

Our Lady of Mercy College

Beaumont,

Dublin 9



Homework Policy & Good Practice Guidelines

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1. Mission Statement:

The core value of Our Lady of Mercy College, Beaumont is respect for all and the nurturing of individual potential academically, spiritually and culturally as a member of the school and wider community and in the spirit of the Mercy Ethos.

2. Scope of Policy:

This policy applies to all students, their parents/guardians, staff and Board of Management.

3. Rationale:

Students are encouraged to aim for excellence in all they do. We in Our Lady of Mercy College Beaumont are committed to excellence and to continually improving the quality of teaching and learning. (*CEIST core value*)

4. The purpose of homework:

- It consolidates and reinforces skills and understanding developed at school.
- It encourages students to develop the skills, confidence, self-discipline and motivation needed to study effectively.
- It extends school learning, for example through additional reading.
- It sustains the involvement of parents in the management of students' learning and keeping them informed about the work students are doing.
- It directs research.

From the beginning of First Year each student is expected to establish a homework routine. **Each student is expected to have her Journal on her desk for her classes and she is expected to keep a record of all homework and revision work in her Journal.** Journals are regularly monitored by the teacher and are available to all teachers, should they wish to communicate with parents. All homework should be completed and organised as guided by the subject teacher, and should be dated. This assists with revision. A teacher will communicate initially through the journal if a student fails to present written assignments or has failed repeatedly to complete learning assignments.

5. The amount of homework appropriate for students of different ages:

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 on average, by Second Level students, on homework should fall within the following ranges:

- First Year 1 ½ hours
- Second Year 1 ½ - 2 hours
- Third Year 2 – 3 hours
- Transition Year varies depending of project work and activities
- Fifth Year 3 - 3 ½ hours
- Sixth Year 4 hours. Weekend study, school holiday study and revision are also essential.

Teachers and parents need to consider the varying abilities of students when setting homework or when inspecting homework respectively.

The school expects that all homework is completed on time and presented on time. It should be done to the best of the student's ability in a neat and tidy fashion. It is very important that homework, including sanctions for not completing it, should be consistently applied across the school so that all pupils see the arrangements as fair. **If a student has been absent the onus is on the student to discover what work has been set and to endeavour to complete it within the time given in as far as is possible.** If the student has been ill, a period of time will be given to the student to complete missed assignments. It is also necessary for both teacher and parent to ensure that there is a healthy balance between time allocated to homework and time allocated to extracurricular and leisure activities.

6. The role of parents/guardians in supporting pupils

- (i) Parents/guardians are encouraged, as far as possible, to provide a reasonably quiet, suitable place in which students can do their homework free of distractions from televisions, mobile phones, P.C. etc. You are advised to provide suitable desk, chair, adequate light and heat. Digital books may be used at home when appropriate.
- (ii) Students should have a regular time set aside for homework.
- (iii) Parents/guardians must remind their daughter about the proper use of her school locker so that books are stored at home for homework or study purposes.
- (iv) Encourage students to attend *homework module*/after-school study if available.
- (v) It is the parents'/guardians' responsibility to inform the school or subject teacher of any reasons why a student was unable to complete a homework assignment. A parent/guardian may communicate this through the student's journal. **Students must have Journal on their desk for each class.**
- (vi) Parents/Guardians are expected to check and sign the Journal weekly. Individual notes from school personnel should also be acknowledged.
- (vii) Parents/Guardians may communicate with a class teacher at parent/teacher meetings regarding homework.
- (viii) Since computers are an integral part of today's world, it is desirable that the Internet serves as a source for student's research. For meaningful learning to take place the student must show they have used information acquired through ICT to lead to an increased understanding of the material assigned for learning. Parents/Guardians, therefore must monitor their daughter's use of the Internet. See the schools "Internet & Website Usage Policy".
- (ix) It is recommended that students should not be employed in part-time work during the school term.

7. Study skills

It is very important that students develop good study skills, time management skills and self-reflection skills. The school will work with the students to develop these skills so that learning can be enhanced and effective learning skills developed. The Class Tutor, Guidance Counselor and Learning Support teacher as well as the SPHE team address study skills with students. Study Skills workshops are offered to some year groups. Each individual subject teacher provides tips on the specific requirements within his/her own specialist subject area. Students who find homework difficult should not be excused homework, but may need extra help with strategies to manage it.

8. Appropriate tasks for homework

The range of tasks which are appropriate for students of various ages are many and varied. Some examples are as follows:

Designing	Preparing for class tests or exams
Drafting	Preparing for role plays, debates etc
Drawing	Presentations
Drill practice	Problem solving
Essay writing	Projects, Individual & Group
ICT tasks	Public Library visit
Interviews	Reading
Investigations	Report writing
Learning assignments	Research
Listening comprehension	Revision work
Making a model	Simple experiments
Note taking	Watching a TV documentary
Oral presentations	Written assignments
Practice of some procedure	

Assignments should have a clear objective, linked to study programmes. They should be both challenging and interesting. Teachers are encouraged to check that their overall homework programme is meaningful and balanced in the type and scale of tasks and manageable for students. This balance is not always possible and can vary considerably from day to day. However, it should be noted that homework time devoted to reading and learning is as important as written work. **All students should spend time at home on their studies whether or not work has been assigned.** If no homework has been set then students have an obligation to go over material they have recently studied in class to make sure that they have fully understood it.

9. Special educational needs

In setting homework for students with special needs teachers are encouraged to balance the right of students to share fully in the work of the class, including homework tasks, with their individual learning needs. These needs may include consolidation and reinforcement of specific skills. For some students, the continuing involvement of parents is very valuable. Subject teachers will collaborate where possible with Learning Support teacher to ensure class tasks are manageable, and individual skill practice can be incorporated without overloading the students.

10. Feedback for pupils

Feedback can come in a range of methods that encourages the improvement of learning, a range of methods that aims to shape and guide the next steps in learning. It is about “learning to learn”. Feedback is fundamental to helping students progress and can take many formative and summative forms (see Assessment Policy).

Oral feedback

Comment only marking

Self-reflection

Peer reflection

Teachers check and correct homework on a regular basis. The student may be asked to resubmit a piece of work following feedback and revision.

A variety of methods are used to correct homework for example:

Individual teacher correction

Class correction

Class discussion

Students exchange work for correction

Students write out answers in the form of a test

Self-correction based success criteria and learning intentions

Some items of homework (and class work) may be checked by students themselves under the direction of a teacher. This can be a useful part of the learning process for students.

The school reports to parents on the progress of students and indeed reporting is a crucial part of the relationship between school and parents. Traditional school end-of-term reports that take the form of a grade or mark and an application score as well as general comment for each subject and Classroom Based Assessment (CBA) as relevant can be reassuring and supportive for the parents of students. Parent/teacher meetings, held yearly offer valuable opportunities for the school to move beyond the marks, as it were, and to present more comprehensive assessments of progress. As well as allowing a focus on progress achieved; such meetings provide an opportunity to nominate areas that need specific attention and indicate what needs to be done to improve student learning.

11. Related Policies

- (i) Code of Behaviour
- (ii) Pastoral Care Policy
- (iii) Guidance & Counseling Policy
- (iv) Special Needs Policy
- (v) Internet & Website Usage Policy
- (vi) SPHE Policy
- (vii) Assessment Policy

12. Monitoring and Evaluating

The effectiveness of this homework policy needs to be monitored and evaluated. It is envisaged that each subject department monitors homework within the department at subject meetings. Teachers need to evaluate the quality of homework and the contribution it is making to learning. The system can also be evaluated through staff appraisal at staff meetings. In addition to monitoring arrangements, the homework policy needs to be reviewed regularly to assess its effectiveness. The key criterion should be the extent to which the policy is contributing to the progress students make at school and their attitude to learning.

13. Review of policy

Review takes place every three years as is Board of Management policy.

Ratified February 12th 2019

Signed:
(Chairperson, Board of Management)