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RATHDRUM
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Homework Policy

Mission Statement

“Learning to grow through trust and respect”

Contents: Rationale
Goals
Homework Procedures
Roles & Responsibilities
Policy Implementation Procedures
Success Criteria
Monitoring Procedures
Review Procedures
Appendices 1 - 6

Signed: _____

Date passed at BOM meeting: _____

Forwarded for ratification to the VEC: _____

Who the policy was communicated to:

Date for Review: _____

This policy is rooted in the school’s fundamental aim to enable our students to be responsible, independent and co-operative. It is also to provide them with skills for life-long learning.

Rationale

Regular homework is a valuable aspect of the learning process. It reinforces the learning of the school day, improves written skills and develops revision skills. It promotes independent learning and rationale.

Goals

- To ensure consistent approaches to the setting and reviewing of homework across the school
- To promote the development by students of good study habits and effective study skills
- To enable students to develop a capacity to organise their own work
- To enhance the academic achievements of students
- To encourage parents to take an interest in and to share responsibility for their children’s work and progress

Homework Procedures

- Each student will be assigned homework in subject areas each night
- Students are expected to record details of the work set for homework in their homework journal
- The amount of work expected per night of a student varies according to age and ability,

1 st year	2 nd year	3 rd year	4 th year	5 th year	6 th year
1 -1.5 hrs	1.5 -2 hrs	2 - 2.5 hrs	Up to 1 hr	2.5 - 3 hrs	3 hrs plus

- A balance will be maintained between written/practical work and oral/learning work
- Teachers will correct homework and give feedback to students
- Special consideration will be given to students with special educational needs
- Students will be given specific training in homework/study skills
- Parents will be informed by teachers through the homework journals when students do not carry out set homework tasks and detention may be arranged to enable the students to complete the work under supervision
- Each teacher will keep records of homework, grades and comments.
- If students miss some classes for whatever reason it is their responsibility to get class work and homework
- If students miss school days, it is their responsibility to catch up on topics missed.
- Students may use the canteen before classes to study
- Students may use the library/Room 27A/ canteen area at lunch time to study in a quiet environment

Roles and Responsibilities

Board of Management

- To ensure that the policy is developed and evaluated from time to time
- To approve the policy
- To consider reports from the Principal on the implementation of the policy.
- To provide after School study programme and holiday time facilities for students at a small cost subject to resources being available

Principal, Deputy Principal and Year Heads

- To establish structures and procedures for the implementation of the policy.
- To monitor the implementation of the policy.
- To co-ordinate the After School Study programme - see *Appendix 1*

Subject Teachers

- To implement the policy, review homework assignments and provide feedback to students
- To keep records of homework given, grades and comments.
- To write up the assigned homework clearly and in good time
- To impress on students the importance of filling work into journal

- To encourage students to insert a full description of “work done/ to do”
- To instruct students in homework/study skills.

Pastoral Care Personnel

(Class Tutors, Guidance and Learning Support Personnel)

- To carry out a Tutorial on the use of the Journal as per *Appendix 2*
- To distribute an information sheet on types of work which constitute homework and to clarify any issues raised by students - *see Appendix 3*
- To monitor the effects of the policy
- To provide support and guidance, especially for those identified as experiencing difficulty
- To liaise with subject teachers, especially in relation to consideration for students with special educational needs.

Parents/Guardians are expected

- To support the school policy
- To provide suitable conditions for homework. If this is not possible an evening study facility is provided for students at a small cost subject to resources being available
- To ensure that the suggested amount of time is spent on homework
- To check and sign the homework journal weekly (with the exception of sixth year) or when requested by teacher (all years).
- To provide a written explanation to the teacher when homework is not done or completed.
- Exam class parents are encouraged to volunteer to supervise holiday time study sessions.

Students are required

- To write their homework in their homework journal every day
- To describe accurately the work to be done and / or the work done in class
- To do homework set, both oral/learning and written/practical
- To present written homework properly
- To get class work and homework if students miss some classes for whatever reason.
- To catch up on topics missed if students miss school days.
- To provide a written explanation from a parent/ guardian to the teacher when homework is not done.
- To organise their time in accordance with their timetable to ensure that all home is completed by date due.
- To organise their leisure time to ensure that they achieve a healthy work/leisure balance.

Policy Implementation Procedures

- Each subject department will develop agreed guidelines on the amount of homework and the balance between written/practical work and oral/learning work that is desirable for each year group
- Each subject department will develop guidelines on the homework/study skills appropriate for that subject
- The Learning Support teachers will advise on designing homework for students with special educational needs.
- Study skills may be covered by subject teachers and will be covered in Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) class at junior level and by the Guidance Counsellor
- After school “Homework Club” is provided through the DEIS Programme.
- Outside speakers for study skills are organised at all levels.

Study Skills Programme

Every student in the school has the opportunity to participate in a Study Skills Seminar

Three Seminars are presented by a company called The Super Generation...Inspiring Futures.

1st, 2nd (half day), 3rd, 5th & 6th (full day) years all participate in the Empowered Learning Seminar which includes sections on:

- Profiling the Learner,
- Mind Mapping
- Memory Strategies.

Transition Years (full day) take part in the Seminar on Raising Aspirations & Empowered Learning

Teachers take part in the following workshops on School Planning Days at the start of the school year as part of Continuous Professional Development (CDP)

- Techniques to assist students to empower their learning
- Advanced Teaching Methodologies - Teaching so that students will remember

Seminars are also offered to parents at a time coinciding with their child’s training session.

Differentiation See Appendix 4

Success Criteria

- Good quality homework is being presented
- Parents and students are satisfied with the effectiveness of the policy
- The goals are being attained

Monitoring Procedures

- Class Tutors will check homework journals once per week
- Class Tutors and Year Heads will conduct on-going monitoring through:
 - informal discussion with students and subject teachers
 - homework spot checks and
 - will note feedback from students, teachers and parents
- Year Heads have responsibility to support teachers in situations where a student is repeatedly uncooperative regarding homework.
- Subject Departments will review implementation at annual subject department meeting.
- Principal and Deputy Principal will consult with Subject Departments, Year Heads and Pastoral Care Personnel on effectiveness of policy.
- The Principal will report to the Board of Management.

Sanctions for homework not done

- If homework is not presented a teacher may send a note to the parent/guardian via the student journal and implement their own sanction.
- Where a student persists in not doing homework a “Subject Progress Report” letter (See **Appendix 6**) will be sent to the parent/guardian by the subject teacher, countersigned by Year Head, who will add it to student file. Acknowledgement slip should be returned to that teacher.
- If no improvement is made the *subject* teacher will refer this on to the Year Head through a serious incident report.
- Relevant sanctions will be implemented by the Year Head.
- Students “On Report” are monitored daily by the Deputy Principal.

Student Journal: See Appendix 5 for summary to be inserted in Journal

Review Procedures

- Procedures will be implemented on a trial basis and evaluated by the review team after a short period of time before sanctioning by the Board of Management
- Procedures will be implemented
- The policy will be reviewed every three years. The review team will comprise of a review committee including the Principal or Deputy Principal, a Year Head, and subject teachers and student council representatives.
- Views and experiences of teachers, students and parents will be sought in relation to the success criteria through the staff, the parents' association and the students' council.
- School records will be analysed to assess impact on students' academic progress as part of the reporting process by Principal and Year Head.
- The progress of students with special educational needs will be given particular consideration.

December 2010

Appendix 1

AFTER SCHOOL STUDY PROCEDURE

Contents:

Procedures for Students
Sanctions
Success Criteria
Monitoring Procedures
Review Procedures
Rules of Study Class
Letter to parents

Rules and Procedures

In early September

- ❖ Letter handed to all students from 2nd year to 6th year stating times and rules for study. (First Years will be offered this facility next year)
- ❖ Return slip provided to be signed by parent / guardian.
- ❖ All slips returned to school Co-ordinator
- ❖ First year students to be included in the near future.
- ❖ Roll called each day by Supervisor or Co-ordinator
- ❖ Journals stamped
- ❖ Absences noted

Study Payment

Monies collected and days given to Co-ordinator every Monday of each school week
Students may pay weekly.

Study Duration

Monday	4.00 - 6.15
Tuesday	3.45 - 6.15
Wednesday	3.45 - 6.15
Thursday	3.45 - 6.15

After School Study Co-ordinator: B. Breen

Appendix 1 (Continued)

Rules for Supervised Study

1. Normal school rules apply during study.
2. Silence must be maintained during study.
3. No food is permitted during evening study; water is permitted so long as you are not distracting anyone else.
4. Students are not, in general, allowed to leave their place and are asked to use the toilets and go to their lockers before study begins.
5. If you have to leave study early you should show a note to your supervisor on the day in question. This note may be written into your journal.
6. A roll call will take place each day during evening study at 3.45 by your supervisor.
7. The study room must be kept tidy. You are responsible for putting all pencil parings, used paper and other rubbish in the bins provided.
8. Any student who fails to comply with the above rules will be asked to leave evening study with no refund of the fee.

Reply Slip (To be signed by Student)

I agree to the above study rules. I understand that failure to comply with the above rules means that I will have to leave evening study and I will not get a refund of fees.

Name of Student: _____ Class _____

Signature of Student: _____ Date _____

Reply Slip (To be signed by parent/ guardian)

I wish my son/daughter to attend supervised study. I am aware that I can check my son/daughter's attendance in his/her journal daily.

Parent/Guardian's Signature: _____

Appendix 2
CLASS TUTOR INFORMATION SHEET

Journal

Task:

To impress on students the importance of filling work into Journal

Please make students aware that:

- ALL subjects for each day are to be written in
- The journal is a reflection of work done as well as work to do
- The journal is used to ensure that students do not visit lockers during, and/or between classes
- Students may use the canteen before classes to study
- Students use the library/ canteen area at lunch time to study in a quiet environment

Appendix 3 Student Handout

What type of tasks will I be expected to do as Homework:

- Research the project topic....
- Continue on my project.....
- Learn notes / definitions given in class
- Draw and label diagram e.g. Fig 2.3 pg 444
- Write up Experiment done in class (under headings Aim, Method, Result, Conclusion and Diagram)
- Revise for test e.g. Chp 8
- Answer / Do Q 1-5 in Homework copy
- Do Exam Q's ... Year
- Read Chp. ... and Make notes / Design Mind map on
- Fill in Evaluation sheet
- Bring in ingredients / sewing / container for
- Practise notes on instrument (e.g. tin whistle / recorder)
- Revise Keys, Clefs and time signatures
- Compose a 4/16 bar melody
- Study notes from class / PowerPoint handout
- Complete General study layout
- Gather materials
- Design
- Draw sketch
- Colour study
- Observe the study.....

- Sketch diagram.....
- Design template for project piece
- Complete plan, elevation & endview on page.....
- Draw Auxiliary view on Q ...
- Complete worksheet on

What words in

Questions really mean:

“Why” – explain the reason behind the word or process

“Name” – just write the word nothing else

“Distinguish between” – write a sentence for each making sure you show the difference between the two words

“Describe” – give a full and detailed account, using labelled diagrams if possible

“Outline”/ “write a short note” – write the main points in a list using diagrams with it if you can

“Explain” – tell in your own words how something happened

State” – give the word/phrase asked for, nothing else

“Define” – write a sentence saying what the word means, give an example or draw a diagram if it helps

“Function” – say what the job of the object is

“List”/ “Give” – write the words under one another

Appendix 4 Differentiation

Tips for preparation of Homework (Handouts, PowerPoint presentations etc) for students with Special Educational Needs

Homework worksheets for less able students need to be presented typed if possible, or written carefully with attention to clear, uncluttered presentation. Some points for consideration are below:

- Keep in mind what must be learnt, what should be learnt and what could be learnt.
- Is there a sufficient range of learning targets to meet the needs of the full range of abilities
- Make sure that the pupils know what is expected of them.
- Build on pupil's existing knowledge when introducing new concepts - use real life situations as examples
- Some students are apt to forget so once is not usually enough for something to be learned.
- Learning sequences should be broken down into small steps.
- Pupils learn more if they have to write full sentences - keep filling in the missing word exercises to a minimum.
- When presenting areas of text in a worksheet, use plenty of line spacing and a font such as Trebuchet or Comic Sans and a reasonable font size (14 or 16). Nine to ten words per line is good.
- If you can count more than five difficult words in each sentence then a child with a low reading age will probably have great problems coping with the text.
- If there is a large areas of text included, leave text left aligned, rather than justified, to avoid the 'river of white space' resulting from the irregular word spacing. This effect can cause problems for those whose vision is not very stable.
- Avoid using words printed in capital letters as they are harder to read than lower case.
- Keep headings and sub-headings consistent in presentation (size, bold, italic, underline etc) throughout the worksheet.
- Keep sub-headings to a minimum, as too many can be confusing.
- Illustrations should be clear and accompanied by captions.
- Try to use the same graphic symbols and effects (arrows, bullet points, etc) as other school departments to avoid confusion.
- Lots of boxes and arrows may look good but they can make the overall layout of worksheets confusing.
- It can be easier to read black text on coloured paper.
- With maps, make sure they are clear and large enough to work with. If possible shade areas of sea, as less able pupils often find it difficult to discriminate between land and sea. Be consistent with labelling (always to the left or right of dots, for example).

Appendix 5 Homework Procedures

(to be included in Student Journal)

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- Relevant sanctions will be implemented by the Year Head.
- Students "On Report" are monitored daily by the deputy Principal.

APPENDIX 6

Subject Progress Report (on headed paper)

Name: _____
Subject: _____

Class: _____
Teacher: _____

The progress of the above named student is causing concern in this subject.
The reasons are indicated below.

- Difficulty in coping with class work _____
- Failure to complete homework _____
- Lack of effort _____
- Poor Attendance _____
- Punctuality _____
- Behaviour _____
- Books/Equipment _____

Other reasons:

Signed: _____(Teacher) Signed:(Year Head)_____

Principal: R O' Neill

Date: _____

✂ -----

Parent/Guardian Reply Slip (Please detach and return to the school)

I acknowledge receipt of this progress report.

Comment:

Parent/Guardian's Signature: _____ Date: _____