



**Colaiste Choilm
Swords**

Homework Policy

Adopted by the Board of Management on:

18th October 2021

Signed:

Chairperson

Tomás Ó Murchú

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1. Edmund Rice Education

1.1 Congregation of Christian Brothers

The Congregation of Christian Brothers (*Congregatio Fratrum Christianorum*) is a worldwide religious community within the Catholic Church, founded by Blessed Edmund Rice in 1802. In 2008 the congregation was trustee of 96 schools in the Republic of Ireland.



1.2 Edmund Rice Schools Trust (ERST)

At the start of the new Millennium, the Christian Brothers founded by Blessed Edmund Rice decided to hand on responsibility for the schools to a group of lay people. The Edmund Rice Schools Trust (ERST) was established to hold the schools in trust so that they may continue to provide Catholic education into the future for the people of Ireland. Through reflection, and sharing, the school partners sought to reach consensus on what comprises the heart and soul of an Edmund Rice School. The educational approach of Blessed Edmund Rice schools is neither functional nor utilitarian, but subscribes to the holistic vision expressed in the following five key elements of the ERST Charter:

- **Nurturing faith, Christian spirituality and Gospel-based values;**
- **Promoting partnership;**
- **Excelling in teaching and learning;**
- **Creating a caring school community;**
- **Inspiring transformational leadership**



<http://www.erst.ie/our-schools/the-erst-charter/>

1.3 Mission Statement of Coláiste Choilm Swords

The aim of Coláiste Choilm is to provide a holistic education which is driven by a Catholic ethos.

We strive to create a safe environment which fosters inclusion, honesty, dignity and respect.

The school community encourages the individual in their pursuit of excellence.

We aim to promote among students a sense of pride in their school. The school is committed to:

- Respecting the dignity of the student with his background, tradition and beliefs, valuing the potential of each and encouraging the strong to support the weak;
- Enabling the student to develop a healthy self-image and to form positive relationships with others;
- Encouraging in the student a sense of creativity and of collaboration with others;
- Promoting the student's appreciation of his cultural heritage;
- Preparing the student through academic and technical training for his vocational role in life;
- Providing opportunities for the student to experience God in the wonder of creation, in worship and in service of others.
- Developing a critical sense in the student, helping him to challenge the forces that threaten human life;
- Providing a disciplined atmosphere in which the student is encouraged to grow in freedom and to take increasing responsibility for his education and for the life of the school community.



<http://colaistechoilmswords.ie/about-us/>

1.4 The Edmund Rice Schools Trust Charter

1.4.1 Nurturing faith, Christian spirituality and Gospel-based values

Edmund Rice Schools in partnership with the home and the parish are dedicated to providing and developing a Catholic education that cultivates a living faith, fosters Christian spirituality and educates people in Gospel based values.



Figure 1: The school community gathers for a celebration of the Eucharist in October 2017.

1.4.2 Promoting partnership

The Edmund Rice School is a welcoming community, where people are actively involved, their views are valued and their contribution is affirmed as they learn and grow together. Working together as partners improves the quality and effectiveness of the school. A spirit of partnership makes it easier to implement decisions and actions needed to achieve excellence.



Figure 2: 'The Ceiliúradh Committee' comprising of students, teachers, parents and management.

1.4.3 Excelling in teaching and learning

The Edmund Rice School is a community of people dedicated to the pursuit of excellence in all its endeavours and in all aspects of its teaching and learning.



Figure 3: Seán Mok (class of 2015) is presented with an All-Ireland Scholarship. Sean was congratulated by Mr. PJ McManus, Minister for Education and Skills, Ms Jan O'Sullivan T.D. and Mr David Neville (Principal)

1.4.4 Creating a caring school community

The hallmarks of an Edmund Rice school are care, especially for those who are vulnerable or disadvantaged in any way, and action for social and ecological justice.



Figure 4: Students in Coláiste Choilm preparing for a hurling match.

1.4.5 Inspiring transformational leadership

School leaders articulate a vision for their school in keeping with the Edmund Rice tradition. They inspire minds and hearts, raise critical consciousness and cultivate a strong work ethic coupled with an enterprising spirit.

(Source: Edmund Rice Schools Trust Charter (2014)
http://www.erst.ie/uploads/ERST-Charter_2014.pdf)



Figure 5: Daniel Grace, Prefect 2017-18 addresses guests at the Golden Jubilee celebration

2. 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

3. 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 engaging in a variety of learning activities as part of homework

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 and assist learning. Encourage Students to study effectively on their own and become more independent and self-organised learners;
- To develop revision and study skills;
- To help our Students to develop new skills or to practice skills already learned;
- To enable pre-teaching of topics, where Students engage in a piece of work or with an assigned resource, in advance of the introduction of new topics
- That Parents will be involved so that they may see how their children are doing with their learning so that they can find the best way to support their sons;
- To reinforce our Students literacy and numeracy skills by the implementation of this policy.

4. Forms of Homework

Homework can take many forms and is more than just written work. Homework and written work are not the same.

Some of the most important work that a Student can do is **review homework**, i.e. reading, reviewing material, or learning important facts. Every class contact automatically becomes review homework.

Teachers will set different types of homework for Students depending on their class, on the material and on the topic being studied. Below is a list of the different types of homework, the teacher may request:

- Self-organisation: preparing and organising myself the night before school
- Organising notes in folders and / copies according to subjects.
- Written assignments
- Oral learning assignments in languages
- Reading – novels, plays, poetry, newspapers, magazines and blogs
- Revision/review work
- Collecting information/materials for projects through primary and secondary research, including interviews
- Listening to audio books, recordings, podcasts and exam aural tests
- Watching documentaries or specific television programmes or online videos/vlogs
- Preparing for debates, role-plays etc.
- Task fulfilment – completing work already begun in class, or continuing with project work
- Basic experiments
- Accessing Google Classroom for teacher instructions/resources to help in homework completion
- Online quizzes or interacting with specific websites/simulations etc.
- Preparation before field trips or extra-curricular activities; including permission slips and required equipment or suitable clothing
- Computer work using or creating documents or artefacts using
 - MS Word
 - MS Powerpoint
 - MS Excel
 - Gmail - correspondence
 - Google Classroom
 - Google slides
 - Google docs/forms/quizzes
 - CAD
 - Selected smartphone apps recommended by Teachers
 - Audio recordings/podcast creation
 - Video creation

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

4. The Student

All homework, written assignments and learning assignments are to be recorded in the Student 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+

In subjects with projects and practical assignments Students should make note of important dates so as to adhere to deadlines. This prevents an overloading of work close to the written exams.

4.1 Student Role in Homework

- To keep a note of homework in the Homework Journal and/or access Google Classroom for instructions/homework resources. If the Student is unable to take down homework they should check with the Teacher, for permission to use their smartphone to take a snapshot of the homework.
- To be certain to understand the homework before the class ends.
- Not to hesitate in seeking clarification from the teacher.
- To complete each piece of homework to a high standard in accordance with the given criteria.
- Check over own work before submitting to the Teacher
- To complete homework within deadlines and avoid clashes of deadlines by leaving work to the last minute.
- To show your Parents any notes from class Teachers and to ask them to sign them.
- To complete any corrections or suggestions from teacher feedback.
- To submit homework in either a hard copy or electronic copy as requested by the subject teacher.
- To understand that attempting and completing homework is their individual responsibility

Absence from Class

Responsibility and obligations relating to doing work which is missed through absence rests with the Student. Extra-curricular activities will not be accepted as a valid excuse for work not done. Any concerns should be discussed with the subject teacher.

Absence through illness may require a Student to catch-up on certain pieces of work to support his continued learning. However, the Student should talk to his Teacher(s) about which pieces of

work should be prioritised and how this can be managed. How exactly this is done will vary according to particular circumstances, and if appropriate the Teacher(s) concerned may contact Parent(s)/Guardian(s) directly.

If a Student is absent for a long period contact should be made with the relevant Year Head.

4.2 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 in school work being minimized and unrepeatability opportunities squandered.

4.3 The Homework Journal

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

- (i) To help Students to self-organise and track assignment deadlines
- (ii) To record the progress of the Student
- (iii) To help Parents support their son's studies
- (iv) 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

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.
- To inquire about how they can help their son in doing homework.
- Checking the Student journal regularly and discussing with your son his progress and self-organisation and that homework is completed by your son.
- The Homework journal should be signed weekly by Parent(s)/Guardians(s); a text reminder will be issued by the school
- To notify the school if there is a problem concerning their child with homework.
- 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 for leisure and school, and its benefits.
- Ensuring that any part-time jobs held by Students do not interfere with the completion of homework and revision.
- Appendix I contains a checklist of items that Parent(s)/Guardian(s) can use to support a positive homework routine

It will be the Parent(s)/Guardian(s) 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 Cycle 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

The role of Teachers is:

- to give homework on a regular basis
- to write a note of homework on the classroom board or via Google Classroom.
- to share the learning intention and success criteria and to explain clearly again if it is thought that there is any confusion
- to share examples of best practice when needed.
- listen to the student concerned if he is concerned about a homework deadline
- regular feedback/checking of homework by an appropriate selection of the following methods
 - whole-class correction on the board
 - oral feedback to whole class or individually
 - written feedback (including comments via Google Classroom)
 - feedback on specific graded work or tests
 - voice comments via Google Classroom
- 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:

<p>Fifth offence: Principal/ Deputy Principal Intervention</p>
<p>Fourth offence: Meeting with Parents & Teacher & possibly Year Head.</p>
<p>Third offence: Final written warning sent home. Warning states that if it happens again, Parents will be requested to attend a meeting with Teacher</p>
<p>Second offence: Internal sanction such as: (but not limited to)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher detention • Second note in journal • Second verbal warning • Other
<p>First offence: Internal sanction such as: (but not limited to)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extra homework • Note in journal • Verbal warning • Other

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. A copy of this letter will be forwarded to the Year Head for placement in the Student's file (see Appendix II).

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.

8. Conclusion – How our Homework Policy is drawn from our ERST Charter

Nurturing faith, gospel-based values and Christian based spirituality	
Promoting Partnership	
Creating a caring school community	
Excelling in Teaching and Learning	
Inspiring Transformational Leadership	

APPENDIX I – Homework Routine Checklist for Parent(s)/Guardian(s)

The following is a checklist designed for Parent(s)/Guardian(s) to assist them in supporting their son in developing a positive and consistent homework and revision routine.

- Homework and revision need to take place in a quiet space away from others; if your son doesn't have a separate study space, perhaps a designated time each day in a set room can be managed
- This homework space needs to be well ventilated so that the temperature is not too cold or too hot, and there is a flow of fresh air.
- Good light prevents eye strain, and it needs to be placed to the opposite side of the Student's writing hand to prevent shadows
- Encouraging your son to regularly take brief (30 – 45 seconds) movement breaks to stretch muscles.
- Encouraging your son to take healthy snacks and water during homework, avoiding soft drinks.
- Distractions can be minimised by
 - Parent(s)/Guardian(s) protecting the homework space from interruptions by others
 - Removing/shutting down unnecessary screens (TV, tablets, laptops, PC's, smartphones, gaming platforms)
 - Your son letting friends know that he is unavailable during this homework time
 - If your son needs to use a tablet/PC/smartphone as a tool during homework, check at random points that he has not become distracted
 - Textbooks/folders/handout should be organised & stored close to the homework space
- Making sure that e-copies of textbooks are accessible to your son through a designated device
- Checking if you son needs to access Google Classroom for further details of homework or resources that will aid homework tasks
- Reading over class notes/ classwork and homework corrections from the school day to reinforce learning and refresh your son's memory
- Following suitable layouts and formats for homework
 - Read instructions carefully and re-read questions before beginning your answers
 - Think through the main points of your answer before you start writing
 - Avoid clutter in your work by leaving space between questions and parts of questions; make sure to label each question
 - Re-read your work to correct mistakes and make sure you haven't left anything out
- Signing your son's Homework Journal at least once a week and checking that your son
 - has made a reasonable attempt at assigned work
 - is managing the sequencing of his deadlines
 - is progressing in his learning

- Checking your son's understanding by asking to explain what he is working on; you know your own son well enough to gauge if he understands and when he is struggling – you don't need to be a subject specialist.
- If your son struggles from time-to-time with a topic this can be part of the natural process of learning – encourage your son to ask follow-up questions in his next lesson
- Encourage your son to view mistakes or misunderstanding as learning opportunities; when starting something new these can teach a Student how to look at problems/tasks in different ways and develop their learning skills
- Encouraging reading for pleasure helps students develop language skills, vocabulary and knowledge about the wider world. Suitable reading material includes:
 - Fiction
 - Non-fiction
 - Newspapers/reputable news sites
 - Magazines, blogs, video logs on topics/hobbies that interest your son
 - Comics or graphic novels

APPENDIX II – Letter of final Warning

Date: _____

[C.C.: Year Head]

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.