



St Olaf's National School

Homework Policy

We believe that homework is an important part of a child's education. It helps to consolidate what has been taught during the school day and it also provides a link between school and home.

1) Why give homework?

- To re-inforce what the child learns during the day.
- To provide a link between teacher and parent
- To develop a child's concentration skills and develop a work ethic
- Homework is meant to be achievable by a child, i.e. it provides an opportunity to practice work already done. It is normally prepared by the teacher in class. However, sometimes with middle & senior classes, some homework is designed to challenge children's ability and provide opportunities for creativity.
- Children are expected to do their homework to the best of their individual ability - no more, no less.

2) How often is homework given?

- Homework is given on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays but not on Fridays. There are two exceptions:
 - If homework has been neglected during the week
 - In senior classes some project work is undertaken at weekends
- 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 or as part of their reward for attaining 'Pupil of the Week' or other award.
- Please note extra homework may sometimes be given during the week or at the weekend if a child has not done homework, made a suitable effort or presented untidy work.

3) What is the content of homework?

- Ideally homework will contain a balance between reading tasks, learning tasks and written tasks.
- This balance is not always possible and can vary considerably from day to day. However, 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.
- Children often feel that reading and "learning by heart" is not real homework. Parents can play an important role in listening to reading and items to be learned ensuring this work is done well.

4) How much (time) homework?

The following are guidelines for time spent at homework. 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 following are general guidelines only:

- Junior Infants 0 - 10 minutes
- Senior Infants Up to 20 minutes
- Rang 1 & Rang 2 Up to 30 minutes
- Rang 3 & Rang 4 Up to 40 minutes
- Rang 5 & Rang 6 Up to 1 hour

Homework is given from Monday to Thursday. Normally there is no homework at weekends or on a school day just before a public holiday. However, children in middle and senior classes may sometimes be required to work independently on projects at weekends.

5) **How much help should parents give?**

- Parents should try to help their children with homework by:
 - providing them with a suitable place and time to do their homework
 - preventing interruptions or distractions, like T.V. , mobile phone, internet or other children
- 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. If a child consistently fails to complete homework within the suggested guidelines (above), then there is probably good cause to contact the teacher. In such instances, it is perfectly ok for a parent to allow the child to stop after the guideline time has elapsed and to write a note explaining this to the class teacher.
- Shared reading is not homework in the regular sense and it is simply meant to be an enjoyable exercise between parent and child.

6) **How often should parents monitor homework?**

- Parents should check and sign a 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 should be put in the homework journal (additional pages available at the end of the journal)
- Please check that your child records its homework neatly in the correct page and ticks each item of homework when completed.
- Our principal method of communication with home is by email but other notes to parents may occasionally be folded and placed in the current day of the homework journal. Please check your child's journal for such notes on a regular basis.

7) **How often do teachers monitor homework?**

- Ideally, teachers like to check homework on a daily basis. However with large class numbers it is not always possible to check each child's homework every day.
- As children get older and learn to work independently, some items of homework are checked less often e.g. every second day or once per week.
- 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.

8) **When should parents communicate with the teachers about homework?**

- When your child cannot do homework due to family circumstances
- When your child cannot do homework because she/he cannot understand some aspect.
- If the time being spent at homework is often longer than the recommended amount of time.

9) **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 may need a break before starting homework. Homework should never be left until morning-time before school

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.