

## **HOMEWORK POLICY**

Loreto Community School is a co-educational school under the auspices of the Department of Education and Science. The school has a Christian ethos whilst maintaining a deep respect for the diversity of traditions, values and beliefs found in the whole community. It aims for a high standard of educational provision but is also concerned with the development of the whole child. The school's mission statement asserts: "Loreto Community School respects the individual's rights and self worth while promoting a happy, safe and Christian environment where all may realise their spiritual, educational and personal potential." An important aspect of developing potential is the ability to become an independent learner so that the student can continue to develop as a lifelong learner.

This policy operates within a legislative framework and takes account of the following:

- The Education Act, 1998
- The Education Welfare Act, 2000
- The Education of Persons with Special Needs Act (2004)

It is linked to the Pastoral Care Policy, the Code of Behaviour Policy and the Special Needs Policy.

### **RATIONALE**

- Regular homework encourages the habit of good study skills which are essential for success in education.
- It builds on and develops the work done in class.
- It introduces students to research methods.
- At its best it stimulates curiosity and independent research.
- It allows teachers to monitor the progress of each student.
- It provides an opportunity for self-assessment.
- It teaches the skills of time management.

### **AIMS OF POLICY**

This homework policy is not designed to be prescriptive in relation to amount or timing of homework but to set out the general principles which all stakeholders can agree on.

- Each teacher and each subject department will have particular homework guidelines based on the type of learning needs required by their subject but will also take cognisance of what demands are placed on students, especially in the junior years, by the variety and breadth of the subjects they study.

- The policy also aims to ensure that homework will be purposeful and meaningful so that it enhances learning. To this end it is important that students understand that homework is not just a burden to be endured but a means by which they can deepen their own knowledge and skills.
- The role of parents and guardians is vital in encouraging and supporting good homework practice. Communication with the home is essential to ensure that parents feel involved.
- Homework given must take into account the varying levels of ability of students and as far as is practical will be differentiated accordingly. This is especially important in the case of students with special needs or learning difficulties.

### **TEACHER RESPONSIBILITY:**

- Each teacher will assign clear homework tasks and explain to students what is required.
- Each teacher will teach students study skills relevant to the subject area and emphasise quality over quantity.
- During class the teacher will instruct the students to write the homework in the student journal and will specify the date on which the work is to be submitted.
- The amount of homework given will take into account the length of time which could reasonably be expected to complete it. It should also be consistent with the approximate time considered appropriate for the year group:
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Year – 1½ hours
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> Year - 1½ - 2 hours
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> Year - 2-3 hours
  - 4<sup>th</sup> Year - 3 hours
  - 5<sup>th</sup> Year - 3 hours
- All homework will be checked and the teacher may use a variety of methods depending on the nature of the assignment. The teacher will take into account the value of ‘Assessment for Learning’, i.e., comments will give appropriate feedback on what the student has done right, what weaknesses are in the work and what the student needs to do to improve performance and understanding.
- Teachers will be aware of varying levels of competence in each class and will differentiate homework accordingly. In particular they will take note of the abilities of children with Special Educational Needs and differentiate in terms of task or expected outcome.
- Feedback should be positive and encouraging.
- Records of homework grades will be kept by the teacher.
- When a student does not attempt or complete homework the teacher will record this in his/her own diary and also record it in the student’s journal.
- The teacher will use the student journal to communicate with parents on concerns and may also use it to communicate positive feedback.

- In some areas students, especially senior students, will be expected to undertake research to help them develop independent learning skills. In such cases the teacher will provide guidelines and the students will take responsibility for their own homework.
- Homework will not be used as a form of punishment.

### **STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY:**

As one of the aims of homework is to help the student become an independent learner it is important that each student develops the self-discipline and motivation required to complete homework tasks. To ensure that this process happens there are a number of areas where the student must take personal responsibility.

- Each student must ensure that the school journal is always used to carefully record details of homework. Learning as well as written homework will be recorded and note taken of dates on which it is to be submitted.
- It is the student's responsibility to ensure that all appropriate materials and copybooks are available.
- The student must ensure that he/she has a copybook for each subject and only use it for that subject.
- All written work must be attempted and the student must take care to present work neatly and tidily.
- When a student misses a class due to involvement in sport or other extr-curricular activities he/she must discover what homework has been set.

### **PARENT/GUARDIAN RESPONSIBILITY:**

The support of parents/guardians is vital to the success of their children and there are many practical ways in which they can assist them.

- It is useful to set a particular time aside in which homework is done. It should be emphasised that whatever other activities are planned, homework must take priority.
- As far as possible a quiet place should be provided where students can work without distraction.
- Parents/ guardians should regularly check homework and sign the journal.
- If a child is not able to complete homework assignments for genuine reasons it is the duty of parents to inform the teachers by way of a note in the school journal.
- If a parent/guardian has concerns about the amount of homework being set he/she should contact the school to discuss the problem.

- While parents are encouraged to assist with home work it is unhelpful to do the work for the student.
- Parents/guardians will ensure that students have all necessary textbooks for school and homework.

### **Homework in Transition Year and Leaving Cert Applied:**

By their very nature some school programmes demand a different approach to homework and may rely less on written tasks than on other forms of learning.

In the case of the Leaving Cert Applied the type of homework underpins the philosophy of the course, i.e. it must by its nature be 'applied'. Thus homework might take the form of Observation, Oral Interview, Craft Work, Conducting Activities etc. It is important that students understand the purpose and relevance of any such activity and carry out instructions to the best of their ability.

Over the course of two years LCA students carry out seven tasks and coming up to the time of task examination students will be expected to spend more time on preparation. This will usually involve more written or computer work and the focus must be on presentation of work.

Homework in Transition Year is also very varied. While regular style homework may continue in some subject areas, eg. Maths, other activities require a different focus. The Transition Year teachers will ensure that students understand how homework tasks have valuable learning outcomes.

**This policy will be reviewed again in 2011.**