

St. Mary's College Dundalk.



HOMEWORK AND STUDY POLICY.

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MISSION STATEMENT

St Mary's College is a Catholic secondary school under the patronage of the Marist Fathers. The primary aim of the College through its spiritual and humanistic endeavours, is to promote and develop a sense of community where those entrusted to its care can be brought to the fullness of their human potential in accordance with the teachings of the Gospel.

The College, through its academic, pastoral and spiritual undertakings strives to provide for the holistic development and welfare of each of the students in its care.

Note:

The following 'Home Work and Study Policy' dovetails with other appropriate policies of St Mary's College, including, but not limited to, 'SMC Code of Behaviour', 'SMC Teaching and Learning Policy', 'SMC AUP Policy', 'SMC Distance Learning Policy' etc.

*During periods of 'Lockdown learning, 'Distance Learning':
'SMC Distance Learning Policy' and 'SMC Homework and Study Policy' are used in conjunction with each other, as well as other pertinent policies. Please refer to the appendix of this policy.*

Teachers and students utilise the Microsoft Office suite of applications.

All relevant policies are available on the college website: maristdundalk.ie. A hard copy is available on request via the Main College Office.

INTRODUCTION

A meaningful education provides every student with the best possible start in life and it helps them to mature and develop into conscientious young adults.

The purpose of this policy on Homework and Study is to encourage regular homework completion and therefore full participation in the education system, which gives students good preparation for the responsibilities of third level and employment.

Moreover, it endeavours to promote self-discipline, commitment and responsibility and therefore provide for the holistic development of the person, and the pursuit of academic excellence.

This policy applies to the entire college community including students, parents and guardians and teachers. St Mary's College encourages active involvement and participation of all in developing coherent approaches to this important aspect of student development.

RATIONALE

The purpose of this policy is to inform the college community of the schools position regarding homework and study.

The overarching aim is to assist and encourage students to develop to their full potential, in line with the Marist ethos. The final responsibility for satisfactory completion of homework lies with the student.

More specifically, the purpose of this policy is to:

1. Reinforce homework as a prerequisite for academic achievement.
2. Create a college wide policy to the benefits of homework.
3. Give clear guidance about situations where homework is not completed.

Regular Homework is a key aspect of the learning process and contributes to the development of sound Study Skills. It consolidates, reinforces and supplements the work done in class and promotes independent learning and creativity.

WHAT IS HOMEWORK

- Homework refers to tasks assigned to students by their teachers to be completed mostly **outside** of school hours, either at home or at the supervised studies provided in the College.
- Homework involves the ongoing and regular revision of course work.
- This is work assigned by the subject teacher for completion by the student, for the most part outside of school time. It may be written, aural, oral, reading, project based or revision based. It is challenging and purposeful, and aims to enhance student motivation. It is coordinated, regular, promptly marked / corrected / assessed, and supported with relevant ***formative** feedback, be it written feedback or oral feedback.

****Formative feedback.***

This type of feedback is provided by teachers to students as strategies to engage learners to constantly reflect on how they can approach, complete and evaluate their learning.

When each party engages fully, formative feedback leads to successful learning outcomes.

It is usually conducted regularly in the classrooms by various forms, including written and spoken forms.

MAIN TYPES OF HOMEWORK

Staff members assign different types of homework to accomplish specific purposes. It is an essential part of the learning and teaching process and may be set in a number of different ways:

- ***Practice Homework***

This aids the student in gaining specific knowledge and skills that have been presented in class. This type of homework includes, but is not limited to, completing worksheets, answering questions from a chapter etc.

- ***Learning and Revision Homework***

This type of homework involves the revision of recent material (during or at the conclusion of a unit of work) in a planned and structured manner, revising or taking notes, preparing study cards, using revision journals to **consolidate*** learning. Learning and revision homework should be active to be considered effective.

****Consolidated Learning.***

Consolidation is a lesson stage where learning is reinforced. It would normally be at the end of the lesson. At this point students are given the opportunity to try out their new skills. As well as helping pupils retain information, reinforce and apply it, consolidation is also an opportunity to ask questions and clarify issues.

- **Extension homework**

Sometimes students need to communicate their mastery of knowledge and skills by using different media. This type of homework includes, but is not limited to, writing compositions, preparing a demonstration, drawing maps, making models, or other visual displays.

- **Projects**

At times teachers require students to complete projects that combine many skills and display a depth of knowledge. This type of homework includes, but is not limited to, preparing oral reports, preparing for debates, role plays, written reports, science projects, or artistic productions. These projects often extend over a number of weeks.

BENEFITS OF HOMEWORK

- Homework enables teachers to evaluate students work and assess its standard.
- Learning is strongly reinforced and consolidated when students revise that which was learned during the day, that evening.
- Better examination results are achieved when homework is completed regularly.
- Homework is an integral part of the learning process and learning continues through the completion of homework. Homework plays an important part in helping students to develop to their full potential and should be a positive experience.
- It allows students to develop the practice of ***independent learning** without the constant presence of the teacher or other students and the external discipline of the timetable. This way of working is vital to the later stages of secondary education and thereafter.
- It allows students to use materials and other sources of information that are not always available in the classroom.
- It involves parents/guardians and others in students' work for their mutual benefit.
- It gives students valuable experience of working to deadlines.
- It forms a link with the study techniques crucial to success at Leaving Certificate level, third level and beyond.

****Independent Learning.***

Independent learning is a method or learning process where learners have ownership and control of their learning – they learn by their own actions and direct, regulate, and assess their own learning. The independent learner is able to set goals, make choices, and decisions about how to meet his learning needs, take responsibility for constructing and carrying out his own learning, monitor his progress toward achieving his learning goals, and self-assess the learning outcomes.

Junior Cycle Classroom-Based Assessments

Classroom-Based Assessments occur during class time when the teacher evaluates the students in the specific assessment(s) that are set out in the subject.

Students will complete one Classroom-Based Assessment based on learning outcomes in more than one strand of the course. The Classroom-Based Assessment will be designed in consultation with the students.

A particular purpose of the Classroom-Based Assessment is to facilitate feedback to students during their engagement with learning and at the end of the process.

The Classroom-Based Assessment can be produced by the student in written, digital, visual or audio formats and it may be supported in these formats through the use of an interview or presentation.

Leaving Certificate Project Work

At LC there are several subjects that include a project component.

Projects are designed to assess a student's research, performance, critical thinking and presentation skills, and are worth a significant percentage of Leaving Certificate grades award. *(Please see table below).*

LC SUBJECT	FINAL SEC RESULT - % WORTH
LC Agricultural Science	25%
LC Art	70%
LC Computer Science	30%
LC Construction Studies	50%
LC DCG	40%
LC Economics	20%
LC Geography	20%
LC History	20%
LC Home Economics	10% - 45%
LC LCPE	50%
LC Music (performance)	50%
LC Politics & Society	20%
LC Technology	50%
LCVP	60%

General Guidelines to Project work Completion:

Students should ensure that adequate time is spent on these required components throughout their two year Leaving Certificate programme for the following reasons:

Completion – Staying organised and managing project work effectively ensures the student completes and submits their work on time, and prevents last minute stress.

Quality of Work – When managed well, the student has the time and resources to maintain a high level of quality to their project work. 'Rushing', due to poor planning, can lead to errors and achieving below their academic standard.

Communication - When organised and up-to-date with project work, the student can communicate more effectively with their subject teacher, and receive timely and appropriate support and guidance.

Wellbeing - Being organised with project work reduces the students stress levels, and improves wellbeing and self-satisfaction.

WHAT IS STUDY

- 'Studying' is a learning method where students direct their own learning, outside the classroom and without direct supervision. It is important that study is ***active**.
- Study is an excellent method for students to consolidate their in-school learning, to build foundations for future learning and to train themselves for future academia.
- Homework and study together support students learning and retention, improving comprehension, results, self-esteem, motivation, self-discipline etc.

***Active Study**

Studying actively means engaging with the material in a way that is meaningful and promotes retention. Reading over class notes or presentation slides, for example, is considered passive studying; it will not test your true understanding of the material and will only help you retain information minimally. Active studying involves organizing information into charts and graphs, summarizing, creating flash cards and outlines, etc. In short, it requires doing.

THE BENEFITS OF STUDY

- With active study, students learn more effectively. Through studying a topic, a student is actively engaged with the information. Those students who regularly study are able to consider and comprehend topics more deeply, as well as the obvious benefits of improved academic results.
- Study also helps build study skills the student can use to explore new topics and apply to more advanced homework/class work.
- Studying can boost self-esteem. As a student improves their study, he/she can become a more confident learner, further increasing general confidence. The student actively taking control of their learning can be a significant motivation boost, and so reducing feelings of frustration and/or anxiety.

HOMEWORK AND STUDY GUIDELINES

- Students are advised to draw up a study/revision timetable for themselves.
- Students in Sixth Year and Third Year should expect to complete homework and study during weekends and school breaks.
- Guidelines on homework/study skills shall be made available to students.
- The quality of homework is more important than the amount of time devoted to it.
- Students with further educational needs will be given due consideration in consultation with the learning support teacher and Parents.
- Extra-curricular activities i.e. sport, recreation or part-time work should not interfere with completing study or homework.
- Absence from class for extra-curricular activities is never acceptable for failure to do homework.
- Evening or weekend jobs are not recommended, particularly during exam years.

Year	DES recommended times for Homework & Study per night
First Year	1.5 hours
Second Year	2 hours
Third Year	2 - 3 hours and increasing approaching exams
TY Year	2 hours, depending on project work and activities
Fifth Year	2.5 - 3 hours
Sixth Year	3-4 hours and extra time at weekends

STUDY SKILLS MODULES – Each Year Group

Since 2013 each year group in St Mary's College receives a module of study skills, First Year to Sixth Year.

In First Year, foundations in 'How to Study' are established and built upon in the following academic years.

Study skills may be formulated and authored by the specific Year Team, or where deemed appropriate and/or necessary, by Senior Management, can be facilitated through an outside company, e.g. 'Enhanced Learning'.

Study skills modules for each year group are mandatory and students are robustly encouraged to attend and focus.

The Study Skills Programme provides guidance across the range of study skills needed at specific secondary school levels, including but not limited to:

- Managing your time and developing learning strategies.
- Reading textbooks critically and effectively.
- Taking and comprehending notes in class (from hard or electronic copy).
- Planning answers effectively and thoroughly.
- Developing a writing style.
- Improving spelling and grammar.
- Preparing and delivering presentations.
- Revising and sitting examinations.

Homework and Study

RESPONSIBILITIES OF STUDENTS

Homework and Study: CHECKLIST FOR STUDENT

- Students must have their homework journal in each class.
 - All homework assignments should be recorded at the end of each lesson, entered into the journal and shown to the subject teacher.
 - If in doubt, check the assignment with the teacher before the end of the class.
 - Complete and present homework to a quality standard and at the given deadline.
 - Use the template in the College journal to present homework neatly and accurately.
 - Homework is to be the student's own and is not to be completed during class or break times.
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- At the beginning of each year, establish a good study/homework routine.
 - Students must have their homework journal in each class.
 - All homework assignments should be recorded at the end of each class, entered into the journal and shown to the subject teacher. While some teachers may use online platforms as a support, homework must still be recorded by students in their student journal.
 - It is the student's responsibility to check the assignment with the teacher before the end of the class, where necessary.
 - Complete and present homework to the required standard and given deadline.
 - Co-operate with the class teacher. To check and complete what homework was assigned after a return to school from illness or during a time of absence – e.g. sporting or extracurricular activities.
 - Ensure that written homework is their own and is not to be completed during class or break times.

- To have music, the television and the phone switched off during homework and study periods, as per Study Skills module facilitated to students.
- Homework must be prepared with care and completed in the correct copy.
- Revision of coursework is an important element of homework, particularly around exam windows.
- Students are prohibited from completing homework within the college i.e. in the mornings before school or during breaks (break and lunch).

RECOMMENDATIONS **FOR STUDENTS**

The intrinsic value of homework activities is far more important than the precise amount of time devoted to them. Best practice suggests that the amount of time that should be spent by students at second level on average, on homework should fall within the ranges as stated in the table above. Some students will complete all tasks quickly and correctly and may appear to have given very little time to their homework. Some students and those with learning needs may put in more time and effort.

General Structure to Homework in hardbacks - *this is a general layout and not a mandatory one:*

Whole School Homework Procedure			
Copybook Layout/Structure: All students in the college are directed to layout/structure each page of their copybook in the following manner.			
Date	Page No.	Title	Chapter
Classwork / Homework Assignment:			
*Rewrite assigned task(s) before beginning.			

Ruled margin

Homework and Study

RESPONSIBILITIES OF **PARENTS/GUARDIANS**

Homework and Study: CHECKLIST FOR **PARENT / GUARDIAN**

- To check your child's Student Journal daily for homework details and teacher comments.
 - To discuss any teacher correspondence in Student Journal, positive or negative.
 - To ensure your child is completing all homework assigned to a **quality** standard.
 - To discuss homework and study and affirm its importance.
 - Provide positive reinforcement and praise for quality homework completed.
- To encourage and provide a supervisory role in ensuring students do homework and establish a good study and homework routine at home.
 - Arrange for after-school study, if deemed necessary.
 - To provide suitable conditions so that students can do homework, free from distraction i.e. suitable desk, chair light and heat, ensuring unnecessary electronic devices are switched off.
 - To ensure that adequate time is spent at homework.
 - To check and sign the College journal weekly.

- To sign notes from teachers, if necessary.
- To contact the subject teacher if concerns arise about Students progress.
- To provide a written explanatory note in the students journal if, for a **valid reason**, a student is unable to do homework.
- To attend Parent/Teacher meetings.
- Where problems with homework may arise, it is imperative to contact the subject teacher at the earliest stage.
- To support the study and homework policy of the school.

Encouraging and Motivating Your Child to Produce Quality Homework

Parents

- Provide a quiet location, free from distractions for student to complete homework and study.
- Provide encouragement and support to the student.
- Ensure assigned homework is completed.
- Engage in dialogue with student on their aspirations and desires post-secondary school.
- Ensure college journal is signed every week.
- Ensure homework is checked/signed each evening.
- Encourage the student in positive homework and study habits.

Helping Your Child to Study Effectively

Parents

General items your child will need for the most effective study session include:

- A study area—such as a desk or table, free from distractions and clutter. It is advisable to not study in a place that is too comfortable, e.g. Bed.
- A computer—so your child can read, watch, and listen to online resources.
- Study tools—including pens, highlighters, and paper so your child can create organised study notes.

1. Help your child seek out resources that provide more information on the topic he or she is learning about. Books, articles, and educational videos are all effective ways to increase his or her understanding of new concepts.

2. Talk about what your child is learning and discuss which topics your child is most excited about. Talking about what your child is learning is a great way to boost comprehension and motivation.

3. Use different study methods. Every student has his or her preferred study method. Encourage your child to try different study techniques, like reading books, watching videos, creating mind maps, or some other activity that helps your child process the information.

4. Have the required tools. Being prepared is vital in the area of study. Ensure your child has all the study tools he or she needs to make the most of each study session.

Homework and Study RESPONSIBILITIES OF SUBJECT TEACHER
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Homework and Study: CHECKLIST FOR SUBJECT TEACHER

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|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • End lesson with 5 minutes to go. • Prepare students on how to approach homework: provide sample/model answers. |
|---|

- Exit check: ensure assigned homework is recorded correctly in journal.
- Homework is not to be started during class time.
- Provide regular written / verbal constructive feedback on homework submitted.
- Provide regular positive reinforcement and praise for quality homework submitted.
- Use tiered sanctions for unsubmitted or poor quality homework.

The day to day responsibility for classroom learning and teaching, which includes homework oversight, is the responsibility of the classroom teacher. These responsibilities include:

- To give clear instructions on homework assignments **AND** to ensure students have sufficient time to write their homework into their school journal.
- To keep an account of the homework given to students **AND** to keep an account of the homework completed by students.
- To complete an exit check and ensure assigned homework is recorded correctly in journal.
- Teachers may accept a dual homework system, where homework is submitted online or in hardcopy. This is acceptable, once online submission is not the only method applied.
- To regularly monitor homework completion at the commencement of the lesson or as soon as is feasibly possible.
- To consider the varying abilities of students when setting homework.
- To periodically collect and provide structured, reflective feedback - to correct, mark and/or comment and return homework.
- To provide regular, constructive feedback to students on their homework performance.
- To report, record and reward Students for good performance. It is recommended that a policy of positive affirmation is fostered in the classroom - students should receive praise for achievements, equally to report and record lack of homework in the student's journal.
- Be available to meet Parents/Guardians if concerns arise regarding a student's study and homework.
- Provide regular written reports, as part of termly/monthly exams on students' educational progress.
- To implement sanctions on students in cases of 'no homework' or 'poor quality homework' where necessary.

Homework and Study **RESPONSIBILITIES OF YEAR HEAD & TEAM**

- To explain the importance of Homework and Study to students via Assemblies, Daily Rounds etc.
- To facilitate a study skills module to the year group.
- To check the student's journals for the recording of homework, or instances of poor quality or no homework notes in the 'Teacher Comment' pages of journal.
To implement sanctions on students in persistent cases of 'no homework' or 'poor quality homework' where necessary. The Year Head will become involved following consultation with the classroom teacher and upon being fully appraised of all interventions the subject teacher has completed/attempted. The Year Team may place student on daily/weekly report. The Year Head, in consultation with Senior Management, may place student on Saturday Detention.

THE ASSIGNMENT OF HOMEWORK FOR THOSE RECEIVING ADDITIONAL EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT

- Relevant information relating to individual students with learning needs is given to staff by school management and/or the SENCO.

2. The subject teacher will apply an appropriate initial sanction to the student.
Appropriate Sanctions can include additional writing/homework/penalty sheet to complete etc. according to the classroom management practices that teacher maintains.
3. Where student homework issues persist, the subject teacher will apply appropriate further sanctions. These will be tiered in nature and will include additional work, lunchtime detention, and if no improvement, contacting that student's parent/guardian via telephone/email/Compass. This will typically occur on the third occasion of no or poor quality homework, when classroom interventions are insufficient.
4. The subject teacher will apply the above sanctions if any pattern of no or poor quality homework emerges.
5. The Year Head will become involved following consultation with the classroom teacher and up being on fully appraised of all interventions the subject teacher has completed/attempted. The Year Head will sanction student with After School Detention.
6. **Persistent repeat offenders** will have their parents brought in to accompany them for interview with Year Head. The subject teacher has the choice to attend this meeting, assuming he / she has already applied the tiered classroom sanctions.
7. **Persistent repeat offenders** will be referred to Senior Management.
8. The Year Head may place student on daily/weekly report.
9. The Year Head, in consultation with Senior Management, may place student on Saturday Detention.

Failure to comply with any of the above sanctions will be dealt with through the College's Code of Behaviour.

EVALUATION AND REVIEW OF ST MARYS COLLEGE HOMEWORK POLICY

The Homework Policy is reviewed as part of the review of the Subject Department Plan or as issues may arise throughout the school year.

Progress regarding the implementation and success of the policy is regularly discussed among teachers.

Signed: 
Chairperson, Board of Management, St. Mary's College

Dated: 19/09/23