

**Homework Policy**

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| Ratified at BOM Meeting on: 6th March 2017……………………………………  Signed …………………………………………………………………….Chairperson of Board of Management  Signed …………………………………………………………………….Principal  Date………………………………………………………………………..  Date of next review………………………………………………… |

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**Rationale:**

* To establish consistent homework practices throughout the school
* To support parents by providing clear guidelines around school expectations with regard to homework.

**Relationship to characteristic spirit of the school:**

Rush and Lusk Educate Together seeks to enable each child to develop his/her potential. Homework encourages children to work independently and take responsibility for their assignments. As a way of developing each child’s unique qualities, discovery learning and research will be included regularly. Tasks will also be given that enable the child to link into the local community. Parental involvement will be encouraged to support a child where necessary, while taking cognisance of the importance of developing the child’s own independent learning.

**Aims of this Policy:**

* To strengthen links between home and school
* To promote a consistent approach to homework across all classes.

**Principles behind homework:**

* To benefit the child’s learning
* To promote independence and creativity.
* To reinforce work done in school and highlight difficulties
* To give the child an opportunity to complete or extend work begun in class
* To develop a child’s study skills and work ethic in areas such as concentration, memory, organisation and time management.
* To enable a child to do research not possible in school
* To maximise the amount of oral work a child engages in through talking, listening, questioning and reasoning.
* To encourage parents to take an interest in and to share responsibility for their children’s work and progress.
* To keep parents informed about what their child is doing in school and how s/he is coping with the tasks.

**Homework in Practice:**

Homework is given on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, but not on Fridays.

There are a number of exceptions to this. Homework may be given at a weekend

* If homework has been neglected during the week.
* In senior classes where project work is being undertaken

At the discretion of the class-teacher, children are sometimes given ‘homework off’. This could be for a special occasion or when a homework pass has been earned (senior classes in particular).

A child may be asked to repeat a task at another time, if the work was not done at the correct time (with no explanation from a parent), if the child has not made a suitable effort or presents very untidy work.

**Time allocation at different class levels:**

The following are general guidelines for time spent at homework. Different children will complete the same homework in different lengths of time. Time spent can vary from day to day and also from the beginning to the end of the school-year.

**Infants:** In the infant classes, a fortnightly bulletin is sent home. This keeps the parents informed of numeracy and literacy topics covered in class, thus enabling parents to revise and consolidate in-school learning.

**Junior Infants:** 5 minutes on reading / revision of sounds / nursery rhymes

The child can also be encouraged to:

* do water play, construction
* work on oral problems e.g. who is taller? What colour is - ? /sorting / counting
* listen to stories at night
* watch out for seasonal changes and animal habits

**Senior Infants:** 10 minutes on reading / pattern work / writing and checking words / oral work on sentences / rhymes.

Other tasks for parents to engage in:

* work on word / letter / sound recognition
* make sentences
* make cards / diaries
* Play I Spy / Snakes and ladders etc
* Oral work – comparing size, shape, sorting / counting
* Listening to stories at night

**First Class:**  15-20 minutes

**Second Class:** 20-30 minutes

**Third / Fourth Class:** 30-40 minutes

**Fifth / Sixth Class:** 45 minutes – 1 hour

Children should always try their best at homework tasks and take a pride in the presentation of work.

**Content of homework:**

* Teachers will endeavour to give variety in homework tasks set.
* Homework will regularly contain reading, spellings, tables, maths, written tasks, pieces to be learned, drawing /colouring, collecting information/items and finishing work started in class. However, this balance can vary from day to day. It should be noted that homework time devoted to reading, discussion and learning is as important as written tasks.
* Children may be asked to do project work as part of their homework. This may include researching information online; teachers may name specific websites to be used. Occasionally, children may also be asked to do online activities e.g. maths games, spelling games, etc. We recognise that all children may not have access to the internet, or that it might not be possible to supervise and help children with using the internet. However, we ask that parents, insofar as possible, to support their children in this.
* Homework tasks may be tailored to meet the needs of individual children in a class – those with learning difficulties, those acquiring English Language skills as well as children with particular ability in an area.
* From time to time there will be worksheets connected to home/school link programmes such as Stay Safe and RSE (Relationships and Sexuality Education).
* Parents can use any opportunities which present themselves to reinforce or extend themes being covered in school as part of the Learn Together Curriculum (e.g. ‘a healthy me’, ‘playing fairly’, ‘sharing with others’, ‘caring for the environment’).

**Homework and Children with Special Needs:**

Child-centeredness is a core principle of Rush and Lusk ETNS; we recognise the individuality of each child and respond as necessary. Homework, as an extension of classwork, will also be differentiated according to the child’s needs. Practical examples of this includes differentiated spelling work, differentiated reading programmes, different maths homework, etc. Support teachers working closely with children with special needs may also set homework for the child; this may be instead of other work or as an additional support.

**Homework as a Partnership:**

* At the class meetings held at the beginning of each school-year, each class-teacher will discuss the homework policy and procedures as it relates to the particular class.
* Teachers value homework and take time to correct it regularly. This can be done daily, every few days or on a weekly basis. Work is monitored in different ways: individually or within the class group with work checked by children under the direction of the teacher.
* The homework journal is an efficient means of communication between home and school. It gives parents and teachers an opportunity to feedback to each other on homework, communicate absence, signal any problems and give positive reinforcement.
* Signing the journal helps to affirm in the child’s eyes the value of the work. Please sign every night. Whenever possible, please record in the journal the length of time your child takes to complete homework as this is a useful guide for the class teacher.

**Useful Tips for Homework:**

* Parents should try and provide a quiet space for homework with little outside distraction or interruptions. For a younger child a comfortable position such as on the parent’s knee or with an arm around the child can make early learning a positive experience.
* It is important for parents to regulate the time their child works at homework tasks. If a child is spending considerably longer at homework than the guidelines above indicate, the parents should monitor how the homework is being done and break it up into manageable amounts, check that there are no added distractions such as television interfering with concentration and that the child is doing homework before s/he is too tired.
* If a child has difficulty with homework, the parents should help the child overcome the difficulty with further explanation or example, but not by actually doing the homework for the child.
* If the difficulties persist, the parent should talk to the class-teacher about it. It is important to report any areas the child is having problems with as soon as possible.
* When forgotten copies or books prevent the child from doing homework, having to complete an alternative piece of homework assigned by his/her parent (e.g. Some revision, spellings, or a short written task) can prevent this becoming a habit.
* Check that your child records homework neatly on the correct page and ticks each item when completed.
* Tasks such as shared reading are meant as enjoyable activities between parent and child and should be done in a positive and calm atmosphere.
* Take an interest in your child’s homework – it is one way of linking into their schoolwork and progress.