



## Clifden Community School Homework Policy

This policy was drawn up in consultation with staff, students, parents and the Board of Management and with reference to the School's Mission Statement.

*Our mission statement in Clifden Community School is to continue to provide a challenging educational environment in which all members of the school community irrespective of ability level or background can realise individual and collective potential in a caring environment which values and strives for quality and creativity in all that it offers.*

*We are committed to preparing our students for adult life by teaching Responsibility, Respect and Personal Regard for self and others under our banner of Lux, Pax, Felicitas - Light Peace and Happiness - in an atmosphere that encourages positive self-esteem.*

### Rationale for Homework

A synthesis of more than a dozen studies of the effects of homework in various subjects showed that the assignment and completion of homework yield positive effects on academic achievement. The effects are almost tripled when teachers take time to grade the work, make corrections and specific comments on improvements that can be made, and discuss problems and solutions with individual students or the whole class. Homework also seems particularly effective in second level schooling. *(Walberg & Paik (2000) Effective Educational Practices (International Academy of Education)*

In Clifden Community School homework is viewed as part of a student's education – it encourages students to take responsibility for their own learning and helps to develop skills for life-long learning. Homework refers to any work which students are asked to do outside class time. Teachers assign homework on a regular basis. The completion of homework tasks is compulsory.

### Objectives of Homework

1. to reinforce class learning
2. to provide students with opportunity to practice what they learn
3. to develop resourcefulness, self-reliance and good study habits
4. to promote a sense of achievement and pride in one's work

If these objectives are to be realised it is important that:

1. Homework is relevant to the lessons to be learned and is in keeping with students' abilities.
2. Homework assigned is challenging and not concerned primarily with recall of factual information and transcription.
3. Amounts assigned are reasonable and may involve oral, aural, reading and research activity, as well as written work.
4. Homework is carefully assessed, marked and dated.
5. Teachers insist on properly maintained exercise copies and well presented work from all classes.

### Homework Planning and Content

Each subject grouping is expected, as part of subject-planning, to develop guidelines on the amount of homework and the balance between written/practical/project work and oral/learning/aural work for each year group.

Parents are advised that there are basically three types of homework - revision of work done in class during the school day, completion of exercises assigned in class, and preparation for the next day's work. At no time can a student say that he/she has no homework. Homework and class/school-based assessment are measurements of student progress, and are opportunities to develop motivation and support revision.

### Homework Guidance for Students

1. Each student is required to record homework assigned in the homework journal.
2. Each student will also keep a homework copy if his/her teacher specifies this.
3. All copies are to be kept neat and tidy and free from "graffiti".
4. All students are expected to complete all homework to the best of their ability. Clarification should be sought from the teacher on any aspect of homework of which they are unsure.
5. Homework assigned should be available to the teacher on time, and in a tidy, legible and organised form.
6. Where a student is absent from class for any reason, it is the responsibility of the student to find out the details of work missed and homework assigned. This applies also to classes missed due to involvement in school-related activities.
7. Students can expect homework on a daily basis. In general a minimum of 1.5 hours per evening is expected from first years, a minimum of 2 hours from second years and three hours minimum from third years. Between three and four hours per evening is expected from Senior Cycle classes.
8. Parents / Guardians will be notified if a students' performance at homework does not meet the school's expectations. A student's homework journal must be signed by one of his parents /guardians each week.

### Monitoring of Homework

Teachers, will keep a record of homework submitted by students, which will be used to inform parents about progress particularly at parent-teacher meetings. Teachers examine each case of non-presentation of homework on an individual basis. In the first instance teachers should apply their own sanction and communicate with parents via a note in the student's journal. If despite teacher interventions, there is no improvement, a letter may be sent home and the classroom teacher should bring the matter to the attention of the Year Head or Class Tutor. The sanctions set down in the Code of Behaviour will apply.

If a teacher feels that there is an underlying problem they are advised to contact the relevant Year Head. It may be the case that a student is experiencing difficulty with the subject area or is experiencing other difficulties. If these difficulties persist the issue may be referred to the Student Support Team or Additional Educational Needs Coordinator as appropriate.

Class Tutors and/or Year Heads will monitor homework informally with students and subject teachers through spot checks, and will note feedback from students, teachers and parents. The implementation of the Homework Policy will also be reviewed by the subject group and at staff meetings.

### Assessment for Learning

The teacher will check homework. Teacher feedback on homework may identify areas where the student has done well or excelled, and provide guidance on how specific aspects of the work might be improved. Feedback should be supportive and meaningful for the student, teacher and parent. This kind of feedback will be most helpful when the learning intentions and criteria for success are clearly understood by the students. The teacher's comments should relate to the task in hand, the learning intention and the criteria for success.

**STUDY SKILLS:** Students, teachers and parents are advised that effective homework and study skills are complementary. Individual teachers in their various subjects may reference study skills. The Career Guidance Counsellor may also take classes from time to time to explain the different methods, which can be used to facilitate learning and the retention of information. The SPHE curriculum addresses study skills in the module 'Self-management: A sense of purpose'. This module requires a review of effective work and study practices including organising homework, personal work schedules and study skills.

## Homework Guidance for Parents:

Parents can aid the success of their child in completing homework through:

1. Provision of a suitable study environment
  - a desk and chair in a quiet location, free from distractions (TV, mobile phone, music etc)
  - good lighting
2. Discussion of homework - parental support and interest can have a significant impact on the quality of work done.
3. Signing the homework journal weekly and noting any teacher comments. In the event of homework not being completed, a note of explanation should be sent to the teacher.
4. It is not recommended that students engage in part-time work during the school week. Weekend work should not be allowed to interfere unduly with academic work.
5. Fully supporting the school in any sanctions used to deal with matters relating to homework. Failure to meet homework requirements is taken seriously by the school, as neglect of homework is likely to result in underachievement.

*Ratified by BOM Nov 2015*