

Homework Policy

DEFINITION OF HOMEWORK:

Homework is an extension of work done during lessons. It is generally done during 'after school study' and at home. It can involve a written or practical task, reading, learning or research.

RELATIONSHIP TO SCHOOL'S MISSION/VISION/AIMS:

As a Loreto School our homework policy has its foundations in the Loreto International Education Guidelines (Kolkata (India), November 2002) which states, "*Students are encouraged to strive for excellence at the level of each one's potential in all areas of life and work.*"

Our policy is rooted in the school's fundamental aim of ensuring that each of our students has the opportunity to reach the fullness of her academic and personal potential.

RATIONALE:

- Homework is an integral part of the learning process

AIM:

- This Homework Policy will provide students, parents and teachers with guidelines that will assist students in reaching a deeper understanding of the information they learn in school, and that will help them consolidate their learning and develop their skills so as to achieve maximum success.

PURPOSE OF HOMEWORK:

- To reinforce and consolidate work done in class
- To extend learning done in class, for example through additional reading
- To develop study skills, writing skills, research skills and organisational skills
- To develop the ability to engage in critical thinking
- To foster independent learning skills
- To encourage further research, with the ultimate aim of enhancing academic achievement
- To carry out preparatory work for the next day's class
- To motivate and challenge students
- To enable teachers to monitor students' progress

TYPES OF HOMEWORK:

Each subject department sets assignments which are specific to its particular subject area. Homework can include the following types of activity:

- Development of oral skills
- Writing of essays/articles/speeches/short stories/dialogues/poems
- Learning by rote
- Listening to and/or viewing radio or TV programmes/use of internet
- Drawing and illustrating
- Making notes
- Reviewing
- Reading for pleasure
- Reading for information and memorising
- Preparation of presentations
- Practice of exam techniques
- Research
- Revision
- Visits to relevant museums, art galleries, theatre and other places of interest and relevance to subjects and related assignments

GUIDELINES ON TIME TO BE SPENT DOING HOMEWORK:

The time spent working on each subject will vary depending on the nature of the assignment and the number of class periods per week allotted to the subject in the timetable.

Homework will not be assigned to First Year students at the weekend up to the October mid-term break. However, students may choose to do homework at the weekend where their timetable has a gap between classes which includes at least one school day immediately prior to or following the weekend.

The length of time spent doing homework will increase with each year in school. In the run up to school and state examinations, students are expected to do extra revision and study. The following are guidelines relating to the length of time which should be spent at homework:

1 st Year	One and a half hours
2 nd Year	Two hours
3 rd Year	Two and a half hours
4 th Year	Variable
5 th Year	Two and a half to three hours
6 th Years	Three hours (minimum)

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES RELATED TO SCHOOL STRUCTURES:

Board Of Management

It is the function of the Board of Management to ratify the policy and to support its implementation

Principal And Deputy Principal

It is the role of the Principal and the Deputy Principal to avail of opportunities in appropriate fora to reiterate to students and to parents the importance of homework and to refer them to the Homework Policy. It is also their role to support all members of the teaching staff in their efforts to have students adhere to the measures outlined in the Homework Policy

Tutor And Year Head

The Tutor and Year Head are required to:

- Support and reinforce the important place of homework in students' education as set out in the homework policy
- Assist students in matters of organisation and good practice in relation to homework
- Check and sign the Student Journal weekly (Tutor)
- Play an appropriate role in the implementation of the Rewards and Sanctions scheme
- Ensure that measures concerning non-compliance with procedures laid down in relation to homework in the school's Code of Behaviour are adhered to

Guidance Department & Learning Support Team

The Guidance Department and Learning Support Team are required to:

Ensure that assistance and instruction offered by them to students are in keeping with the school's Homework Policy.

USE OF STUDENT JOURNAL IN RELATION TO HOMEWORK:

The student journal, which each student is required to have, is the chief means of communication between school and home in relation to homework. When used correctly, it is also an important aid to students in ensuring that they cover the prescribed homework. It is very important that teachers, students and parents/guardians ensure that they use the Journal so as to maximise the benefit to the student's education. Teachers will use the Journal to commend good work and consistent effort on the part of students in addition to using it as a channel to inform parents of failure on the part of a student to do homework or to make an honest effort in relation to the satisfactory completion of homework

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES RELATED TO PRACTICAL APPLICATION:

Student Responsibilities:

Students must:

- Have the journal on the desk at the beginning of class and record all homework in it
- Ask the teacher if they are unsure of what the homework entails
- Make an honest effort to complete all homework assigned to the best of their ability
- Follow the guidelines given by teachers
- Have the necessary books, materials and equipment necessary to complete the homework
- Revise work from earlier lessons and focus on keywords if no specific homework is assigned
- Learn from the corrected homework and feedback given by the teacher
- Find out work missed when absent and arrange to catch up
- Have the journal signed by a parent/guardian each week

Teacher Responsibilities:

Teachers are required to:

- Set homework early in the lesson and allow sufficient time for students to take it down
- Have a procedure in place for checking that students record homework accurately and comprehensively in Journal
- Give guidelines as to what is required for successful completion of homework including an indication of the amount of time that the performance of a particular task or tasks should take
- Give students the opportunity to ask for clarification or advice in class
- Demonstrate and give examples of correctly completed homework
- Ensure that the homework is relevant to the work done in class
- Assign a variety of homework types e.g. research, written, oral, practical etc.
- Be mindful of differing levels of ability among students and pitch expectations accordingly. The *must, should, could* yardstick can prove very helpful (See Appendix 1: Differentiation)
- Monitor and correct homework and give feedback to students (See Appendix 1: Assessment)
- Offer a comment and/or a mark (See Appendix 1: Assessment)
- Keep records
- Present homework as a positive learning experience
- Promote independent learning
- Engage students in peer and self evaluation
- Participate in the implementation of the school's 'Rewards and Sanctions' scheme
- Follow the school's agreed procedure for dealing with students who fail to make an honest effort with regard to the satisfactory completion of their homework

Parent/Guardian Responsibilities:

Parents/guardians are expected to:

- Sign and monitor the Student Journal and to liaise with the teacher when necessary
- Demonstrate their interest in and support for homework
- Show clearly the view that the student must take her homework seriously
- Provide as best they can an appropriate environment for doing homework
- Ensure that the student has the necessary books, materials and equipment to complete the homework to the best of her ability
- Pay particular attention to any issues which the teacher has raised in connection with homework and support the student in addressing these issues
- Respond to teachers' communication through the Journal
- Inform the teacher or Year Head if the student experiences ongoing difficulty with her homework

APPENDIX 1

Differentiation of Homework:

Differentiation of homework is the setting of homework tasks which match the current stage of student development and ability. This is particularly important in a mixed ability class setting but it applies equally to class settings where students are grouped according to their ability level at a particular subject.

Ideally, written homework would include graded questions incorporating those which all students must do and more challenging questions which students should be encouraged to attempt. Homework should be varied and manageable. It should include challenges and aim to build confidence. As confidence grows, students should be able to cope with increased depth and challenge in a wider range of questions and assignments. If homework is set to target all abilities appropriately, students will experience success and challenge in relation to it.

Students with learning needs and those for whom English is not a first language should be assigned homework which is appropriate to their stage of development. Teachers should consult the student Resource and EAL files and the Learning Support and Language Support teachers for information on the most appropriate homework to assign.

Assessment:

All homework should have a clear and specified purpose. Students should be told exactly what criteria will be used to assess the work, which aspects of an assignment will be judged and marked and what they can do to achieve the best possible result. When homework is returned students should be equipped with the tools and the skills necessary to judge the corrected assignment against the criteria set.

Preparation for examinations must include grading of assignments if students and teachers are to build a profile of summative achievement. However, grading of all assignments may be counter productive as students may judge themselves on the grade only and may not focus on feedback given.

‘Comment only’ marking should be used on selected assignments and feedback given. Feedback should inform the student of strengths and weaknesses in the assignment as well as ways in which the assignment could be improved. It will be particularly beneficial where the learning intention and the criteria for success are understood by the student.

Teachers may grade all work but retain the grades in their own records and use them to build up a picture of graded achievement for the students, their parents and other relevant parties. All grades can be given to students at the end of an agreed period of time or on school reports.