



HOMEWORK POLICY

Review Dates

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1. INTRODUCTION

Pobalscoil Iosolde is a co-educational community school located in Palmerstown, Dublin 20.

The school community strives to create a learning environment that provides its students with the academic, social and cultural training necessary for success in life.

The student population is drawn from varied communities and cultures. There are approximately thirty feeder primary schools. The school is a designated DEIS school (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools).

The school offers the following programmes - Junior Certificate/Cycle (JC), Junior Certificate Schools Programme (JCSP), Transition Year (TY), Established Leaving Certificate and Leaving Certificate Applied Programme (LCA).

1.1 Scope

The Homework Policy involves all aspects of school life and as such it is a whole school activity.

The Homework Policy applies to all school staff, the board of management, parents / guardians, students and others (including prospective or potential students and their parents / guardians and applicants for staff positions within the school) insofar as the measures under the policy relate to them.

While the Leadership and Management Team has the overall responsibility for coordinating and compiling the policy all members of staff have a contribution to make.

The school educational team aims to provide students with the best possible service. Members of this team include, among others:

- School Management
- Year Heads
- Class Tutors
- Subject Teachers and Departments
- Special Needs Co-ordinator
- Special Needs Assistants
- Programmes Co-ordinator
- School Completion Programme
- Home School & Community Liaison Officer
- Parents / Guardians
- School administration
- School maintenance

The interventions and supports of the plan apply particularly to junior, senior, minority, special educational or personal needs etc. of all students as they progress through their post-primary education.

1.2 Definitions

Many forms of homework may be assigned to students. Essentially homework will consist of written work and work to be read, studied, prepared or practiced. The amount of homework may vary from subject to subject. Further details of this will be found in the subject plans.

Students may be asked to :

- do written questions or prepare for verbal questions;
- re-read material previously taught in class or material related to that previously taught; prepare material for future class work;
- do research and record the results;
- learn and prepare material for oral, aural or other work;
- do project and research homework;
- do questions from previous examinations;
- do revision work;
- practice diagram and / or art work;
- analyse maps, documents or pictorial material;
- summarise material.

This list is indicative and is not intended to exclude other forms of homework.

This policy may be reviewed in the light of changing circumstances and the success of its implementation.

1.3 Policy and Legislative Context

This policy is being developed in response to relevant legislation and resource documents.

The school has also been guided by the fact that the Education Act 1998 provides that schools promote the social and personal education of students and provide health education for them.

This policy should be read in conjunction with other school policies such as those on Discipline and Social, Personal, Health Education.

1.4 Rationale for the Homework Policy

Our mission is to provide an inclusive learning environment, happy, safe and secure, which would enable students to develop.

To fulfil the Mission Statement the school adopts a caring, pastoral approach which aims to ensure a healthy and supportive learning environment. The Homework Policy is an integral part of this holistic policy.

To protect and enhance this approach the school asserts its right to require high standards of effort when completing homework assignments.

In accordance with its Mission Statement Pobalscoil Iosolde supports the idea of appropriate and relevant homework. Pobalscoil Iosolde believes that homework which is graded according to ability, and is sensitive to personal and family circumstances, will help students learn and grow to their full potential.

Homework provides a valuable re-enforcement of class and other school work. It provides an opportunity to aid memory and to review work already taught. Diligent attention to homework will help students to prepare for in-school assessments and examinations as well as State examinations. Homework will also help students identify learning problems and can lead to subsequent classroom questions and re-enforcement. Homework helps to introduce students to independent learning and so facilitates the transition from first to second level and from second to third level education.

It is essential to recognise that homework is for the benefit of the students as it fosters student learning. Students who do not do homework or who make inadequate efforts will be disadvantaged in their learning and will not make as much progress as homework compliant students.

1.5 Principles of the Homework Policy

The principles that underpin the provisions of the Homework Policy are:

- A caring, pastoral approach
- A healthy and supportive learning environment
- A whole school approach

1.6 Aims and Objectives

Within the overall context of the school's mission statement the Homework Policy aims to support students during their time in Pobalscoil Iosolde so that they can learn and grow to their full potential.

The Homework Policy aims to:

- Outline the school's policy
- Acknowledge the role of parent(s) / guardian(s) / teachers

- Outline the role of homework
- Define and outline the types of homework that may be given
- Encourage best practice

The objectives of this Homework Policy enable students achieve the following outcomes:

- Learn and grow to their full potential
- Be in a safe learning environment
- Value the importance of homework as part of their learning

2. POLICY PROVISION

2.1 Whole School Overview

Pobalscoil Iosolde wishes to emphasise that homework, to be effective, should be completed at home, in a homework club or at supervised evening study. Work copied from other students is of little value, as is work done in a rushed manner or left incomplete. Students should be aware of this and make a serious effort to complete and present homework on time and in the proper form. Parents should also be aware of the importance of homework and ensure that students comply with the homework code.

2.2 Education Provision

Within the resources available Pobalscoil Iosolde. will seek to provide age appropriate Homework related Educational Programmes for students. These programmes will incorporate and seek to build on Department of Education and Science programmes and syllabi which are already available in subjects such as Social, Personal and Health Education and the area of Wellbeing.

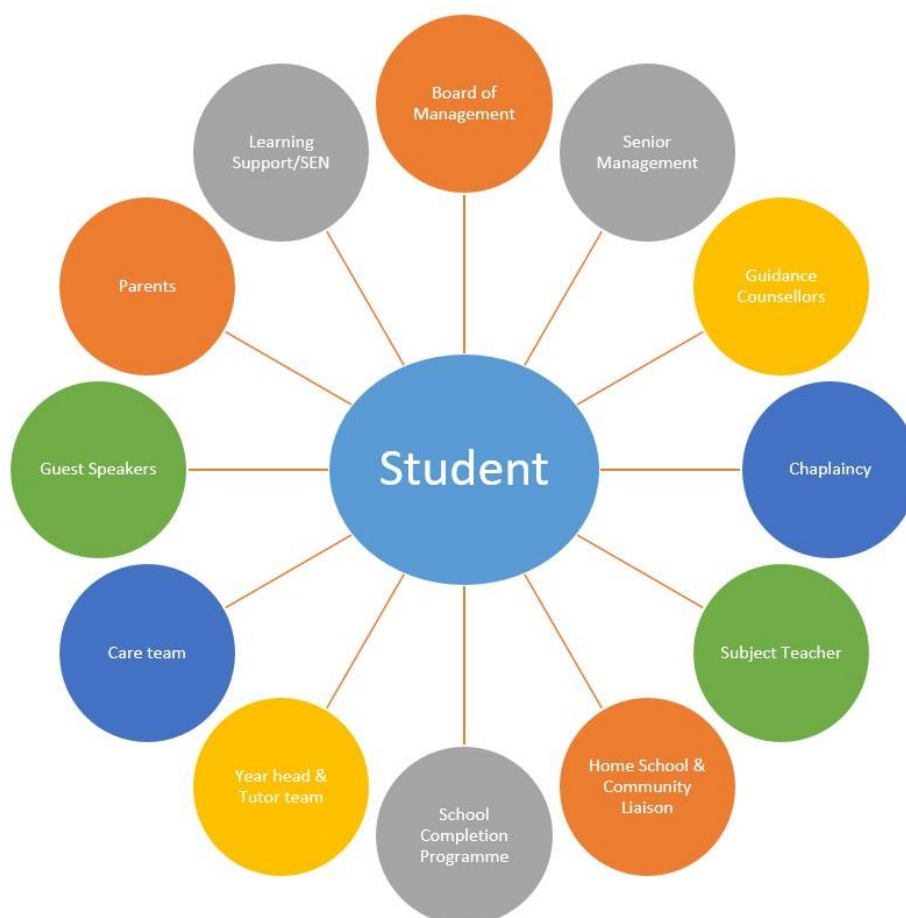
3. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

The Homework Policy is not provided exclusively by any one individual or group. It is a holistic process that benefits from the synergy of many working together with a shared vision towards a common.

Pobalscoil Iosolde acknowledges the role of parent(s) / guardian(s) as the primary educators of their children and all programmes and policies are developed to enhance and support this role with the ultimate aim of providing the best possible education for students.

This support will entail acknowledgement of the importance of the Homework Policy, support of these policies in partnership with the school and full co-operation with the school when it seeks to deal justly and effectively with incidents involving homework.

A Whole School Approach thus ensures that our school maximises its resources through the identification of roles and responsibilities for school management and staff in the provision of appropriate education to students. The main roles and responsibilities within our School are:



a) Board of Management

The Board of Management has a responsibility to ensure that the provision and practice of education the school is of the highest possible standard. The Board of Management manages the school in accordance with the Education Act (1998).

b) Senior Management

The Principal controls the internal organization and management of the school, and exercises supervision over the teaching and non-teaching staff. The Deputy Principal is in charge of the school in the absence of the Principal. In the absence of the Principal and Deputy Principal, an Assistant Principal is placed in charge of the school. The Senior Management team also have a responsibility to ensure that the Homework Policy is implemented fully. This includes managing the process of planning in cooperation with the guidance counsellors, school staff and other school partners such as parents / guardians.

c) Guidance Counsellor

Guidance counsellors because of their specialist training have a professional role in each of the main areas of guidance: personal and social, educational, and career. Within personal and social their role for example may involve publicising to the students and at parents' meetings the work of the Guidance Counsellor and the Guidance Counsellor's availability to individual students for an appointment at any time (within the framework of guidance hours available).

d) Chaplaincy

The Chaplain collaborates with all members of the school community and in particular with those who hold designated pastoral responsibilities relating to students, staff and members of the wider community connected with the school. The Chaplain meets regularly with the Guidance counsellor, Principal and Deputy Principal. The Chaplain actively engages with year heads and all members of the Care Team and outside supportive agencies. They are a member of the Critical Incident Team.

The Chaplain has a specific mission toward the spiritual, pastoral care and faith development of the entire school community.

d) Home School & Community Liaison Co-ordinator

In line with the vision and values of the HSCL scheme the HSCL Coordinator shall encourage, support and facilitate partnership between parents and teachers to enhance the education of children through building bonds of trust between home and school. By working with staff to develop an understanding of educational disadvantage the HSCL shall promote innovative approaches and methodologies to address it.

A focus of the work of the HSCL is to actively develop and promote parental involvement as an integral part of the school development / DEIS planning process and in their work, to support the development, implementation and review of the whole school.

The HSCL will also support the establishment and further development of links between primary schools, parents, families, schools and communities to support children across the education continuum.

e) School Completion Programme

The School Completion Programme (SCP) was set up as part of Department of Education and Skills (DES) DEIS Strategy – Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools.

Its aim is to increase the numbers of young people staying in primary and second level school and in doing so improve the numbers of pupils who successfully complete the Senior Cycle, or the equivalent.

Our local SCP project is led by a management committee comprising school principals, HSCL co-ordinators, parents and voluntary and statutory agencies.

In Pobalscoil Iosolde, SCP co-ordinator and project workers focus on targeting and providing supports to young people identified to be most at risk of early school leaving and includes:

- Identifying and supporting children at risk of not reaching their potential in the educational system because of poor attendance, participation and retention via initiatives such as:
 - o homework clubs;
 - o afterschool supports;
 - o mentoring programmes;
 - o therapeutic interventions;
 - o summer programmes.
- Ensuring that schools have in place the appropriate procedures to monitor, identify and respond to attendance, participation and retention issue;
- Implementing transfer programmes to support young people transitioning from primary to post-primary school.

f) Student Support Team

The Student Support Team is made up of Management, Year Head, Guidance Counsellor, HSCL Officer, SCP coordinator, Care Team, IEP Coordinators, BFL Teachers and SEN Core Team. The Team meet weekly to review the needs of students. The Team strives to provide a response to students needs and is a forum for sharing information and concerns in a safe and confidential setting.

g) SEN Coordinator

The SEN Coordinator directs the provision and application of resources for students with special educational needs and / or specific learning difficulties. They liaise with the Principal and all staff, parents / guardians and outside agencies. They apply for resources including resource hours, special needs assistants and assistive technology. The Deputy Principal oversees timetables for students requiring learning support and assistance. The SEN coordinator and Deputy Principal liaise with special needs assistants, Guidance Counsellor, Chaplain, Year Heads, subject teachers and Principal.

h) Year Head

The Year Head has general responsibility for the welfare of a year group. The year head oversees the student's attendance, punctuality, academic performance and behaviour and liaises with the parents / guardians of the year group. The Year Head works closely with the subject teachers, class teachers, Guidance Counsellor, Chaplain, Deputy Principal and Principal. The Year Head also links with outside agencies in conjunction with the above.

In relation to the referral of students to the Guidance & Counselling department, Year Heads play a central role. Any teacher who has a concern in relation to a student forwards the details to the Year Head, who then liaises with the Guidance Counsellor.

i) Tutor

The class tutor takes a particular interest in the attendance, activities and progress of the students in a class group and helps the students to be positive in their behaviour and work. In addition, the class teacher serves as a special link between the school administration and the students and co-operates with the Year Head in ensuring the students observance of the school rules.

j) Subject Teachers

Subject teachers have final line role of responsibility for the education of all students in their classes. The subject teacher is the key in helping students to achieve their full potential and assists in identifying students and giving support. Subject teachers have a key role in providing support to students and information and advice relating to their subject disciplines and related careers.

Some teachers have additional formal responsibilities through management, pastoral care and coordination roles and through participation in programmes such as SPHE. Individual teachers may be sought out by students on an informal basis for advice and information.

All teachers may consult with the Guidance Counsellor on the needs of an individual student and / or refer the student to the Guidance Counsellor / LS / SEN Coordinator when specialist competence is required with due regard to confidentiality.

k) Guest Speakers

Guest speakers are engaged by School personnel to support the educational needs of students. Guest speakers are designed to bring their own unique experience, knowledge, expertise to the student, staff and parental body. Guest speakers work in conjunction with existing school programmes / subjects / areas so as to augment and support existing educational provision.

l) Parents / Guardians

This Homework Policy adopts the legal definition of parent as set down in the Education Act, 1998. The policy recognizes that parents play a pivotal role in developing, promoting and supporting the growth of their child both at home and within the school. Parents play a vital role in shaping their children's attitude to school. A supportive home environment shapes attitudes that promote the holistic development of the child. It is important that parents are aware of and support this policy together with other school policies and procedures. Parents are further encouraged to involve themselves in positive participation in school life in order to facilitate the development of mutual and beneficial links between school and home.

The Parents Council, too, in hosting seminars, meetings and information evenings with external agencies builds the personal capacity of parents. The National Parents' Council Association also facilitates regional development and information meetings.

Parents can also participate through:

- i. Consultation with school staff.
- ii. Attendance at relevant information and other meetings at school.
- iii. Contributing to the development and review of school development and policies.

m) Students

This Homework Policy seeks to attend to the welfare of every student and their right to participate in and benefit from education. It helps students to focus on their personal responsibility for their own behaviour and to experience the value of being a responsible and participatory member of the school community. Students have an important part to play in creating and sustaining a positive atmosphere of mutual trust and respect that nurtures teaching and learning.

The Student Council affords students an opportunity to voice their opinion and become involved in the daily life of their School. Wellbeing, SPHE, RE and CSPE cover many aspects of Personal and Social Development. Here, students develop an awareness of their own needs and difficulties and come to know how to ask and who to ask for advice and help.

Because Pobalscoil Iosolde adopts a whole-school approach to homework, students are free to approach any member of staff with their concerns. Accordingly, a student may talk to a subject teacher, class teacher, Year Head, Guidance Counsellor, Chaplain, Deputy Principal and Principal as they see fit. Fellow students also have a part to play in supporting their peers in difficulty.

4. CURRENT WHOLE SCHOOL PROVISION, PROGRAMMES & PROCEDURES

4.1. Student Journals

The student journal plays the central role in establishing, monitoring and maintaining homework compliance and standards. Students must have the journal with them at all times. Students must note the homework given in any class at the time it is given and use this information at night to check the work to be done. Parents are advised to monitor the journal and the student's copies to ensure that the work is being done and that the best possible effort is made. Parental or sibling assistance with homework is encouraged when it enhances learning, but it should not replace the student's own work. Parents should also pay particular note to the section in the journal where failure to do homework

is recorded by teachers. Other notes, such as those about the quality of homework or persistent non-performance should also be attended to. If a student is absent for a day or part of a day (s)he is expected to find out the homework set for the class and complete it.

4.2. Monitoring of Homework

Consistent with encouraging independent learning, teachers monitor the delivery of homework. They correct errors, give guidance and keep records of student compliance or noncompliance. However, they cannot authenticate that the work is actually that of the student and done at home.

Subject to resources, student support personnel may also be able to help students and parents in relation to homework. Referrals to other agencies may also be possible where difficulties are encountered.

4.3. Procedures for Managing Homework Incidents

When performance of homework is persistently negligent, lacks proper effort or is in other ways inadequate, teachers will record this for their own records and in the student journal. They may use Stage 1 of the Ladder of Referral to deal with homework problems.

In the case of persistent negligent or under performance, teachers will refer the matter to the Form Tutor. They may use Stage 2 of The Ladder of Referral. If there is no improvement further stages of The Ladder of Referral may be used.

4.4. Programmes

Students learn the importance of organisation and routine with regards to homework as part of the Social, Personal and Health Education programme and as part of Wellbeing. Targeted, age-appropriate lessons are delivered to the students by the class teacher / tutor.

The school also has focused Study Skills weeks where lessons on homework and study are delivered to the students by the class teacher / tutor.

The Motivation and Study Skills Programme is also delivered to students, targeting particular areas of need.

5. GLOSSARY

DEIS	Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools
DES	Department of Education and Skills
DLP	Designated Liaison Person (Child Protection)
DDLDP	Deputy Designated Liaison Person
ESL	Early School Leavers
HSCL	Home School & Community Liaison
ICT	Information & Communication Technology
JC	Junior Cycle
JCPA	Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement
JCSP	Junior Certificate School Programme
JCT	Junior Cycle for Teachers
LC	Leaving Certificate
LCA	Leaving Certificate Applied
LS	Learning Support
NCCA	National Council for Curriculum and Assessment
SC	Senior Cycle
SCP	School Completion Programme
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SPHE	Social, Personal and Health Education
SSE	School Self-Evaluation
TY	Transition Year