



## **Scoil Maelruain Junior**

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### **Homework Policy**

Date	September 2024
Initial Draft	September 2024
Ratified by the Board of Management	7th April 2025

**This is a working continuous document**

#### **Introduction:**

Scoil Maelruain Junior is a school that caters to children from Junior Infants to 2nd Class. We are an inclusive school that focuses on the holistic development of our pupils.

Extensive research has been conducted by staff members regarding the importance of homework and its positive impact on pupils' learning and individual development (Appendix 2).

This policy was redrafted during the 2024-2025 school year in consultation with pupils, parents/guardians, and staff. Equal importance was given to each stakeholder's input during the policy drafting process (Appendix 1).

#### **The purpose of Homework is to:**

- Provide an important link between home and school.
- Encourage daily reading practice.
- Encourage and develop the habit of independent study.
- Consolidate, revisit and revise daily schoolwork.
- Promote consistency and a uniform approach to homework across all teachers and class levels.
- Enhance self-esteem through the provision of a homework menu that is doable by all pupils.

#### **Roles and Responsibilities:**

##### **The teacher will:**

- Assign homework from Monday to Thursday, with no homework typically given on weekends.
- Communicate homework to parents and pupils via Aladdin or Homework Journals in 2nd Class.
- Provide homework aligned with the learning objectives in the teacher's short-term and long-term planning.

- Provide homework that supports the home-school links.
- Assign class-level appropriate homework that is pre-prepared with pupils.
- Provide consistent, small, achievable tasks that pupils can predict, remember, and complete independently.
- Offer differentiated homework for pupils, in consultation with Special Education Teachers (SET) if necessary.
- Ensure daily reading activities are included in an age-appropriate manner.
- Correct homework regularly and provide feedback as needed.

#### **Parents are asked to:**

- Check Aladdin Connect App or homework journal for assigned activities.
- Encourage your child/children to work independently as much as possible, while resisting the urge to over-help.
- Establish a consistent routine and set time for homework. A quiet, distraction-free environment is preferable.
- Encourage good presentation of written homework.
- Check your child's homework each night, bearing in mind that it does not have to be fully correct. This will allow teachers to assess your child's learning, provide further instruction on a topic or differentiate for your child.
- Make time in the day for daily reading activities, reading to your child, paired reading with your child or listening to your child's reading.
- Write a note in the journal/Aladdin Notices if/when homework is unfinished.
- Inform teachers of any issues or ongoing issues as they arise.

#### **Pupils are asked to:**

- Check homework by asking their parents what homework has been assigned on Aladdin Connect App or in their homework folder or in their homework journal (2nd Class).
- Ensure they take home relevant books, copies and activities.
- Complete homework assignments to the best of their ability.
- Complete daily reading activities assigned by their teacher.
- Present written work neatly and/or to the best of their ability.

#### **Allotted time for homework:**

<b>Junior Infants and Senior Infants</b>	10 minutes	10 minutes reading (reading to/with/independent reading)
<b>1st and 2nd Classes</b>	10 - 20 minutes	10 minutes reading (reading to/with/independent reading)

#### **Contents of Homework:**

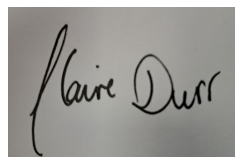
<b>Junior Infants and Senior Infants</b>	Reading/paired reading activities Word activities Basic number activities Wellbeing/Social Personal Health Education
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	(SPHE) homework Religion homework Questions on a topic/theme for parents to ask pupils
<b>1st and 2nd Classes</b>	Reading/paired reading activities Literacy activities Maths activities Written literacy tasks Written maths tasks/workbook Wellbeing/SPHE homework Religion homework Questions on a topic/theme for parents to ask pupils

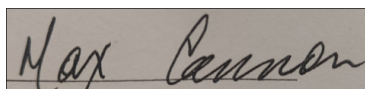
### **Policy Review:**

This policy will be reviewed regularly in consultation with pupils, parents/guardians and staff.

**Policy ratified 7th April 2025**



Claire Durr, Principal



Max Cannon, Chairperson Board of Management

## **Appendix 1: Consultation Process:**

Three focus groups were conducted by Claire Durr, Principal, and Aideen Butler, Deputy Principal, with pupils, parents/guardians, and staff members in September/October 2024. Each group was asked similar questions regarding homework:

- Do they agree or disagree with, or like or dislike, homework?
- What are the positives and negatives of homework?
- What is the purpose of homework?
- What type of homework would they like to see children completing, or what activities did they enjoy completing themselves at home?
- Suggestions for improving homework.
- How can teachers support homework?
- How can parents support homework?

The policy has been drafted with the outcomes of these focus groups in mind.

## **Consultation Outcomes:**

- All groups had mixed opinions on homework, providing both positive and negative feedback.
- Pupils generally have a much more positive attitude toward homework than parents and teachers.
- All groups agreed that daily reading activities are very important, including reading to your child, paired reading, and listening to your child read.
- A menu approach to homework was preferred by all participants. This means that children would have a menu of homework activities to complete each week. Families can decide when to do the homework, but it must be submitted on a specific day decided by the class teacher. This approach accommodates extracurricular activities and allows families to plan their week more easily.
- Parents see homework as a link to school life. Children can sometimes struggle to explain what is happening in school, so if teachers provide activities that offer insight into school life, parents can connect more easily with their child's experience.
- Parents were unaware that homework does not always have to be returned to school completely finished or perfect. Teachers prefer to see mistakes, as this helps them gauge the level of understanding and identify areas where children may need further support.
- Homework should not cause conflict in the home.
- If pupils are unable to complete homework, parents can write a brief explanation in the child's journal or on Aladdin Notices for the teacher.
- If consistent issues with homework arise, parents are encouraged to inform teachers.
- Parents suggested changing the name of homework to remove preconceived ideas of it. Teachers did not see any issue with this. Children did not see the need to change the name of homework.
- Suggested homework activities were:
  - Spelling practice
  - Handwriting activities
  - Literacy and maths worksheets
  - Daily reading activity
  - Maths workbooks, such as *Maths Mastery*
  - Wellbeing-related homework

- SPHE homework
- Religion homework
- Active homework (physical activity)
- Interactive maths games on devices
- Interactive literacy games/activities on devices
- Timed guidelines for each class level
- Use of Padlet to set homework activities
- Menu approach to homework – a list of activities, with four to be completed by Friday
- Word bags with literacy activities for parents to complete with children
- Maths games for parents to complete with children
- A list of questions that parents can ask their children about topics/themes the class is focusing on

## Appendix 2: Research

Pros of Homework	Cons of Homework
<p>Irish Times - 20th Feb 2023 Ita O'Kelly</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Important bridge between home and school</li> <li>• 20-30 minutes spent one on one with a child is a positive</li> <li>• Encourages independence in children who can work independently</li> <li>• Allows parents to be part of their child's learning journey</li> <li>• It can be made to be a fun experience - bonding for both child and parent</li> </ul>	<p>Irish Times - 20th Feb 2023 Ita O'Kelly</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonising homework sends a message that school work is a negative</li> <li>• If homework is abolished in primary schools could lead to a ban in secondary schools which would not support our written exam based subjects</li> </ul>
<p>RTE - Today with Claire Byrne</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promotes independence for children</li> <li>• Provides communication between home and school</li> <li>• Meaningful and targeted homework a positive</li> <li>• Should be a repeat of work that every child can achieve</li> </ul>	<p>RTE - Today with Claire Byrne</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents don't have the time</li> <li>• Homework for homeworks sake</li> <li>• Not a black and white topic</li> </ul>
<p>Dr Joan Kiely - Marino Institute of Education, Dublin - worked with schools to link parents and teachers with workshops, spoke about pros and cons implemented change based on those workshops</p> <p>Most successful when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Based on child's interest - real life assignments (nature walk, shape trail, going to the shop)</li> <li>• Interactive</li> <li>• Self-monitor their own progress</li> <li>• There is dialogue between parents and teacher (such as info meeting at the beginning of the school year)</li> <li>• Suggestions -             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Mindful Mondays</li> <li>○ Project based homework</li> <li>○ Homework as a menu - allows control and takes into account busy days</li> <li>○ Active homework</li> <li>○ Reading for pleasure</li> <li>○ Oral language dev homework - retell a story, reporter with a microphone - do an interview (topic based), parent/child game playing</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Dr Joan Kiely - Marino Institute of Education, Dublin - <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8LIHBwJv8s&amp;t=156s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8LIHBwJv8s&amp;t=156s</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents find homework stressful - they don't have clarity around tasks being set</li> <li>• Function of homework unclear</li> <li>• 2 out 5 principals against all forms of homework</li> <li>• Parents implemented the homework changes enjoyed it, but felt it was unsustainable</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Differentiated homework for children to meet their needs</li> <li>● Findings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Project homework and based on child's interest most successful</li> <li>○ Interactive homework (games, interviews etc)</li> <li>○ Homework promotes an understanding of their own thought process</li> <li>○ Differentiated homework a must</li> <li>○ One topic a night instead of several subjects</li> <li>○ Choice is crucial - gives control and motivation</li> <li>○ parent/teacher links needed</li> <li>○ National guidance needed</li> <li>○ Whole school approach</li> <li>○ No homework for JI bar reading based activities???</li> <li>○ Consideration for pressure on parents when setting interactive homework - how do we engage with parents - felt that the new homework was unsustainable for a prolonged period of time - how to balance the findings with pressures on parents and family life</li> <li>○ Consideration for special ed</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
<p>RTE - 19th Sept 2024 A study of over 4100 14 year old students - Nathan McJames, Andrew Parnell and Ann O'Shea, Maynooth University Focus on Maths and science</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Up to 15 minutes max of focused and targeted assignments</li> <li>● Traditionally assumed those from a better socioeconomic background benefit from homework others don't. The 15 minute approach benefits all</li> <li>● Consistency rather than duration is key to reinforcing learning</li> <li>● Homework can have a very positive effect</li> <li>● Boost independence</li> <li>● Boost self esteem when tasks are achieved</li> <li>● Positive tool for aiding learning</li> <li>● Encourages daily practice</li> </ul>	<p>RTE - 19th Sept 2024 A study of over 4100 14 year old students - Nathan McJames, Andrew Parnell and Ann O'Shea, Maynooth University</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Anything over 15 minutes negates the progress made in the first 15 minutes</li> </ul>