

St Patrick's Academy, Dungannon



Homework Policy (Draft)

'Achieving Excellence Together'

May 2025

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MISSION STATEMENT: *'Achieving Excellence Together'*

RATIONALE

In St Patrick's Academy, we believe that homework plays an essential role in supporting effective teaching and learning, both inside and outside the classroom. Homework promotes independent learning, provides opportunities for pupils to develop and practice key skills, and encourages pupils to reflect on their understanding of a given topic. Evidence from The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) stated that homework has a positive impact on pupil progress, especially in secondary schools.

Our policy will provide a guideline for staff, pupils and parents to follow so that we can promote a consistent approach to the preparation, completion and marking of homework, so that all pupils can achieve their potential.

AIMS OF THE POLICY

In St Patrick's Academy we believe effective setting of homework will:

- Promote a climate of self-discipline and independence so that pupils understand the importance of taking responsibility for their own learning;
- Develop independent study habits and lifelong learning skills amongst all of our pupils;
- Create opportunities to practice and reflect on skills learned within the classroom;
- Consolidate teaching and extend learning opportunities beyond the classroom;
- Provide opportunities to regularly assess individual progress;
- Prepare pupils for internal assessments as well as external examinations;
- Raise achievement and ensure progression of learning.

TYPES OF HOMEWORK

Homework tasks vary and may include:

- **Written Tasks** such as essays, reports, problem-solving questions, research or revision/summary notes, short paragraphs, translations, comprehension tasks;
- **Non-Written Tasks** such as reading, research, artwork, revising theory, learning vocabulary or key definitions, speaking and listening practice, recordings.

RESPONSIBILITIES

St Patrick's Academy recognises that all members of our school community have a responsibility to ensure they work in partnership to promote the effectiveness of homework. Staff, pupils and parents should work together to ensure that this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.

Pupils will:

- Record all homework set in their planner, on the day that it is given, and ask the teacher to clarify any concerns before leaving the room;
- Complete homework in a timely manner and to the best standard possible;
- Inform the teacher at the beginning of the class if they have encountered any difficulties with completing their homework;

- Complete all corrections suggested by the teacher before the next lesson;
- Catch up on missed homework by speaking to the teacher **or** asking a classmate. If the absence is planned, pupils should ask the teacher in advance for work or handouts. Pupils should complete any missed work prior to the next class, and if they encounter any difficulties, speak to the teacher.
- Make use of the supervised study facilities to complete any outstanding homework.

Parents will:

- Use planners to check for homework due and sign their child's planner each week;
- Establish a supportive routine and positive attitude towards homework;
- Ensure that their child has a quiet space and time to complete their homework;
- Contact the school, either by telephone or a note in the planner, should their child have any difficulty completing work set;
- Support attendance at mentoring, revision, and homework clubs, when necessary.

Teachers will:

- Set homework that is meaningful, challenging and encourages independent research;
- Ensure that quality homework tasks are set and monitored;
- Follow departmental policy regarding the setting and assessing of homework;
- Communicate any concerns by writing a note in their child's planner;
- Use homework as an effective assessment strategy.

Head of Department will:

- Oversee the effective delivery of the school's Homework Policy within their department;
- Provide clear guidelines to colleagues regarding the effective setting and assessing of homework;
- Monitor the quality of homework tasks set by teachers;
- Support teachers in ensuring the timely submission of homework tasks from pupils.

Form tutors and Head of Year will:

- Check and sign planners weekly (Form tutor will check planners weekly and Head of Year upon referral or spot checks)
- Monitor comments from class teachers and follow the school's Positive Behaviour for Learning Policy, when necessary;
- Use form period to speak to pupils who are consistently failing to submit homework;
- Promote the importance of homework at pastoral meetings, during PD and at assemblies;
- Communicate with parents/carers, when necessary.

GUIDELINES

When setting homework:

- Pupils should be given a minimum of three days' notice for the completion of a substantial homework task (and at least one week's notice for a test or core assessment task). There may be a variation in deadlines according to the Key Stage;
- The homework task should be planned, meaningful and a challenge to complete;
- Details should be fully explained, and displayed clearly on the board, ideally at the start of the lesson, and pupils should be given time to copy it down;
- The task should not be excessively long or repetitive.

DURATION AND FREQUENCY

Teachers should be mindful that many of our pupils pursue a range of extra-curricular activities each evening and should not feel obliged to set homework at the weekends or during school holidays for KS3 pupils. Additionally, teachers also should bear in mind that pupils' workload can increase significantly before assessment phase deadlines and homework demands should be discussed with the class at these times, to avoid overload.

Pupils should manage their time effectively during the course of the week to ensure that homework is completed:

Key Stage 3 Year 8:	Maximum of 5 - 6 hours per week
Key Stage 3 Year 9:	Maximum of 6 - 7 hours per week
Key Stage 3 Year 10:	Maximum of 7 - 8 hours per week
Key Stage 4 Year 11 & 12:	Maximum of 8 hours per week
Key Stage 5: Year 13 & 14:	Maximum of 9 hours (3 subjects) or 12 hours (4 subjects) per week

which includes independent study time at school

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS (SEN)

Homework for SEN pupils should be set in line with recommendations made within the pupil's Individual Education Plan (IEP/PLP) and adapted to suit their individual needs. SEN pupils may require additional assistance to record homework accurately in their planner.

FEEDBACK FOR IMPROVEMENT

Effective feedback has been shown to have a significant impact on pupil outcomes. Feedback which is effective will focus on the learner rather than the task and will provide specific guidance on how to improve or on what is particularly good about a response. Dylan Wiliam suggests that the only thing that really matters about feedback is *the reaction of the recipient*. If students don't act on the feedback, it's meaningless.

Effective feedback can include:

- verbal feedback;
- written feedback;
- whole class feedback;
- self/peer evaluation;
- digital feedback;
- model answers.

While written feedback is traditionally valued highly, studies indicate that verbal feedback can have a slightly higher impact overall while digital feedback has a slightly lower impact (Education Endowment Foundation).

Teachers will endeavour to ensure that feedback is given within one week of work being submitted.

Teachers will consider a range of marking strategies, in line with departmental policies.

The frequency of feedback will vary during the academic year according to the tasks being completed.

CELEBRATING SUCCESS

Recognition should be given to pupils who complete homework to the best of their ability. There are a range of strategies available to teachers to recognise the efforts of pupils in relation to homework, such as: positive comments on lesson monitor or in student planners, praise, displaying good work, a phone call home, reward/merit scheme and certificates.

SANCTIONS

If the homework task has been well planned with clear success criteria provided and a realistic deadline, then there is less likelihood that pupils will fail to understand what was expected. However, inevitably there will be occasions when pupils fail to complete homework for a range of reasons. In such instances teachers should also use their professional judgment before issuing sanctions and Heads of Year will apply The Code of Conduct as outlined in the Positive Behaviour for Learning Policy.

Reviewed: June 2025

To be reviewed: June 2026