



**College of the Immaculate Conception,
Summerhill, Sligo**

Homework Policy

Ratified _____

Signed _____

Date _____

1. **Rationale**

The college community seeks to promote a love of learning among its students. Autonomous learning is central to the educational philosophy of the College of the Immaculate Conception and is particular to the talents, learning style and character of each individual student. Homework is a central element of the school's effort to promote autonomous learning.

This policy aims to inform the school community of the school's position regarding homework and thereby to promote consistency and individual engagement in the approach to homework. Just as students have individual learning styles so too the school community accepts that teachers may have reasonable grounds for adopting different teaching and assessment styles. This policy gives practical expression to the school's mission to foster students' spiritual, moral, intellectual, physical and creative development and thereby develop their full potential. Teachers, parents and students play a role in and carry equal responsibility for implementing the policy.

2. **Mission Statement**

“The College of the Immaculate Conception (Summerhill College) is a Voluntary Catholic Secondary School under the trusteeship of the Diocese of Elphin.

In partnership with parents the College strives to educate their children in accordance with the teachings of Jesus Christ and his Church. It aims to foster students' spiritual, moral, intellectual, physical and creative development and thereby develop their full potential.”

3. The purpose of homework

- a) It consolidates and reinforces skills and understanding developed in class.
- b) It encourages students to develop the skills, confidence, self-discipline, organisation and motivation needed to study effectively on their own. This is an essential tool to prepare for life-long learning and intellectual flexibility.
- c) It builds on and develops learning in class, for example through additional reading.
- d) It enables students to prepare for future lessons.
- e) It fosters student independence in the management of their learning.
- f) It directs research.
- g) It provides teachers with feedback on student progress.
- h) It can be tailored to the individual learning requirements of the individual student.
From the beginning of First Year each student is expected to establish a homework routine.
- i) Each student is expected to keep a record of all homework in his school journal, which is produced by the school specifically for this purpose.
- j) Every student should have at least one homework copy dedicated to each subject. They must enter the written homework into the correct subject copy. It should be dated e.g. homework for day/month/year. The questions and answers should be clearly written. This aids revision.
- k) Students should ensure that they retain their homework after it has been assessed for learning as it is an important record of progress and learning.

4. The amount and nature of homework appropriate for students of different ages:

Best practice suggests that the amount of time that should be spent on homework by students at post primary level, on average, during the week should fall within the following ranges:

- First Year: 1 hour.
- Second Year: 1½ – 2 hours.
- Third Year: 2½ – 3 hours.
- Transition Year: Varies depending on project work and activities. TY students will have homework which includes computer and typing assessments.
- Fifth Year: 3 hours.
- Sixth Year: 3 hours. Weekend study and revision is also essential.
- Leaving Certificate Applied: ½ hour each evening and up to 1 ½ hours when preparing for tasks.

Balancing and organising time is a skill all in the school community can learn through practice. While homework must be completed it must be done in the context of our students living a full and active life – engaging in out of school activities when possible to develop all their abilities and talents.

Some students will complete their tasks quickly and correctly and may appear to have given very little time to their homework. Other students may put in huge amounts of time and effort and appear to enjoy only modest success. Teachers need to consider the varying abilities of students when setting homework or when inspecting homework.

The school expects that all homework is completed on time, presented on time and to the best of the student's ability in a neat and tidy fashion. It is very important that homework, including sanctions for not completing it, should be consistently applied

across the school so that all students see the arrangements as fair. If a student has been absent for any reason the onus is on the student to find out what work has been set and to endeavour to complete it within the time given in as far as is possible.

5. Expectations regarding Homework

Teachers may expect

- a) That students will record all homework in the journal on the day it is assigned and will take note of the date for when it is due.
- b) That students will make an honest effort to complete homework on time.
- c) That all written homework is completed in the designated homework copy for that particular subject. Homework completed on sheets of paper will not be acceptable unless explicitly directed by the teacher.
- d) That students away on school or extracurricular activities will make every effort to get and complete homework given in their absence.
- e) That students will have adequate facilities to enable them to do their homework, i.e., adequate space, light, heat, ventilation, freedom from noise and other interference such as a computer, mobile phone, television, radio, music, etc.
- f) That students will complete the homework using full sentences and elaborating when necessary.
- g) That students will spend time at their studies whether or not work has been assigned.
- h) That if students have homework at weekends that this work will be completed to an appropriate standard for the next day of class. In particular parents should encourage students to complete such school work that may be assigned outside of term time or at weekends.

- i) That parents will communicate via the journal any difficulties with homework and will sign the journal on a weekly basis.

Students may expect

- a) That homework in each subject area will not take up an unreasonable amount of time.
- b) That adequate allowance is made for time-consuming homework, such as essays etc.
- c) That homework will have a clear objective.
- d) That homework will be fully explained.
- e) That adequate time will be given in class for the recording of homework.
- f) That encouragement is given by teachers and parents/guardians to do their best and complete the work.
- g) That teachers will monitor homework and help identify students with particular difficulties.
- h) That teachers will impose appropriate sanctions for uncompleted work e.g. a note in the diary, demerits, detention etc...

Parents/Guardians may expect

- a) That an active interest is taken in homework.
- b) That time is set aside for homework.
- c) That regular checks of the homework copies of each subject takes place.
- d) That the teacher will communicate with parents if homework is not being completed. (e.g. school journal, parent/teacher meetings, etc...)

6. Study Provision

A number of teachers in the college are involved in making a provision for evening study in the college. The cost and times for this are available on request from the school office. Provision of the study facility for students whose financial circumstances may not allow them to participate will be considered on a case by case basis.

7. Study skills

It is very important that students should have frequent and increasing opportunities to develop and consolidate their competence as autonomous learners. Meeting homework deadlines may not be always easy for students. They should not be excused homework, but may need extra help with strategies to manage it. Study skills and managing time are included as part of the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) programme and our guidance counsellor will assist students in improving study skills and exam techniques.

8. Special educational needs

In setting homework for students with special needs teachers are encouraged to balance the right of students to share fully in the work of the class, including homework tasks, with their individual learning needs. These needs may include consolidation and reinforcement of specific skills. Subject teachers will collaborate where possible with learning support teachers to ensure class tasks are manageable and individual skill practice can be incorporated without overloading the student. Where possible, subject teachers will guide the gifted student in their learning and research. Students in the Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) classes may be given homework at the discretion of the class teachers appropriate to and in accordance with their Individualised Education Plan (IEP).

9. Feedback for students

Students look mainly to teachers for a response on the quality of their work. Effective marking and feedback have always placed demands on teachers, but both are fundamental to helping students make progress. Teachers check homework regularly as they deem appropriate in line with student learning needs.

A variety of methods are used to assess homework for learning depending on the content and the age of the student:

- Teacher correction.
- Teacher comments in writing or orally.
- Class correction.
- Class discussion.
- Students exchange work for correction.
- Students write out answers in the form of a test.
- Some items of homework (and class work) may be checked by students themselves under the direction of the teacher. This can be a useful part of the learning process for students.

10. Arrangements for monitoring and evaluating homework policy

The effectiveness of this homework policy needs to be monitored and evaluated. It is envisaged that each subject department monitors homework within the department at subject department meetings. Teachers need to evaluate the quality of homework and the contribution it is making to the individual student's learning. Teachers and students shall have due regard to differentiating their teaching according to student ability. The system can also be evaluated collaboratively through staff appraisal at whole staff or relevant department meetings. The key criterion should be the extent to which the policy is contributing to the progress students make in developing their skills and attitudes as autonomous learners.