

Borrisokane Community College:

Homework Policy

Relationship with School Ethos

Borrisokane Community College's mission statement emphasises the promotion of a caring and committed environment. Our homework policy promotes a whole school approach to homework inclusive of parents/guardians, teachers and students, recognising that homework helps to reinforce learning.

Guidelines for Homework:

Students can be asked to demonstrate understanding through various homework activities including completion of written assignments, project work, presentations, performances, student reflection on learning and planning for improvement/target setting.

Homework can be given in various formats to promote the development of key skills. Allowing student's learning to be visible and giving them the opportunity to plan for improvement.

Types of homework may vary and hence appropriate time should be given regardless of the type of homework given. Time spent on homework will depend on the ability of individual students. The following is a suggested guideline for homework/study.

- First Year: 1.5 hours
- Second Year: 2 hours
- Third Year: 2.5 hours (increasing closer to exam times)
- Transition Year and LCA: may vary depending on project work/modules etc.
- Fifth Year: 3 hours
- Sixth Year: 3-4 hours.

Purpose of Homework

- > To reinforce classroom learning.
- > To extend learning through additional revision and additional activities.
- > To encourage self-directed and discovery learning.
- > To prepare in advance for the next lesson.
- > To access resources not available in the classroom.
- > To give students an opportunity to demonstrate key skills.
- > To assess progress made in class.
- > To encourage home support in a student's learning.

> To develop good school and home links.

Types of Homework

> The type of homework will vary according to the subject, purpose of the homework and the ability of the student. Homework tasks may be given in the any of the following formats; written, oral, research, reading, listening or revision.

The Student Journal in relation to Homework

>The purpose of the school journal is to assist students in developing a good homework routine.

> Students are required to have their journals in their possession at all times. This improves their organisational skills.

> Parents are requested to sign/initial the journal daily for Junior Cycle and weekly for Senior students.

> Teachers use Eportal or the journal to inform parents of any homework related issues.

> Parents can use the journal if an unforeseen circumstance has arisen to provide an explanation for incomplete homework.

> Students are encouraged to take pride in their school journal and keep it free of graffiti or any offensive material. If a student defaces or loses their journal she/he will be required to replace it at an additional cost.

The Role of Students

>> It is the student's responsibility to record their homework correctly and ask for teacher's assistance if needed.

> Students should ask for help at home if difficulties arise with homework.

> It is important that students attempt homework in order to make progress.

> If a student is absent from class for any reason including any school related extra-curricular event it is student responsibility to find out work missed and homework given.

The Role of Parents:

> To support the school's Homework Policy

> To encourage students to attempt all homework including non-written work and support them to complete it to the best of their ability.

> To provide suitable conditions for homework e.g. a desk, a quiet space, the appropriate materials.

- > To monitor and minimise distractions e.g. phones, TV, social media etc.
- > To have a copy of the student's timetable.
- > To decide with the student a routine around their homework e.g. a timeframe and appropriate breaks.
- > Sign the student journal as outlined above.
- > It is the parents' responsibility to inform the class teacher of any reason why a student was unable to complete their homework, or if a student has difficulty in completing the homework. A parent may communicate this through the student's journal.
- > To monitor any homework related issues reported on Eportal.

The Role of Teachers:

- > Homework is communicated clearly to students allowing sufficient time to record it in their journal and seek clarification from the teacher.
- > Homework should be displayed on the board.
- > Teachers where possible, are aware of dates in the school calendar where students are engaged with Classroom Based Assessment (CBA's), Assessment Task (AT's), Oral exams and practical exams. Hence allocating more time to complete homework if necessary to support student's Well Being.
- > Homework when possible should be inclusive of all and differentiated accordingly.
- > Teachers should provide help and support to students when requested. Teachers may provide success criteria stating what a good piece of homework should look like.
- > Teacher's feedback on homework is important for students to make progress. Teachers can use various strategies to correct homework given. Feedback can be given orally or written by the teacher and through Peer and Self-assessment.
- > Teachers may inform parents through the journal/ eportal if homework is not completed or attempted. The year head issues any homework related sanctions in line with the school's Code of Behaviour.
- > Teachers may allow students start their homework before the end of class to give the opportunity for students to ask questions or seek clarification regarding the homework.

Special Educational Needs/ Learning Support

Learning Support/SEN teachers may collaborate with subject teachers in relation to Inclusion and Differentiation. Learning Support/SEN teachers may work in guiding students through difficult tasks. Team teaching takes place in some subjects and is also very effective in checking that students are clear about their homework before the end of class and have recorded it in journal.

Homework Supports

- **Parents** are the most important support that a student has when completing homework
- **Homework club** has been running in the school since 2009 with first year students. Teachers, SNA's and Transition Year students supervise from 4.15pm – 5.30pm. Teachers assist with any difficulties and the students engage in peer tutoring. There is a short break for refreshments and games. The cost per student is 5 euro per term.
- **The Year Head** supports students with homework issues as they monitor academic success and attendance. If a student has 3 or more homework offences the year head will contact parents and put the student on a homework card.
- **The Class Tutor** The class tutor explains each section of the student's journal and homework procedures to students on their first day at school. Throughout the year the tutor encourages the development of study skills, encourages exam preparation and after school study as well as undertaking the role of caring for a class group to encourage learning. The tutor checks daily/weekly that the journal has been signed by the parent/guardian.
- **Guidance Counsellor** can provide one-to-one guidance and positively reinforce the importance of homework. Guidance is significant when students choose subject options. Choosing subjects of personal interest or subjects necessary to secure a college course motivates students to study and to complete homework.
- **After School Study** takes place from 4.20 pm until 6.30 pm, Monday to Thursday. This facility is available to all students. Students can pay per day or per term. Any student that disrupts study gets a verbal warning and if the behaviour persists students are removed. A roll-book is kept for record of attendance and study is supervised by a teacher.
- **Study Skills:** Students are given the opportunity to develop their homework skills. Individual teachers offer useful guidelines and tips for studying within their subject. The Year Head, learning support/SEN teachers and class teachers reinforce the study techniques to students throughout the year.
- **LCA Mentoring;** Mentoring of students in LCA focuses students on project work deadlines. The mentoring teacher helps the students to set targets for project progression. LCA students have many tasks but communication between the student, anchor teacher and mentoring teacher supports project completion.

Arrangements for monitoring and evaluating homework policy

The homework policy will be monitored and amended accordingly. This policy will be reviewed regularly to assess its effectiveness. The key criterion should be the extent to which the policy is contributing to the progress students make at school and their attitude to learning.

This policy was developed during the school year 2009/2010 and reviewed during the school year 2016/2017.

Ratified by Board of Management: 15th June 2017

