



# **Draft Homework Policy**

**Sept 2023**

**This document serves as a draft policy, open for review by all stakeholders.**

**We encourage members of the school community to share their insights and feedback. Your input is not only valuable but essential in shaping a policy that best serves our collective interests.**

**For any comments or suggestions regarding this draft, please reach out to Dr Gash through email or other available channels.**

**To facilitate a timely review process, we kindly request that all feedback be submitted by Wednesday, 11th October 2023.**

**Thank you for your invaluable contribution and assistance.**

MIDDLETON COLLEGE



# Draft Homework Policy

DRAFT Version 0.2, July 2023

## I. Introduction

### A. Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of Middleton College's Homework Policy is to create a shared understanding among teachers, students, and parents/guardians about the role and importance of homework in supporting students' learning. This policy sets the expectations for the assignment, completion, and review of homework, aiming to provide a consistent approach across all subjects and year levels. It intends to ensure that homework contributes effectively to the development of students' independent learning skills, reinforces classroom learning, encourages time management and organizational skills, and stimulates critical thinking and problem-solving abilities.

### B. Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to all students enrolled in Middleton College, all teachers who assign homework, and all parents/guardians responsible for providing support at home. The policy encompasses all types of homework activities, including but not limited to, practice exercises, preparatory homework, extension assignments, and creative work. It includes homework assigned for completion during regular school days and for weekends. It also applies to situations wherein a student may miss class and needs to catch up on homework assignments. Lastly, this policy guides the communication about homework among all involved parties and stipulates procedures for addressing homework-related issues.

### C. Alignment with Ethos and Mission Statement

The Middleton College Homework Policy aligns with the school's Mission Statement and Ethos in multiple ways.

**Fulfilling Individual Potential:** Both the Mission Statement and the Ethos mention the need for each student to realise their individual potentials and to foster the educational development of each person. The Homework Policy supports this by providing students with an opportunity to reinforce classroom learning, develop independent learning skills, and practice critical thinking and problem-solving. As quoted from the Mission Statement, *"It endeavours to be a school where each student realises their potentials in an atmosphere of respect, care, support and encouragement."*

**Respect, Care, Support, and Encouragement:** The Homework Policy is designed to operate in an environment of respect, care, support, and encouragement, as mentioned in both the Mission Statement and the Ethos. This is evident in the responsibilities of teachers to clearly communicate expectations and provide timely feedback, and parents/guardians to provide a conducive environment for studying and to communicate with the school if issues arise.

**Inclusivity and Diversity:** The school's Ethos Statement emphasizes its diverse community and the recognition of academic capability diversity among students. This is reflected in the Homework Policy's emphasis on dealing with different learning abilities and adjusting assignments to cater to various levels of understanding and capabilities.

Community and Partnership: Both the Mission Statement and the Ethos highlight the importance of community, partnerships, and active participation. The Homework Policy mirrors this through its provisions for communication between teachers, students, and parents/guardians. As quoted from the Ethos Statement, "*Midleton College cherishes the partnerships - with teachers, parents/guardians, friends of the college, the local and wider community - which support the fulfilment of its characteristic spirit and goals.*"

Continual Improvement and Modern Approach: The Mission Statement speaks about fostering an environment of continuous improvement and being a modern, innovative, and outward-looking school. This resonates with the Homework Policy's emphasis on regular review and updates to the policy, inclusion of stakeholders in the review process, and the use of homework as a formative assessment to inform teaching practices and enhance learning.

The Homework Policy of Midleton College is well-aligned with the school's Mission Statement and Ethos, reflecting the school's commitment to providing a respectful, supportive, inclusive, and innovative learning environment that encourages each student to realise their potential.

## II. Importance of Homework

### A. Reinforcement of Classroom Learning

Homework plays a crucial role in reinforcing what students learn in the classroom. It provides an opportunity to review and apply the knowledge and skills learned during the day, allowing for deeper understanding and retention. This reinforcement is particularly beneficial in subjects where progressive learning is essential, such as Mathematics and Languages, where each concept builds upon the previous one.

### B. Development of Independent Learning Skills

One of the key objectives of education is to foster independent learners who can navigate their learning journey with minimal guidance. Homework serves as an instrumental tool in achieving this goal. When students engage in homework, they are often required to apply self-guided learning strategies, such as research, analysis, and problem-solving, thereby developing their autonomy in learning. This process helps to prepare students for further studies and lifelong learning.

### C. Encouragement of Time Management and Organizational Skills

Homework, by its nature, requires students to manage their time effectively to meet deadlines. It encourages students to prioritize their tasks, allocate appropriate amounts of time to different assignments, and develop strategies to handle long-term projects. These skills are not only essential for academic success but also beneficial in all areas of life. Moreover, keeping track of assignments and organizing resources needed for homework foster strong organizational skills.

#### D. Facilitating Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving Skills

Homework often involves tasks that necessitate higher-order thinking skills, such as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. For instance, completing a research project or solving complex problems require students to think critically and come up with innovative solutions. These activities not only solidify their understanding of the academic material but also equip them with problem-solving skills essential in today's rapidly changing world.

### III. Responsibilities

#### A. Teachers

**Clear Communication of Homework Expectations:** Teachers have the responsibility to clearly communicate the objectives, procedure, and expected outcome of each homework assignment. This involves clarifying how the task links to classroom lessons, the quality and quantity of work expected, the due date, and how it will be evaluated.

**Consistency in Assignment of Homework:** Teachers should ensure that the assignment of homework is consistent and matches the purpose stated. The homework tasks should be relevant, meaningful, and appropriate to the student's age and learning needs.

**Ensuring Feedback is Provided in a Timely Manner:** Teachers are required to provide constructive and timely feedback on completed homework. This facilitates the student's learning process and encourages continuous improvement.

#### B. Students

The role of students in the homework process is vital. The responsibilities outlined in this section provide a framework for students to succeed in their academic journey and contribute positively to the learning environment. These responsibilities, and ways to support students in meeting them, will be further discussed in the later sections of this document.

**Understanding the Homework Task:** Before leaving school, students should ensure they understand each homework task fully. It is their responsibility to seek clarification from the teacher, if needed.

**Gathering Necessary Materials:** It is essential for students to make sure they have all required materials, such as books and copies, before they leave school.

**Timely Completion of Assignments:** Students should prioritize completing their homework on time, ideally starting on the night it is assigned, regardless of the deadline. This practice fosters discipline and an appreciation for the importance of meeting deadlines.

**Seeking Help When Needed:** If students are struggling with their homework, they should proactively seek help from their teacher, a classmate, or a family member.

**Handling Homework from Missed Classes:** If students miss classes due to illness or for any other reason, it is their responsibility to inquire about the homework assigned during their absence. They should then complete and submit any missed assignments according to guidelines provided by the teacher or school.

Preparing for the Next Day: Students should check their timetable and school bag to ensure that all books, PE gear, and other necessary items are ready for the next day.

By fulfilling these responsibilities, students contribute to a positive and productive learning environment that supports their academic growth and development.

### C. Parents/Guardians

Provision of a Conducive Environment for Studying: Parents/Guardians play a significant role in ensuring a quiet and comfortable study area for their children to concentrate on their homework.

Encouraging and Monitoring Students' Homework Practices: Parents/Guardians should motivate and monitor their children's homework habits. This includes ensuring they are consistently completing assignments and offering support when needed.

Communication with School if Issues Arise: If any issues or concerns arise related to homework, parents/guardians should communicate with the relevant teachers or school administrators to address them promptly. This helps maintain open lines of communication and fosters a productive learning environment.

## IV. Homework Essentials

### A. Duration and Frequency of Homework

Understanding the appropriate duration and frequency of homework is crucial to maintaining a balanced academic life. This section provides guidelines about the expected amount of homework according to each year level. A gradual increase in the complexity and quantity of homework mirrors students' developing academic abilities and increasing responsibility. We will also discuss expectations for homework over weekends and holiday periods, aiming for a balance that allows for rest and self-guided learning.

Guidelines by Year Level: The duration and frequency of homework should be appropriate to each year level. In the lower years, homework might consist of short assignments given a few times per week. As students progress through school, they can expect a gradual increase in the amount and complexity of homework, reflecting their developing skills and academic demands. Specific time guidelines are provided to help manage student workload:

Form I: 1 to 1.5 hours daily

Form II: 1.5 to 2 hours daily

Form III: 2 to 2.5 hours daily

Transition Year: Around 2 hours daily (this may vary due to the nature of the Transition Year program which often involves project-based work)

Form V: 3 to 3.5 hours daily

Form VI: 3.5 to 4 hours daily, plus additional time for research and project work as needed

Weekends and Holiday Periods: Homework will be set on Fridays, and it is expected that students will need to allocate some time for work or study over the weekend. However, in the interest of promoting

a balanced lifestyle, no mandatory homework should be assigned over extended holiday periods. Students are encouraged to use this time for revision and to work on long-term projects, if any. It is also a suitable time for reading and self-guided learning, in line with our mission to foster independent learning skills.

## B. Types of Homework

Homework can take various forms, each serving a specific purpose in the learning process. In this section, we will discuss the different types of homework, including practice exercises, preparatory homework, extension assignments, and creative work. Understanding these types helps to diversify the tasks assigned, thereby enriching the students' learning experience.

**Practice Exercises:** These are assignments meant to reinforce skills or knowledge students have learned in class, such as math problems, language exercises, or reading assignments.

**Preparatory Homework:** This type of homework prepares students for upcoming lessons or projects. It could include reading texts, researching topics, or gathering materials.

**Extension Assignments:** Extension assignments go beyond what was covered in class to deepen students' understanding. They often involve critical thinking, such as essays, research projects, or problem-solving tasks.

**Creative Work:** Creative assignments allow students to demonstrate their understanding in original and innovative ways. These can include art projects, creative writing, designing experiments, or building models.

## C. Homework Quality, Assignment, and Documentation

Balancing the quality and quantity of homework assignments is key to effective learning without causing student burnout. This section delves into the factors that make assignments purposeful and meaningful, including their alignment with course content, the clear communication of their objectives, and their appropriate level of challenge. We will also discuss the role of students and teachers in documenting these assignments, ensuring a consistent practice across all subjects.

**Quality Over Quantity:** The primary focus of homework should be on the quality of the tasks assigned, not the sheer volume. Assignments should promote deep understanding, critical thinking, and active engagement with the material. It's important to avoid overloading students, which can lead to burnout without necessarily enhancing understanding.

**Purposeful and Meaningful Assignments:** Every homework task should have a clear purpose that aligns with the course content and learning objectives. Assignments should be thoughtfully designed to enrich learning, whether they're intended to reinforce classroom lessons, prepare students for upcoming topics, extend knowledge beyond the class material, or allow for creative expressions of understanding. The purpose of each assignment should be explicit to engage students and make the learning process more meaningful.

**Balancing Rigor and Accessibility:** While homework should present a challenge, it should not be overly complex or discouraging. The difficulty level of the assignments should be balanced with students' abilities to ensure they are rigorous yet achievable. This approach promotes growth, learning, and keeps students motivated and confident in their abilities.

**Clarity in Assignments:** Teachers are responsible for ensuring homework assignments are clear and accessible, with tasks explained well and success criteria shared with students. The purpose and due date for each assignment should be clearly stated to avoid any confusion.

**Recording Homework Tasks:** Students have the responsibility of accurately and promptly recording their homework assignments. This could be done in a physical homework journal. Teachers should support this by ensuring all homework is clearly written on the classroom whiteboard and allocating time for students to record it.

**Consistency Across Subjects:** The process of assigning and recording homework should be consistent across all subjects and year levels. This not only serves as a reminder for students but also provides a tool for parents to stay informed about their child's assignments.

#### **D. Managing and Organizing Homework**

Homework management and organization are essential skills that foster responsible study habits and contribute to academic success. In this section, we will share strategies for students to effectively manage and organize their homework, from using a homework diary to planning tasks and timelines. The guidelines provided will also cover the management of long-term projects, regular checks by teachers, and using the homework diary as a communication tool between teachers and parents. All these strategies aim to help students reduce stress, maximize their learning potential, and prepare for their next class.

**Use of Homework Diary:** Each student is given a homework diary at the beginning of the academic year. This should be used to record assigned homework and their respective due dates. It is essential that this diary is brought to every class and home each evening.

**Homework Planning:** Students are expected to plan their homework in a manner that prevents the accumulation of assignments. This involves understanding the scope of each task, estimating the time needed for completion, and spacing out work appropriately.

**Personal Homework Timetable:** A personal homework timetable can be beneficial in maintaining a consistent study routine. Students are advised to complete homework early in the evening when they are most alert and productive.



Long-Term Projects: Larger assignments or projects that span over a longer period should be carefully planned. Break down the project into smaller, manageable tasks with intermediate goals and associated deadlines to avoid last-minute rushes.

Regular Diary Checks: Teachers will periodically check that homework details are recorded in the homework diary. This not only reinforces the importance of the diary but also enables teachers to monitor students' organization skills.

Diary as a Communication Tool: When students are having problems with poor organization or completion of homework, teachers may use the diary as a means of communication with parents. This way, issues can be identified early and addressed collaboratively.

Timely Completion: Students should aim to complete homework on the day it is assigned. This helps in reinforcing the day's learning while it's fresh in their minds and prevents work from piling up.

Preparation for Next Class: Part of managing homework includes preparing for the next class. This may involve previewing the next lesson, reviewing class notes, or gathering necessary resources.

With these strategies, students can ensure they are effectively managing their homework, reducing stress, and maximizing their learning potential.

## V. Homework and Learning Environments

### A. Use of Technology in Homework

In our increasingly digital world, the use of technology has permeated various aspects of education, including homework. Technology can enrich the learning process, fostering creativity, communication, and efficient submission of assignments. However, students must adhere to certain guidelines to ensure that the use of technology enhances, rather than impedes, their academic progress.

Electronic Submission of Homework: Occasionally, teachers may ask that homework be submitted electronically. This method allows for quicker feedback, easy tracking of assignments, and the ability to submit work from anywhere.

Google Classroom: Our school uses Google Classroom as the primary platform for managing and submitting homework electronically. Students should ensure they are enrolled in their respective class "classrooms" and understand how to use the platform effectively. This includes knowing how to submit assignments and participate in class discussions.

**Password Management:** Students should ensure they know their Google password and keep it secure. Forgotten or lost passwords can result in delayed submission of assignments and communication issues.

**Adhering to Deadlines:** Technology should not be an excuse for late submission. Deadlines must be adhered to as it may not be possible to upload assignments after the cut-off time. Understanding and practicing good time management is critical.

**Focus on Content:** When completing homework electronically, students should focus primarily on content rather than formatting. Though a neat presentation is appreciated, the quality and depth of the response is what teachers value most.

**Digital Citizenship:** Students must practice good digital citizenship. This includes respecting copyrights and avoiding plagiarism, acting responsibly and respectfully online, and being mindful of their digital footprint.

**Technology Issues:** Technical difficulties are inevitable but should not routinely hinder homework completion. Students should familiarize themselves with basic troubleshooting steps and have a back-up plan for submitting work in case of unexpected technical problems. For prolonged issues, communication with the teacher is crucial.

**Screen Time and Health:** While technology offers many educational benefits, excessive screen time can have health implications. Students should aim for a balance, incorporating off-screen activities and breaks into their study routine, and be mindful of posture and ergonomics while using devices.

By effectively utilizing technology and adhering to these guidelines, students can enhance their learning experience, foster essential digital skills, and prepare for a future in which technology will continue to play a significant role.

## **B. Study Environment**

Establishing a conducive study environment is crucial for effective homework completion. Students should take into account the following guidelines when setting up their homework routine:

**Quiet Place:** Students are advised to identify a quiet, well-lit place where they can concentrate on their homework. This place should be free from excessive noise and interruptions that could distract from the task at hand.

**Permanent Workspace:** If possible, students should have a dedicated desk or table for their studies that can be left set up. Having a consistent workspace can help students associate the area with learning and productivity, reinforcing the homework routine.

**Avoid Distractions:** To maximize focus, students should limit potential distractions during homework time. This includes turning off the television, minimizing background noise, and avoiding unnecessary use of mobile phones or social media. Ideally, mobile phones should be placed outside the room. By creating a distraction-free environment, students can better concentrate on their assignments and enhance their understanding of the subject matter.

In fostering this conducive study environment, students are encouraged to take ownership of their learning and develop effective study habits that will serve them throughout their educational journey.

### Homework during Illness or Absences

Coping with missed classes due to illness or other reasons can be challenging, but it is crucial to maintain academic progress. Here are the guidelines students should follow in such cases:

**Student Responsibility:** If a student is absent from class or school for any reason, it is their responsibility to obtain details of the homework assignments from their classmates or their teacher. They should ensure they understand the task and the due date.

**Absence due to Extra-curricular Activities:** The responsibility to catch up on missed homework also applies to students who miss classes due to participation in sporting or other extra-curricular activities. These students should communicate with their teachers or classmates to stay up-to-date with their assignments.

**Prolonged Absences due to Illness:** If a student is to be absent for a prolonged period due to illness, it is recommended that the student or their parent/guardian make contact with the Form teacher. The Form teacher can then coordinate with other teachers to ensure the student receives the necessary homework and assignments.

**Communication with Teachers:** If a student is having trouble completing homework due to absences, they should communicate with their teachers as soon as possible. Teachers can provide additional resources, extend deadlines, or offer alternative assignments based on the student's circumstances.

**Submission of Homework after Absence:** In situations where a student is absent on the day homework is due to be submitted, it is expected that the student submits the homework at the next available opportunity, typically the next class. This allows for continuity in learning and assessment, and helps ensure that the student remains on track with the coursework. If there are any issues or concerns related to this, the student should communicate with the respective teacher at the earliest convenience.

**Catch-Up Plan:** Upon returning to school, students may benefit from creating a catch-up plan to systematically address missed assignments. This can be done in consultation with teachers or a school counsellor.

**Flexibility:** Recognize that periods of illness or other unavoidable absences are stressful. During these times, it's important to prioritize health and well-being. Understanding and flexibility from teachers, parents, and the students themselves are important during such periods.

It's crucial to remember that everyone's goal is the student's learning and success, and maintaining open communication is key during times of absence.

### C. Homework Help Resources

**Ask for Clarification:** When homework is assigned, students are encouraged to immediately ask their teacher for clarification if they do not understand the assignment or its requirements. This helps to ensure the student knows exactly what is expected of them.

**Use Class Materials:** Students should make good use of all class materials provided to them, such as textbooks, resources on Google Classroom, class notes, and any additional materials their teacher may have provided. These resources often contain a wealth of information that can help students understand and complete their homework.

**Online Resources:** There are a plethora of online resources that can aid in understanding concepts and completing homework. Some examples include:

**Khan Academy:** A comprehensive learning resource with tutorials and practice exercises on a multitude of subjects.

**Scoilnet:** An Irish education portal with a wealth of resources for Junior and Senior cycle students.

**Studyclix:** A comprehensive Irish study website covering Junior Certificate, Transition Year, and Leaving Certificate subjects.

**BBC Bitesize:** Covers a wide range of subjects with interactive lessons, videos, and quizzes.

Remember that these resources should be used as a supplement to, not a replacement for, class materials and lessons. If you're struggling with a concept or assignment, it's always best to reach out to your teacher for help.

## VI. Homework and Diversity

### A. Accommodating Diverse Learning Abilities

Creating an inclusive homework environment requires careful consideration of each student's unique learning abilities. This section details strategies for accommodating diverse learning needs, including differentiated assignments, special education considerations, parental involvement, and collaboration with Learning Support.

**Differentiated Homework Assignments:** Homework should acknowledge the diverse range of learning abilities among students. It is fundamental that teachers tailor assignments when appropriate to accommodate varying levels of comprehension and proficiency. This tailoring includes offering extra challenges for high-achieving students and ensuring tasks are manageable for those requiring additional support. The primary aim is to allow each student to benefit from their homework experience without feeling overwhelmed or disengaged.

**Catering to Special Educational Needs:** When assigning homework to students with special educational needs, teachers must maintain equilibrium. This balance involves respecting the right of students to fully participate in all class activities, including homework tasks, while recognizing their unique learning necessities. Often, these needs involve reinforcing and consolidating particular skills.

**Parental Involvement:** For certain students, regular involvement of parents proves critical for their progress. Therefore, teachers are encouraged to actively involve parents in supporting their children's homework efforts. This involvement can take the form of sharing homework strategies, discussing students' areas of strength and growth, or updating parents on their child's progress.

**Collaboration with Learning Support:** Subject teachers should proactively work with Learning Support teachers to ensure that students with special needs are adequately catered to when completing homework. This collaborative approach facilitates the creation of assignments that align with students' individual learning profiles, effectively leveraging their strengths and bolstering areas of weakness.

Through the implementation of these measures, teachers can foster an inclusive and supportive homework environment. This environment considers the diverse abilities of all students, providing equitable opportunities for every individual to succeed.

### B. Homework and Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) are fundamental aspects of an effective learning environment, and they extend into the sphere of homework as well. Addressing EDI in homework requires understanding and considering the varied contexts and circumstances in which students complete their assignments.

**Equity in Homework:** Teachers should strive to assign homework that is fair and adaptable to various home environments and resources. Homework should be accessible, taking into account the diversity of students' circumstances such as access to technology, study spaces, and academic support at home. Consideration should be given to providing different options or formats for homework completion, allowing for student choice.

**Diversity in Homework:** Homework tasks should value and reflect the diversity of the student body. This can involve incorporating diverse perspectives, voices, and examples in assignments or allowing students to explore topics that relate to their own cultural, personal, or social experiences. Diverse homework assignments can enhance students' understanding and appreciation of different cultures, viewpoints, and life experiences.

**Inclusion in Homework:** Homework should be designed to be inclusive, taking into consideration the specific needs of all learners, including those with special educational needs. Accommodations and modifications should be provided as necessary, such as offering extended time, simplified instructions, or alternative assignment formats. Teachers should ensure they are available for clarifying instructions and providing additional guidance as needed, fostering an environment where all students feel comfortable asking for help.

In all aspects of EDI, open communication with students and parents is key. This can help teachers understand and address any potential barriers to equitable, diverse, and inclusive homework.

## VII. Homework Integrity and Parental Involvement

### A. Integrity in Homework

Integrity in homework refers to the commitment of students to complete their assignments honestly, authentically, and in accordance with established guidelines. Encouraging a high standard of academic integrity is fundamental in ensuring that students truly benefit from homework assignments. This involves a clear understanding of the school's policies against copying and plagiarism, and the appropriate use of AI and other technologies.

**Copying:** Copying someone else's homework, including peers' work, is strictly prohibited. It is important that each student submits work that is uniquely their own to ensure their individual understanding and mastery of the topic. Copying homework not only disrespects the efforts of others but also deprives the student of the opportunity to learn and grow. The school treats instances of copying as a serious matter.

**Plagiarism:** Plagiarism involves presenting someone else's work, words, ideas, or data as one's own. This includes sourcing content from textbooks, publications, and the internet without proper citation. Plagiarism is not tolerated, and students must always acknowledge the original source of any information or ideas that are not their own.

Use of AI: While AI and other technological tools can assist in various aspects of learning, it is crucial that students use these responsibly. AI must not be used for completing homework or project work unless explicit permission is given by the teacher. If AI is used, students must provide detailed information on how AI was utilized in their homework submission. This ensures that the use of AI does not undermine the learning process or provide an unfair advantage.

In all cases, students are expected to uphold the principles of academic integrity, fostering a learning environment of honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. Teachers and parents can play a pivotal role in cultivating these values by modeling ethical behavior and setting clear expectations around academic integrity.

## B. Parental Involvement in Homework

Parental involvement plays an essential role in fostering a student's successful homework routines, creating a learning-conducive atmosphere, and promoting academic achievement. Parents set expectations, provide structure, and maintain open dialogue with teachers.

**Providing a Suitable Environment:** Parents should ensure a quiet, distraction-free workspace for their children, encouraging consistent routine and reinforcing the importance of focused study time.

**Monitoring Homework Time:** Parents should monitor the time their child spends on homework, reaching out to the form teacher if the duration seems excessive or insufficient. These situations might indicate difficulties with the material, time management issues, or a mismatch between the student's skills and the assigned homework.

**Ensuring Authenticity of Work:** Homework should primarily be the student's own work. Excessive parental assistance can undermine the learning process and independent study skill development. Instead, parents should guide children towards resources and strategies for problem-solving, rather than directly providing answers.

**Regular Communication with Teachers:** If a student struggles with homework, early communication with class or form teachers can help identify potential learning difficulties or understanding gaps, enabling timely intervention and support. Regular updates can be conducted through parent-teacher meetings, emails, or a digital platform.

**Seeking Advice:** If needed, parents should seek advice on supporting their child's homework routines. This advice can be provided by the class teacher or the Special Education Needs (SEN) department, offering strategies tailored to the student's unique learning needs.

Checking Homework Journal: Parents should regularly review the homework journal (excluding Form IV), keeping track of assigned tasks and deadlines. This allows parents to monitor their child's progress, time management, and supports planning and organisation.

Projects in Form IV: For Form IV students, project deadlines may be communicated via the Transition Year (TY) newsletter. Parents should stay informed about these assignments to provide necessary support and guidance.

Ensuring Regular Homework Completion: If a student regularly fails to complete homework, teachers will contact parents to discuss the issue and seek solutions. Consistent homework completion is critical for continuous learning and academic progression.

Through active engagement and constructive support, parents can contribute significantly to their child's academic development, instilling positive attitudes towards homework and lifelong learning. Ensuring parents understand the purpose and expectations of homework assignments will enable them to better support their child's learning at home.

## VIII. Homework Review and Feedback

### A. Teachers' Review Process

Teachers bear the responsibility of reviewing and assessing homework in a systematic, consistent, and timely manner. This process forms an integral part of student assessment and includes checking for completion, assessing demonstrated understanding, and noting progress over time.

Record Keeping: Teachers should maintain records of homework, feedback, and grades. This documentation allows for accurate tracking of student performance and progress over time.

Timely Review and Return: Teachers strive to review, correct accurately, and, when work is collected, promptly return marked homework to students, ideally within one week. This promptness ensures that the assignment remains fresh in students' minds, thereby maximizing learning potential and reinforcing the topic.

Peer Correction: Teachers can also encourage the use of peer correction, a technique where students correct each other's work. This method fosters cooperative learning and develops critical thinking skills as students engage with and analyze their peers' work. However, teachers should guide this process to ensure accurate feedback and maintain a positive and respectful learning environment.



Reinforcing Learning: Timely review and feedback on homework assignments reinforce the topic of work, enabling the application and consolidation of classroom-taught concepts.

Incorporating these approaches into the review process aids in enhancing students' learning experiences and outcomes, while also promoting responsibility, self-evaluation, and peer learning.

## B. Feedback to Students

Feedback serves as a pivotal element in the homework process and should be adapted to align with the students' preferences. Various mechanisms can be utilized, considering the results of the School Self-Evaluation (SSE) process.

Junior Student Feedback: For junior students, written feedback is favoured. This is typically presented in the format of '2 stars and a wish', indicating two areas of strength and one area needing improvement. This clear and direct feedback style supports students' understanding of their current performance level and provides actionable steps for growth.

Senior Student Feedback: Senior Cycle students, on the other hand, prefer verbal feedback and engaging in dialogue regarding their work. This form of interaction provides them with the opportunity to ask questions, clarify misunderstandings, and gain a more nuanced understanding of their performance.

Constructive Feedback: Irrespective of the feedback format, teachers should ensure that it is constructive, clear, and specific. Feedback should not only highlight areas of strength but also indicate areas requiring improvement.

Showcasing Exceptional Work: Occasionally, work that is exceptionally well-done may be showcased to the class as part of the feedback process. This practice serves to acknowledge outstanding effort and can inspire other students by illustrating exemplar practices.

Implementing these tailored feedback mechanisms fosters a more personalized learning environment, further enhancing students' academic growth and engagement with their homework.

## C. Feedback from Students

Valuing student voice is fundamental to the homework review process. Their insights and perspectives not only provide teachers with valuable information about the learning process but also actively involve students in shaping their own educational experiences. A variety of methods can be used to solicit feedback from students:

Exit Tickets: These are brief formative assessments conducted at the end of a lesson to gauge student understanding. They can also serve as a platform for students to share their thoughts on the difficulty level, relevance, and volume of homework assignments.

Student Surveys: Periodic anonymous surveys can be conducted to gather more comprehensive feedback about homework. Questions can explore various aspects such as the perceived utility of assignments, time management concerns, stress levels associated with homework, and suggestions for improvement.

Classroom Discussions: Regularly scheduled classroom discussions allow for immediate, interactive feedback about homework assignments. These discussions can be guided by questions aimed at understanding students' experiences with the homework, their perceived benefits, and challenges encountered.

Feedback Platforms: Digital platforms can also be used for students to provide feedback on assignments. These platforms offer an open channel for continuous, real-time feedback, allowing adjustments to be made promptly if necessary.

By incorporating these strategies, teachers can ensure a student-centered approach to homework, enhancing its relevance and effectiveness. This practice also promotes an open, responsive learning environment that values each student's input and facilitates ongoing improvements to the homework process.

#### D. Recognition of High Standard Homework

To encourage students to consistently deliver high-standard homework, VSWare points will be awarded by classroom teachers. This serves to motivate students to continually strive for excellence in their assignments.

#### E. Use of Homework as Formative Assessment

Homework should be utilized as a formative assessment tool, as outlined in the Assessment and Reporting policy, to gauge students' understanding of the material and inform teaching practices. It provides valuable insights into students' learning progression, identifying gaps in understanding and areas needing further instruction. However, the primary purpose of homework is to enhance learning, not to assign grades.

## IX. Addressing Homework Issues

### A. Incomplete or Unsatisfactory Homework

Teachers anticipate all homework to be completed to the best of the student's abilities and handed in punctually. When a student fails to meet these expectations, the teacher will record it in the VSWare information system and intervene accordingly. The intervention might include a student-teacher discussion to identify the root causes, or providing additional resources or guidance to support the student.

### B. Strategies for Addressing Repeated Non-Completion

Persistent failure to complete homework necessitates a prompt and collaborative approach. Teachers will communicate with the student to understand the reasons behind the non-completion. Possible strategies might include setting clear expectations, reinforcing a consistent homework routine, or providing additional support. If the issue persists, parents may be contacted, referral to Form Teachers and further sanctions, could be applied.

### C. Overload or Underload

If homework consistently proves too challenging or not stimulating enough, adjustments need to be made. Teachers are open to feedback from parents and students about homework-related issues. The goal is to balance the quantity and quality of homework to ensure it serves as an effective reinforcement and extension of learning.

## X. Policy Review

### A. Regular Review and Updates

The homework policy should be reviewed annually to ensure it remains effective and relevant. Updates should be made based on feedback from stakeholders, current research on homework practices, and the evolving needs of the school community.

### B. Inclusion of Stakeholders in the Review Process

Teachers, students, and parents should be included in the review process. Their feedback is valuable in understanding the effectiveness of the homework policy and identifying areas for improvement. This collaborative approach helps to ensure the policy meets the needs of all stakeholders.