

HOMEWORK POLICY

1. Introduction and Mission Statement

The Religious and Educational Philosophy of Coláiste Choilm Christian Brothers School, Dublin Road Swords (hereto after referred to as 'the School') is based on the vision and teachings of Blessed Edmund Rice, founder of the Irish Christian Brothers. As such the School subscribes to the five key elements as set out in the Edmund Rice Schools Trust Charter:

1. Nurturing faith, Christian spirituality and Gospel-based values
2. Promoting partnership
3. Excelling in teaching and learning
4. Creating a caring school community
5. Inspiring transformational leadership

These key elements inform the basis from which management, teachers, students and parents engage and as such are the foundations for our Homework Policy.

2. Rationale

This policy has arisen from the fusion of the key elements of promoting partnership, excelling in teaching and learning, and creating a caring school community, together with sound pedagogical (teaching) practice.

The aim of homework is primarily to improve the student's grasp of material and work covered in class, while also and especially in Senior Cycle to assist the creation of independent knowledge as a result of/in addition to the gathering of additional materials that may be beneficial to student learning.

The objectives of homework are as follows:

- To enable the teacher to assess the degree to which material taught has been grasped by the student
- To enable the teacher to monitor, on a regular continuous basis, the progress being made by a student.
- To enable the student to become an efficient learner
- To enable the student to develop short and long term memory skills
- To enable the student to master such skills, concepts and principles as are demanded by the curriculum.

The outcomes of the above are a stronger link between the School and home, corresponding to the key elements of 2 and 4 above together with an improved academic performance by the student, corresponding to key element 3 above.

3. Forms of Homework

Homework can take many forms and is more than just written work. Some of the most important work that a student can do is oral homework, i.e. reading, reviewing material, or learning important facts. Every class contact automatically becomes oral homework.

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Homework can be comprised of the following types:

- Written assignments
- Oral learning assignments
- Revision work

- Collecting information for projects
- Listening to tapes
- Watching educational documentaries or specific television programmes
- Preparing for debates, role-plays (TY) etc

This wide trajectory of homework assignments corresponds with key elements 1 and 5 above. They cater for all individual students learning styles and god given gifts while encouraging students to engage with the dynamics of team work transforming them into leaders.

4. The Student

All homework, written assignments and learning assignments are to be recorded in the student’s Journal, which is given by the school to the student specifically for this purpose. The school expects that all homework is completed on time and to the best of a student’s ability. If a student has been out sick and does not have work completed, a period of time will be given to the student to complete missed assignments. As students vary in ability levels and in speed of completion of work, it would be impossible to indicate precisely, the amount of time that should be spent by each individual student in completion of homework and revision on a daily basis. We do however offer the following timetable as a general guideline for what may be appropriate at different levels as students move up through the school:

Year:	Hours per day of homework and revision
1st year	1-2
2nd year	1½-2
3rd year	2-3
TY	Will vary depending on the amount project work
5th year	3
6th year	3+

4.1 Part-Time Employment

The school strongly recommends that casual part-time employment not be undertaken by students during the week as it prevents the doing of homework and is therefore a serious impediment to progress in school. It is well established through research that second level students who consistently work in paid employment for more than 8-10 hours per week do not perform as well in final examinations as those who do not. Those students who work consistently in such employment take this time from their study and examination preparation consequently jeopardizing their future education and life’s opportunities.

A school week consists of:

Class: 27 hours
 Study and preparation 15-19 hours

Additional working hours, however few, added to this inevitably results in school work being minimized and unrepeatability opportunities squandered.

4.2 The Journal

As stated above the Journal is not a personal diary, but a document used:

- (i) To record the progress of the student
- (ii) For communication between home/school

As such, any defacement or use of the journal contrary to the above will result in an appropriate sanction being issued under the code of behaviour. This may result in the student having to purchase a new journal for €10.

The Teacher: Will use the Journal to communicate with home

The Student: Will record the assignments prescribed each day in school

Parent(s)/Guardian(s): Will use the Journal to communicate with the schools and sign it each week

The tutor: will stamp the Journal each week

5. The Parent(s)/Guardian(s)

Parents can support in regard to homework assignments by assisting in the following:

- Providing continued interest and concern for the student's successful performance in school through encouraging the student in his performance of homework assigned.
- Ensuring the students at home are provided with a quiet area to study, equipped with a writing surface and chair and a good quality of lighting
- Assisting the school in stressing the importance of reading and its benefits
- Ensuring that any part-time jobs held by students do not interfere with the completion of homework and revision

It will be the parents/guardians responsibility to inform the school/class teacher of any reasons why a student was unable to complete an assignment. The Parent/guardian can communicate this through the use of the student's Journal. The class teacher will in turn communicate to the Parent/Guardian if a student repeatedly fails to present written assignments or has failed repeatedly to complete learning/revision assignments.

If the student or his parent/guardian feels that she is struggling with the amount of homework or revision, the student should approach the class teacher or the guidance teacher with regard to this matter.

6. The Teacher

The School is mindful that Junior Certificate students have up to 11 different subjects, each with its own demanding syllabus. It is particularly difficult to generalise a certain quota of homework for all subjects for two reasons.

Firstly, the nature of subjects differs. i.e. some subjects are skill based (example; Accounting and Mathematics) and therefore have to be practiced often. Secondly, not all students sit subjects at the same level. Different levels require different amounts of homework.

The allocation of homework is contingent upon the nature of the subject (skill based vs. non-skill based) and the level at which the subject is being studied

Teachers will monitor homework, using an appropriate monitoring strategy.

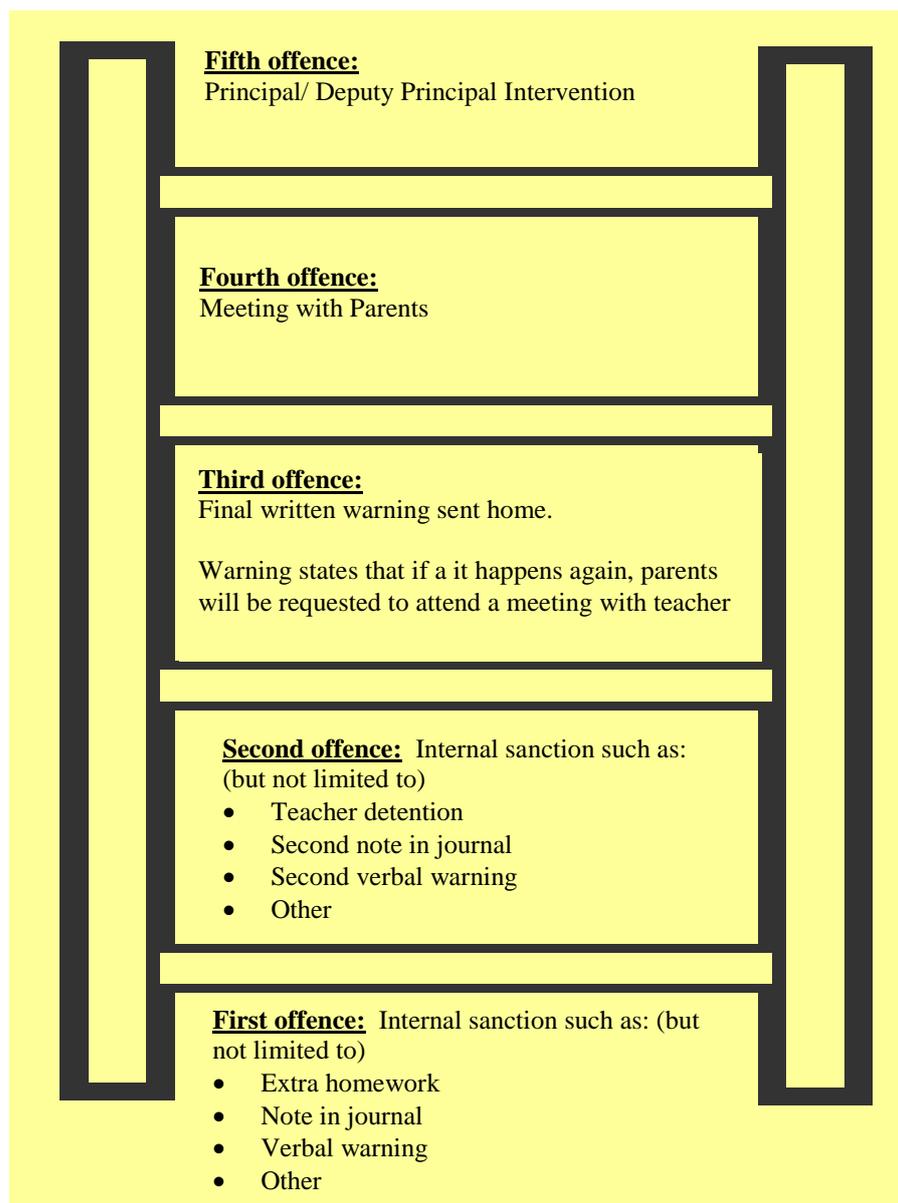
6.1 The Ladder of Intervention

As stated in section 4, the school expects that:

- (a) All homework is completed on time and to the best of a student's ability.
- (b) All homework will be accurately recorded in the Journal

In the event of these expectations not being met, the teacher will make an appropriate intervention ranging from a verbal warning to referral of the case to the Principal. In the interest of fairness, these interventions are graded according to the number of occasions where (a) and/or (b) above are not completed. This allows ample opportunity for the student to change their behaviour and achieve the expectations as outlined above.

The interventions are illustrated in the figure below:



6.2 Letter of Final Warning

On the third offence the teacher will send a formal letter to the parent(s)/guardian(s) by post. The return slip must be signed by the parent(s) /guardian(s) and returned to the school. This letter clarifies the nature of the offence and states that if it occurs a fourth time, a meeting will be necessary. (see appendix)

7. The School

In order to assist students in organising homework tasks and differentiating between study and written homework requirements a number of channels are used for delivery of 'study skills':

- SPHE (a course module)
- In School programme
- External facilitators are used in examination years

7.1 Special Educational Needs (SEN) Students

The philosophy of the School for Special Needs Students is to focus on what students' can do, as opposed to what they are unable to do. This involves either setting the same homework assignments for all students but requiring different content to be returned or differentiating assignments. Example: a higher level student would be expected to have a more critical understating of a TV documentary, whereas a Special Needs Student may be required to just have a recall understanding of it.

APPENDIX

(Copy to go to Year-Head.)

Date: _____

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Re: Final warning for the non-completion of homework assignments.

Your son _____ from class _____

has failed to:

- complete his homework on several occasions
- complete his homework to an adequate standard
- record homework in journal

This is contrary to the school's Homework Policy and may hinder his progress through the school.

If this happens again, I will be making contact with you to arrange a meeting in the school. I would be obliged if you would complete the acknowledgement slip below and arrange to return it to me as soon as possible.

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

(Teacher)

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Attn (teacher's name): _____

I acknowledge receipt of homework complaint for my son:

Student's Name: _____

Class: _____

Signed: _____

Parent/Guardian.

(Copy to go to Year-Head.)

Date: _____

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Re: Final warning for the non-completion of homework assignments.

Your son _____ from class _____

has failed to:

- complete his homework on several occasions**
- complete his homework to an adequate standard**
- record homework in journal**

This is contrary to the school's Homework Policy and may hinder his progress through the school.

If this happens again, I will be making contact with you to arrange a meeting in the school. I would be obliged if you would complete the acknowledgement slip below and arrange to return it to me as soon as possible.

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

(Teacher)

=====cut here=====

Attn (teacher's name): _____

I acknowledge receipt of homework complaint for my son:

Student's Name: _____ **Class:** _____

Signed: _____

Parent/Guardian.