that homework time devoted to reading and learning is as important as written work.
- Homework will regularly contain reading, spellings, tables, written work, pieces to be “learned by heart”, drawing/colouring, collecting information/items and finishing work started in class.

When should parents communicate with the teachers about homework?

Parents are requested to sign their child’s homework journal each day. Parents have the opportunity to write feedback in the homework journal also. Parents should communicate with teachers about homework:

- When your child cannot do homework due to family circumstances/illness.

- When your child cannot do homework because she/he cannot understand some aspect.
- If the time being spent on homework is often longer than the recommended amount of time outlined in this policy.

How often do teachers monitor homework?

- All homework is corrected by teachers by the end of the week.
- As children get older and learn to work independently, some items of homework are checked less often.
- Some items of homework (and classwork) may be checked by children themselves under the direction of the teacher. This can be a useful part of the learning process for children.

How often should parents monitor homework?

- Parents should check and sign their child's homework journal every evening.
- The pupil's journal is an important record of the child's homework. It is also a valuable means of communication between parents and teachers.
- Ideally, all written messages to your child's teacher in relation to homework should be put in the homework journal.
- Please check that your child ticks each item of homework when completed.

How much time should my child spend on their homework?

The following section of this policy details the homework given to each class level and also highlights the amount of time children should spend on their homework. Please note, different children will complete the same homework in different lengths of time. Time spent will vary from day to day and also from the beginning to the end of the school year. It is important to remember that it is the quality and not the quantity of homework that matters. The suggested timeframes are general guidelines only.

Assigned Homework - Junior Infants and Senior Infants

Homework for Junior and Senior Infants should take no longer than 20 minutes. This will vary for each child. If homework is taking your child longer than this, parents are encouraged to raise this with their class teacher. A homework note for the week is sent home every Monday for the infant classes. Please see sample homework note below. Parents are requested to sign the weekly homework note. This provides an opportunity for communication between home and school learning.

Junior and Senior Infants Assigned Homework - SAMPLE

Day	Homework Junior Infants - SAMPLE	Tick when completed	Day	Homework Senior Infant - SAMPLE	Tick when completed
Monday	Crash Sight Words Sound Flashcards Reader		Monday	Crash Sight Words Reader 1 First Half Busy at Maths p19 & p20	
Tuesday	Crash Sight Words Busy at Maths Workbook Page 14 & 15 Reader		Tuesday	Crash Sight Words Reader 1 Second Half Highlighted Activity at the back of Reader 1	
Wednesday	Crash Sight Words Reading Eggs Assignment Lesson 5 'at' Reader		Wednesday	Crash Sight Words Reader 2 First Half All Write Now p37	
Thursday	Crash Sight Words All Write Now Workbook Page 31 Reader		Thursday	Crash Sight Words Reader 2 Second Half Highlighted Activity at the back of Reader 2	
Any Day(s)	-One activity from Active Homework Sheet		Any day(s)	Reading Eggs Assignment- Lesson 75 'where' One activity from the Active Homework Sheet	
Parent signature _____			Parent signature _____		

Junior and Senior Infants Homework Monitoring

Reading: In Junior and Senior Infants the children's readers are changed on Monday's and Wednesdays. In Junior and Senior Infants, every child's reading is listened to twice a week – Tuesdays/Thursdays or Wednesdays/Fridays.

Written work: All written work is corrected by Friday each week.

Choice homework – Junior and Senior Infants

During 'choice' months a choice board will be provided to infant classes. The learning opportunities on the choice board focus on life skills, creativity, active homework and mindfulness activities. A sample of homework for infant classes during 'choice' months is detailed below.

Assigned Homework to be completed daily	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One activity from choice board • Crash Sight Words • Reader • Highlighted activity from Reader on Tuesdays and Thursdays
--	---

Practice putting on and zipping up coat	Wash plates after dinner	Making own bed	Cosmic Yoga on YouTube	Go to the playground
Water the plants	Wipe the table after dinner	Paying for items at the till in a shop	Cycle bike for 20 minutes	Exercises: 10 Jumping Jacks 10 Lunges 10 Squats
Mindful Colouring	Wipe the table after dinner	Practice putting on gloves	Wipe the table after dinner	Five Finger Breathing Exercise
Practice Skipping	Practice folding towels	Water the plants	Go Noodle on Youtube	Trampoline for 10 minutes
Practice packing their lunchbox	Read a book	STAR Breathing Technique	Learn a parents phone number	Practice tying shoelaces

Homework for 1st and 2nd Class should take no longer than 35-40 minutes. This will vary for each child. If homework is taking your child longer than this, parents are encouraged to raise this with their class teacher. A homework note for the week is sent home every Monday for 1st and 2nd classes. Please see sample homework note below.

First and Second Class Assigned Homework – SAMPLE

Day	Homework	Tick when completed
Monday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental Maths • Reading • Spellings and Sentences 	
Tuesday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental Maths • Reading • Spellings and Sentences 	
Wednesday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental Maths • Reading • Spellings and Sentences 	
Thursday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental Maths • Reading • Spellings and Sentences 	
Any day(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading Eggs Assignment- Lesson 75 'where' • Mathematics Assignments • One activity from the Active Homework Sheet 	
Second Class ONLY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fuaiméanna agus Focail 2 activities per day. • Reading activity 	

1st and 2nd Class Homework Monitoring

Reading: In 1st and 2nd class the children's readers are changed on Monday's and Wednesdays. All children's reading in 1st and 2nd class is listened to twice a week – Tuesdays/Thursdays or Wednesdays/Fridays.

Written work: All written work is corrected by Friday each week.

Choice Board Homework – 1st and 2nd Class

During 'choice' months a choice board will be provided to 1st and 2nd classes. The learning opportunities on the choice board focus on life skills, creativity, active homework and mindfulness activities. A sample of homework for 1st and 2nd classes during 'choice' months is detailed below.

Assigned Homework to be completed daily	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One activity from choice board • Reading • Spellings and Sentences • (Second class only - Fuaimenna agus Focail)
--	---

The choice board will be active for 4 weeks, colour in 4 activities each week that you have completed. At times, teachers may set a project for completion instead of the choice board tasks. Details of this project will be set out closer to the date.

Help tidy up after dinner	Help cook dinner/ bake cupcakes	Tidy room/ make bed	Cosmic kids yoga on Youtube	Go to the playground
Go swimming	Water the plants	Pay for a few items at the till in the shop	Cycle bike for 20 minutes	Exercises: 10 jumping jacks 10 lunges 10 squats
Mindful colouring	Practice skipping	Play a ball game for 20 minutes	GoNoddle on youtube	Trampoline for 10 minutes
Practice packing their lunchbox for school	Read a book	Learn a parents phone number	Practice tying shoelaces	Write a short story
DJ Raphi dances on youtube	Set the table for dinner	Help create a shopping list	Go for a walk to identify trees/plants	Do a jigsaw

Assigned homework 3rd and 4th Class

Homework for 3rd and 4th Class should take no longer than 50 minutes. This will vary for each child. If homework is taking your child longer than this, parents are encouraged to raise this with their class teacher. A homework note for the week is sent home every Monday for 3rd and 4th classes. Please see sample homework note below.

3rd and 4th Class Assigned Homework – SAMPLE

Subject	Activities				Tick
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	
Maths	Mental Maths Monday – Thursday Tables x4				
Gaeilge	Fuaimenna & Focail (F&F) Aonad 14 A&B	Fuaimenna & Focail (F&F) Aonad 14 C&D	Fuaimenna & Focail (F&F) Aonad 14 G&H	Fuaimenna & Focail (F&F) Aonad 14 Last Section	
Spelling	Spellings for Me Unit 17 – learn 3 words, put them into sentences and complete Activity 1	Spellings for Me Unit 17 – learn 3 words, put them into sentences and complete Activity 2	Spellings for Me Unit 17 – learn 3 words, put them into sentences and complete Activity 3	Spellings for Me Unit 17 – learn 3 words, put them into sentences and complete Activity 4	
	SWST spellings Week				
Reading	Read for 10 minutes				

Parents are requested to sign the weekly homework note. This provides an opportunity for communication between home and school learning.

3rd and 4th Class Homework Monitoring

Homework is assigned at the beginning of the week. Teachers explain to children how to complete the work over the course of the week rather than leaving it all to one night. In 3rd and 4th class the layout of the homework supports children in organising the completion of homework across the week. All homework is corrected by Friday each week.

Choice Board Homework – 3rd and 4th Class

During ‘choice’ months a choice board will be provided to 3rd and 4th classes. The learning opportunities on the choice board focus on life skills, creativity, active homework and mindfulness activities. A sample choice board for 3rd and 4th classes is below.

Assigned Homework to be completed daily	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading 15 minutes per day • Spellings for Me – learning only • Gaeilge – learning only • Tables • SWST spellings • Choose one activity from the choice board below.
--	---

The choice board will be active for 3 weeks, colour in 4 activities each week that you have completed. Week 4 will be project work set by your teacher. Details of this project will be set out closer to the date.

Lego: Design a marble run. Build a farm, a robot, something with wheels or a bridge.	Baking: Follow a recipe and bake or cook something.	Watch News2day and write 5 sentences about what you have learned.	Write a book report on a book you have finished reading.	Create an obstacle course and challenge members of your family to complete. Record everyone’s time
Plan 5 dinners for your family.	Write out a shopping list for 1 week.	Read to a grandparent, parent, sibling or pet.	Write and post a letter to a friend or relation.	Choose 1 Spellings for Me activity.
Weed the garden. Sweep outside.	Wash the dishes for a week.	Make your bed for a week.	Clean the bathroom.	Tidy your room.
Go for a walk and notice all the signs posted as Gaeilge.	Draw a map of your house/neighbourhood.	Write a poem eg. Acrostic, Haiku, Seasonal	Create a dance to a popular song.	Draw/paint a portrait of your family.
Write up a fire safety plan with your family.	Record on a graph all the vegetables eaten in the week.	Write the next chapter of a book you are reading.	Birdwatch/bird feeder	Make scrambled eggs on toast.

Assigned homework 5th and 6th Class

Homework for 5th and 6th Class should take no longer than 60 minutes. This will vary for each child. If homework is taking your child longer than this, parents are encouraged to raise this with their class teacher. A homework note for the week is sent home every Monday for 5th and 6th classes. Please see sample homework note below.

5th and 6th Class Assigned Homework - SAMPLE

Subject	Activities	Tick
English	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Reading for 15mins every day- Spellings for Me – Unit 16- Reading eggs assignment x 1	
Maths	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Mental Maths - Mon, Tues, Wed, Thurs Week 18- Mathletics assignment x 1	
Irish	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Siopadóireacht – learning vocab and phrases	
Other learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Aimsir Chaite – Revision- Country Project – presentation- Active Homework – Choose 1 or 2	

Parents are requested to sign the weekly homework note. This provides an opportunity for communication between home and school learning.

5th and 6th Class Homework Monitoring

Homework is assigned at the beginning of the week. Teachers explain to children how to complete the work over the course of the week rather than leaving it all to one night. In 5th and 6th class the layout of the homework encouraged children to be independent in completing their homework across the week. All homework is corrected by Friday each week.

Choice Board Homework 5th and 6th Class

During 'choice' months a choice board will be provided to infant classes. The learning opportunities on the choice board focus on life skills, creativity, active homework and mindfulness activities. A sample choice board for 5th and 6th classes is below.

Assigned Homework to be completed daily	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading 15 minutes per day • Spellings for Me – learning only • Gaeilge – learning only • Tables • SWST spellings • Choose one activity from the choice board below.
--	---

The choice board will be active for 3 weeks, colour in 4 activities each week that you have completed. Week 4 will be project work set by your teacher. Details of this project will be set out closer to the date.

Design a card for someone, eg, birthday, thank you, get well soon.	Listen to 3 of your favourite songs and have a dance around your bedroom/kitchen.	Play a board game with your family eg. Monopoly, scrabble.	Watch a programme on TG4. What did you like about it "Is maith liom..."	Write out your address and memorise your parent's mobile number.
Go Noodle yoga activity	Do a jigsaw	Meditate for 10 minutes.	Make a Maths Trail.	Watch a science experiment on Youtube.
Design a treasure hunt with 6 steps.	Complete an act of kindness.	Write a gratitude journal for this week.	Offer to do an extra chore around the house.	Mathletics activity.
Literacy App	Art: use recyclable materials to build a spaceship.	Learn how to do the laundry.	Create an orchestra using household instruments.	Call a relative for a catch-up chat.
Pick an Irish landmark. Design and write an information leaflet about it that would encourage others to visit it.	Write about the funniest thing that has ever happened to you.	If you were President for the day what new rules would you make? Write them down.	Write down five questions you would like to ask a celebrity of your choice.	Become the Recycling Inspector in your house for a week. Let your family what they did well and what areas can be improved upon.

- In consultation with parents, teachers will assign homework tasks appropriate to the child's IEP.
- Tasks will be reviewed on an on-going basis
- Tasks will be assigned on Seesaw and parents are encouraged to communicate how the homework tasks are going through Seesaw to enable effective review.

How much help should parents give?

Parents should try to help their children with homework by:

1. Providing them with a suitable place and time to do their homework
 2. To prevent interruptions or distractions, like T.V. or other children.
- Parents in the JI-2nd class are encouraged to listen to their reading everynight.
 - Children should do written homework themselves and parents should only help when the child has difficulty.
 - If a child has difficulty with homework, the parents should help the child to overcome the difficulty with further explanation or examples, but not by actually doing the homework for the child. In this case the parent should write a note to the teacher explaining the problem.
 - Extra time should not be spent on a task which is causing the child and or parent undue stress/upset. In this instance the parent should write a note or speak to class teacher.

When should homework be done?

- Each family situation is different – both parents working, child minders etc. Ideally, homework should be done before any television is watched, soon after school while your child is still fresh. However, some children need a break before starting homework.
- The school recommends children have a snack and a short active break before starting their homework.
- Some children may require some movement breaks during their homework. This should be structured.

Additional Needs:

- Some children will need additional supports for their homework
- In relation to children who need additional supports, parents and teachers will meet at the beginning of the school year to discuss appropriate differentiation of homework to best support the child's needs.
- The differentiation of homework will be reviewed on an on-going basis to ensure it continues to be a positive experience for all.

Remember: If homework is a stressful experience between parent and child, something is wrong! This leads to poor learning and defeats the whole purpose. Should this happen on a regular basis, please contact the class teacher.

This homework policy was ratified by the Board of Management on _____.

Signed: _____ (Chairperson)

Signed: _____ (Principal)