

## **Cedars School of Excellence**

### **Homework Policy**

At Cedars School we acknowledge that parents play a key role in the education of their children. In the early stages parent/child dialogue promotes language and numeracy skills and as pupils progress through primary into secondary education, parents can provide a supportive environment in which the young person can develop the necessary study skills to move towards independent learning. This homework policy takes account of parents as partners in the learning process.

#### **DEFINITION:**

Homework is a relevant task or activity selected by the teacher, to be completed out with class time, usually to be completed at home.

#### **AIMS:**

##### **General Aims**

- To strengthen home/school links and develop further parental co-operation and support.
- To provide an opportunity for parents to become involved in their child's education by encouraging, supervising and checking such homework as required.
- To heighten parental awareness of the work their child is covering in class and the specific purposes of that work.
- To help teachers monitor the effectiveness of teaching and learning.
- To reinforce, consolidate and extend classroom learning.
- To enable revision for assessment purposes.
- To encourage pupils to develop personal responsibility and life-long learning.

##### **Specific Aims: P1-2**

- To encourage parents to read stories to their children.
- To encourage the parental role in the developing of the spoken language through a range of relevant activities e.g. 'show and tell'.
- To raise awareness of the early years curriculum and appropriate strategies.
- To practise words and vocabulary from the reading programme already taught in school by the teacher.
- To practise phonics - initial sounds and blends.
- To practise and reinforce number bonds already taught in school by the teacher.
- To introduce words as the beginning stages of formalised spelling.

##### **Specific Aims: P3-P7**

- To encourage parental awareness of the relevant levels and areas of A Curriculum for Excellence.
- To encourage pupils to be more aware of the purposes of homework and begin to take more responsibility for their own learning together with the development of organisational and study skills.

- To promote self-reliance and self-confidence and encourage the habit of independent learning.
- To encourage silent reading for a range of purposes especially for enjoyment.
- To consolidate the learning of spelling through a range of appropriate strategies.
- To reinforce number bonds e.g. multiplication tables and further develop mathematical thinking such as problem solving.
- To widen the learning experience by encouraging pupils to use materials and sources of information not available in the classroom e.g. research topics/science activities etc.
- To work in partnership with parents to promote a shared responsibility.

### **Specific Aims: S1-S2**

- To encourage parental awareness of the relevant levels and areas of A Curriculum for Excellence.
- To encourage pupils to be more aware of the purposes of homework and begin to take more responsibility for their own learning together with the development of organisational and study skills.
- To promote self-reliance and self-confidence and encourage the habit of independent learning.
- To widen the learning experience by encouraging pupils to use materials and sources of information not available in the classroom e.g. research topics/science activities etc.
- To work in partnership with parents to promote a shared responsibility.

### **Specific Aims: S3-S6**

- To encourage parental awareness of the relevant levels and areas of A Curriculum for Excellence.
- To help pupils to further understand the purposes of homework and to take increasing responsibility for their own learning together with the further development of organisational and study skills.
- To promote self-reliance and self-confidence and encourage more effective independent learning.
- To encourage independent preparation for senior phase exams and assessments
- To widen the learning experience by encouraging pupils to use materials and sources of information not available in the classroom e.g. research topics/science activities etc.
- To work in partnership with parents to promote a shared responsibility.
- To enable students to take the initiative and work independently as is required for the workplace and the teaching / learning styles in many FE establishments.

### **PRINCIPLES:**

To be effective homework should be:

- Varied and interesting.
- Appropriate to the needs and abilities of the pupil.
- Well explained with a clear purpose understood by all.
- Recognised and rewarded by meaningful and helpful feedback given as soon as possible.
- Related to the ongoing work of the class or group.
- Manageable within a reasonable amount of time.

- Designed to increasingly encourage self-management and independence in learning.

## **PRACTICE:**

Homework reinforces a positive learning experience and covers a variety of tasks and curricular areas.

The allocation and marking of homework tasks mirrors the established policy and good practice established within school.

In P1-3 the homework is usually daily reading practice with a supporting activity, There may also be maths' activities to practise skills learned, spellings or reading words to learn. Work relating to other curricular areas such as social studies, the sciences and the expressive arts should also be undertaken at different points in the term.

In P4-7 core aspects of homework consist of reading practise with occasional supporting activities, spelling/grammar activities and maths work/ times tables. Additional work in language and personal projects as well as other curricular areas such as social studies, the sciences, the technologies, the expressive arts and R.M.E. is also given as appropriate. The children are expected to read independently at home.

In the secondary department a wide range of homework tasks should be given for each subject area as appropriate. This may include internet related tasks and internet access is made available during the school day for any pupils for whom this is a difficulty. Quantity and level of difficulty of homework will increase as pupils progress through the secondary department. In the senior phase it is expected that pupils will undertake independent daily revision over and above specific tasks set in order to achieve success in external exams. This is the responsibility of the child and their parents. Teachers will assist pupils if an area of difficulty is raised by parents or pupils.

We actively encourage parental involvement in children's homework to allow the parent to see the work/skill that is being reinforced, the standard their child is working at and to encourage independent work as the skills develop. Parents are encouraged to sign completed homework to signify their child has consolidated work and presented it neatly and correctly.

We encourage the use of technology in the setting of homework tasks and submissions, for example, emailing, texting, blogging, twittering and MP3 devices.

Cedars School acknowledges the complexity and diversity of present day lifestyles and the wide spectrum of parenting and working arrangements which impact on the area of homework. Therefore, parents are encouraged to contact the school as early as possible to discuss any matters causing concern in this area or any area relating to their children.

### **TIME ALLOCATION:**

The nature of the homework task and amount will vary with the age, ability and needs of the pupil. In the lead up to exams in the senior phase it is expected that pupils will undertake at least two hours of revision / homework a night.

### **FRAMEWORK FOR SUPPORT:**

The main support mechanism is the homework jotter which is usually completed by the teacher in P1-3 and by the pupils in P4-P7.

A homework diary is used by the secondary classes to allow for increased independence, organisation and personalisation. This acts as a record of work set, and as a link between school and home. Parents, teachers and pupils can use the diary to record success and any problems encountered if appropriate. In S1 and S2 homework diaries are regularly checked by secondary guidance staff.

### **MONITORING AND EVALUATION:**

Monitoring of effective practice is part of an effective support structure. The use of homework is monitored through parental feedback, report cards and parents evenings. The school operates an open door policy and parents are encouraged to contact the school if they have any queries or concerns.