

Woodbrook College Bray, Co. Wicklow



Homework Policy

This policy was drafted in consultation with the education partners at Woodbrook College, Bray, Co. Wicklow having taken into account relevant DES Circulars and best educational practice. This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on November 9th, 2011

Rationale

Woodbrook College fully supports and recommends the planning, setting and evaluation of homework exercises across all subjects and by all teachers. The rationale behind this approach is that it:

- Sustains the involvement of parents in the management of their child's learning and familiarises them with the content of the curriculum
- Consolidates and reinforces skills and understanding developed at school
- Introduces students to independent learning and fosters a spirit of self-discipline
- Encourages students to develop the skills, confidence and motivation needed to study effectively on their own. This is vital given the importance for students in the future of life-long learning and adaptability
- Extends learning and directs research which allows students to gain a deeper understanding of topics and ideas which cannot always be accommodated during class periods

Role of the teacher

The subject teacher is responsible for delivering the curriculum and assigning classroom and homework material to the class group. This responsibility stretches beyond the mere setting of homework and covers the following:

- The teacher should write and explain homework aims and activities on the board/through power-point/through worksheets in order to ensure that all learning types and students are accommodated
- The teacher will allow a specific time within each class for students to record and question the homework activity
- The teacher will ensure that the homework is recorded in the students' diary. This is an important means of informing the students' parents and reminding the students of their responsibilities
- The teacher should set appropriate and relevant homework exercises of varied methodologies
- The teacher should mark and evaluate the students work on a regular basis in order to ensure that assessment for and assessment of learning is being supported
- The teacher should allow a reasonable amount of time for all students to complete the homework exercise to a high standard
- The teacher should make all students aware of their own expectations and give structured guidelines for the completion of homework

Role of the Students

The completion of homework should be regarded as one of their priority after school activities. It is the responsibility of the student:

- To record all homework (written and learning) in their student diary
- To complete all homework assignments to a high standard and at all times to the best of their ability
- To place the same importance on oral/research homework as on written homework
- To ensure that there is an adequate balancing of extra-curricular activities and employment with homework activities. Employment during term-time is advised against particularly for examination students
- To complete homework in the event of absences within a reasonable amount of time
- To show evidence of effort in the event of difficulties being encountered

Role of Parents/Guardians

Parents are always considered to be the primary educators of their children and therefore have a major role to play in the academic life of their child. The experience/perspectives/support they can lend to their child's learning is invaluable. As such parents should:

- Provide an environment conducive to homework and study within the family home and a designated area where such homework and study can be completed without interruption
- Encourage their child to designate a regular time for homework activities each day and for the amount of time recommended for each year group. Parents are reminded that a supervised study facility is provided in the school for all students who wish to avail of it
- Take responsibility to record any difficulties their child encountered with homework activities
- Sign the homework journal on a weekly basis as it informs parents about curriculum content and student progress
- Be aware that students are encouraged to use ICT resources and the internet in particular during homework assignments. Parents/guardians should ensure that it is not being abused and that appropriate content is being viewed at all times

- Encourage a positive attitude towards learning and homework

Appropriate Homework Assignments and Time Allocation

The range of tasks which are appropriate for students of various ages are many and varied. Classroom teachers will assign exercises through a broad selection of activities and methodologies.

All homework tasks should have a clear objective, linked to study programmes. Teachers are encouraged to ensure that their overall homework programme is balanced in the type and scale of tasks and is always manageable for students.

All students should spend time at home on their studies whether or not work has been assigned. If no homework has been set then students have an obligation to go over material they have recently studied in class to make sure that they have fully understood it and that they can use it to answer examination-style questions.

It is important for students in each year group to allocate a specific time slot during each day to dedicate to homework activities. This time slot will vary depending on student abilities and the amount of work recommended for a particular year group. Woodbrook College advises the following;

- First Year 1½ hours
- Second Year 1½ – 2 hours
- Third Year 2 – 3 hours
- Transition Year Varies depending on project work and activities
- Fifth Year 2½ – 3 hours
- Sixth Year 3 – 4 hours

For all students at times, but especially for students in 3rd year and 6th year, weekend study and revision is also essential.

It is important that examination students realise that the recommended study period should be increased in the run up to the state examinations or if difficulties are encountered with concepts or course content.

It is important for parents/teachers to recognise that students with learning difficulties or special educational needs could spend the recommended study time covering part of a homework exercise and that although the exercise is not complete; the student has employed his/her best efforts. Teachers will normally provide differentiated work to counter this difficulty.

Supervised Study and Homework Club

Subject to demand and the necessary resources being available, the school will provide supervised study facilities and homework club in the school each week during term time.

Monitoring and Evaluation of Homework

The classroom teacher is responsible for the monitoring and evaluation of homework. Parents are encouraged to play a pivotal role in monitoring and evaluating homework before it is presented to a teacher. It is always supportive to positively enforce the completion of homework to a high standard.

The classroom teacher will:

- Foster a spirit of achievement by acknowledging effort and improvement through regular marking of exercises
- Encourage and facilitate peer marking and the sharing of good practice amongst the students
- Highlight and display samples of excellent work or work that shows marked improvement
- Regularly compare standards with the expected standards of the State Examinations Commission

Sanctions

It is important, in the event that homework is not presented/completed/of reasonable standard or of correct format, that the classroom teacher impose sanctions to address and amend the situation or student attitude. The following actions could be taken and should be followed up;

- Homework might be increased or written punishment of an educational nature may be administered
- Failure to produce homework is recorded in the student diary for the attention of parents/guardians. The teacher will also keep a record of this in his or her own records
- Repeated occurrences will be followed up through parental contact by subject teacher and/or Year Head to address and amend the issue

Should the problem persist, additional sanctions may be administered, if deemed appropriate.

The rationale behind these sanctions is not to discourage students from learning but to highlight the importance of homework in the formation of an effective learner. Psychologists have found that in order to retain material over long periods it should be studied and revised regularly.

No Revision	Regular Revision
80% is lost after 1 day	80-90% is retained
90% is lost after 1 week	
98% is lost after 3 weeks	

After 6 months nothing remains.	After 6 months it is lodged in the long term memory.
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Review

Review Date:..... _____