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- *Research is ongoing on the benefits of homework and this policy will be updated accordingly to reflect the most recent, evidence based research.*

The aims of homework currently in St. Margaret's N.S. are as follows:

1. To consolidate work covered in school.
2. To promote self-discipline and independence as a life skill.
3. To help with retention of facts.
4. To encourage parental involvement in the process of education.
5. To improve reading and writing standards and to encourage a life-long love of reading.

Teachers

- Teachers will differentiate where required, when setting homework and will ensure that all children are fully aware of what is expected in terms of homework.
- Teachers will provide parents with a note at the start of the school year explaining the class homework policy for the year ahead, ideas of how to help with reading and additional information regarding homework relevant to the class etc.
- Teachers will correct and discuss homework with children and provide appropriate feedback to parents and children, when necessary.

Children

- Children will be encouraged to become independent in terms of organising their own homework, taking down their homework (from first class onwards) and completing homework tasks.
- Children will be offered the opportunity to discuss homework with teachers and homework will be differentiated, where appropriate, according to ability and individual needs, interests etc. of each child.
- Children's opinions on homework will be respected and listened to.
- Children will be encouraged to self-assess homework and to become reflective practitioners in terms of their homework.

Parents

Parents have a key role in their children's education. This is not only enshrined in Article 42 of our Constitution which recognises "that the primary and natural educator of the child is the Family" but it is also evidenced in volumes of research over many decades.

- Parents are encouraged to discuss any concerns relating to homework by making an appointment to see the teacher or by sending in a note.
- Parents are asked to sign diary / homework sheet / homework piece to be signed each night, on completion of work.
- Parents are encouraged to read with their children as often as possible. This is just as important in the senior classes as the junior classes.

- Parents are asked to make a note in their child's homework diary or on homework sheet, of how long it has taken to complete homework.

Suggestions/ Tips:

- Experience shows that children can benefit from completing homework sooner in the day, rather than later. It is a good idea to have a snack and a chat with your child after school and then complete homework.
- Reading, learning and oral work is as important as written work. Please listen to your child read and examine spellings and tables.
- Children are encouraged to read for pleasure every day and parents are encouraged to read to all children as often as possible. This may form part of homework but opportunities to read to and with your child should be encouraged. For example, bedtime story, family reading time, library visits etc.

Differentiation/ Inclusion

All pupils are assigned homework appropriate to their age, ability and class level. Some of the tasks may be designed to consolidate the child's classroom learning experiences, while other tasks will encourage the child to work independently and with initiative. Reading practice is a priority for all children.

Children with an IEP may work on target achievement as part of homework and this will be discussed/ agreed with parents during an IEP meeting.

Timeframes

Below are guidelines only, as to the suggested timeframes for each class. Differentiation and different circumstances must be considered when deciding how long a child spends on homework tasks.

Infants.....5 to 15 minutes.
1st class.....15 minutes.
2nd class.....15-20 minutes.
3rd class.....30 minutes.
4th class.....30 minutes.
5th class.....40-50 minutes inclusive.
6th class.....40-60 minutes inclusive.

Conclusion

If your child has worked diligently for the recommended times as stated above and has still not completed the homework, please write a note explaining this to the teacher. Children are not expected to work beyond the suggested timeframes on homework. This helps teachers to gauge how much homework to set.

If homework is generating a lot of anxiety or detracting from family well-being, please ensure you speak to the teacher so this can be addressed.

All areas of the curriculum will be considered for homework opportunities, including Physical Education.

Homework, along with schoolwork, teacher observation, projects, portfolios, diagnostic and standardised tests all lay the foundation for providing an overall picture of a pupil's progress and development as they move through the school.

Implementation/ Ratification and Review

This policy was ratified on_____.

It will be reviewed again in _____