

## Homework and Study Policy



In Beech Hill College, we strive for quality in teaching and learning. The main objective of teaching in our school is to increase the knowledge, understanding and skills of all students. Learning, the process to acquire knowledge and these skills, is built upon and shaped in the classroom environment.

The Homework and Study policy is a guide for students, teachers, and parents on how to improve classroom learning and fulfil students' true potential. It is intended to foster self-discipline, independent learning and encourage students to take responsibility for their own learning.

Learning is a lifelong skill and many strategies can be employed to improve learning. Homework reinforces and extends classroom learning. Assessment for Learning helps students to manage their learning. Study and revision embed that learning. It is essential that students engage and participate in the learning process.

To assist learning, students need to develop good classroom skills, learn to plan, manage, and organise their work and time at home, develop strategies to improve learning and memory and refine study.

### **Rationale**

Homework is defined as the time students spend outside the classroom in assigned learning activities. The objectives of assigning homework to students are the same as teaching in general: to increase the knowledge, understanding and skills of the students.

The purpose of homework

Homework practice is a crucial link between teaching and learning. It also acts as a bridge from one day to the next.

### **Homework:**

- Helps teachers and students assess learning and progress.
- Reinforces work done in class
- Completes unfinished class assignments
- Helps students prepare for the next day.
- Classroom learning is consolidated by assigning relevant, challenging and meaningful homework assignments, thus providing students with the opportunity to understand, practice, reinforce, apply, or improve acquired skills and knowledge.

Homework is crucial to improving student academic performance as it:

- Encourages the development of regular study.
- Stresses the importance of and builds confidence in the area of learning.
- Encourages regular revision which necessary for good exam performance
- Provides students with opportunities to develop their powers of concentration & attention and organisational & time management skills.
- It allows students to develop the practice of working independently and to take responsibility for their own learning, thus fostering lifelong learning skills.
- It contributes toward building personal responsibility, accountability and self-discipline to complete assignments independently with deadlines and consequences.
- It offers an opportunity to develop links between parents, teachers and students.
- It provides parents / guardians with opportunities to monitor their daughter's learning and progress

## What do we mean by Homework?

Not all Homework is alike in nature, purpose or timing. Homework assignments can be to prepare for the next class lesson, to practice, to reinforce skills, knowledge and information taught in class, or to extend and expand on what was taught in class.

Homework may include:

- Written assignments
- Learning assignments, memorising, note making or mind maps
- Revision work, written or learning.
- Reading, listening or watching subject related material.
- Collecting or researching information.
- Solving problems
- Practical work practice, oral, music, art, using ICT, practicing for role play etc
- Preparing work, essays, presentations, debates, reports etc.

Homework	Associated Exercises
Written	Essays, Poems, Reports, Projects, Comprehension, Completing classwork, Performing calculations
Reading	For practice, For pleasure, For study, To gain knowledge
Practical	Improve specific skills, Improve specific techniques, Produce a piece of work, Complete drawings, Practice for role play, Using ICT, Completing homework online, Improving pronunciation
Learning	Poetry, Language, Vocabulary, Calculations, Facts, Spellings
Research	Investigation, Collecting & compiling information, Preparing presentations, Conducting interviews, Viewing TV programmes, Preparing for assessments

Beech Hill College expects that all Homework will be completed on time and to the best of a student's ability. The school supports students in their endeavours in the following ways:

School Journal:

- Each student has a Homework Journal. Students are asked to record all aspects of homework for every subject.
- Time is given during class to record assigned work. Journals are not private to students and act as a link between parents / guardians and teachers.
- Homework is corrected regularly and in a timely fashion.
- Students are encouraged to track their progress in subjects in their School Journal.

Revision focus:

- Revision plans are given to students over 4 weeks prior to First Term and Summer Exams.
- Designated revision only weekends are planned for 3rd and 6th years

SEN & School Completion

- The Learning Support Department assists SEN students.
- Homework Club will be provided by School Completion.

Homework and Study Skills workshops are provided by the Guidance Department to 1st, 3rd, 5th and 6th year students.

- 1st and 2nd year parents' nights are held on supporting 'Homework and Study Skills'
- Evening study sessions are available in school.

- The Guidance Department offer Homework and Study modules to 1st years on planning and organisation skills, and to 2nd years on strategies to improve learning.

### Homework Timetable

From 2021-2022 onwards Beech Hill College will operate a homework timetable for all core subjects in Junior Cycle. Teachers in the core subjects in Junior cycle (Irish, English, Mathematics, Science and History) will discuss with their classes the frequency of homework and will designate specific nights on which homework will be assigned. The purpose of this is to spread the requirement of Homework across the week and to prevent students becoming overwhelmed on specific days.

### Recommendations

As students differ in terms of their ability and speed of completion of work, it is impossible to be specific as to the amount of time to be spent on a daily basis on homework and revision by each individual student. However, the following general guidelines are recommended for Homework and revision each school day:

#### STUDENT & TEACHER GUIDELINES FOR HOMEWORK

STUDENTS
❖ I will record my homework/classwork in my journal.
❖ I will ask if I do not understand the assigned homework.
❖ I realise that there are many types of homework including written, reading, revision, research, study.
❖ I will do my homework.
❖ I will record the time allocated by the teacher for the assigned homework.
❖ I will get my journal signed by a parent / guardian if homework takes longer than the allocated time.
❖ I will make my best effort at homework.
❖ I will catch up on any homework missed.

There will be 5 Revision Only weekends. For 3rd & 6th Years. No homework will be set by teachers.

TEACHERS
I will write up assigned homework on the board a minimum of 5 minutes before the end of class (preferably at the beginning)
I will not assign homework outside of class time e.g. on Ms Teams. Notes can be uploaded however.
I will give students an estimated completion time following the guidelines.
I will explain the homework to students and allow enough time for students to write it into their journal.
I will follow the guidelines for incomplete homework.
If no written homework is assigned, I will remind students to record what has been covered in class, and get them to record it.

NEW GUIDELINES FOR HOMEWORK
❖ 1st years – 10 mins per class
❖ 2nd years – 15 mins per class
❖ 3rd years – 15 mins per class
❖ 4th years – 15 mins per class
❖ 5th years – 20 mins per class
❖ 6th years – 25 mins per class

## Roles and Responsibilities

Set out the roles and responsibilities of teachers, students and parents in relation to homework procedures:

### Teachers will:

- Set homework regularly in compliance with the Homework Timetable
- Assign the homework during class time
- Write homework on the board
- Give students an estimated completion time
- Ensure all instructions concerning homework are clear to everybody and allow enough time to write homework into the journal
- Correct homework and provide feedback
- Keep record of set homework
- Differentiate homework when needed
- Set achievable standards of homework
- Refer to the homework code when setting homework
- Implement policy if homework is persistently incomplete.

### Students will:

- Record all homework in her journal correctly
- Ensure they understands the homework before leaving the classroom
- Understand that homework will vary in nature e.g. Reading, revising, researching, study & preparation for the next day
- Make sure their homework is their own work and not copied from another student
- Get a signed note from a parent/guardian if homework is not completed on time (Please note that this will still count as an incomplete homework)
- Present written homework in a neat and legible manner
- Have necessary books and equipment to complete homework
- Ensure they gets and completes any homework missed due to school activities from their homework buddy.

### Parents/Guardians will:

- Provide a suitable environment for their student to do homework in
- Encourage students to spend sufficient time on homework and revision each night
- Monitor homework
- Check and sign the journal weekly
- Help students to manage their time efficiently
- Attend parent teacher meetings either face to face or remotely
- Support the school with any sanctions employed to deal with incomplete homework
- Provide teachers with a note of explanation for incomplete or failure to complete homework.

### SEN Students

Teacher's will differentiate homework as appropriate to suit the needs of any SEN students in their class.

### No completion of Homework:

- Parents may be asked to sign homework by a classroom teacher.
- Non completion of homework three times will result in a detention.
- Parents may be required to assist in the implementation of a plan to support homework completion if deemed necessary.
- If there is no improvement in homework the student is referred to the Year Head or Deputy Principals /Principal

### Homework Rewards:

- VS Ware points will be awarded by classroom teachers to any student where homework is considered to be of a consistently high standard. Parents may be asked to sign homework by a classroom teacher.

Appendix 1 Best practice Homework Guidelines for teachers of Junior Cycle

Appendix 2 Homework Guidelines for Parents of Junior Cycle students

Appendix 3 Homework Guidelines for students in Junior Cycle

Appendix 4 Homework and study Guidelines for senior students

Appendix 5 Information Sheet for parents of Leaving Cert students

**BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES FOR TEACHERS OF JUNIOR CYCLE**

**HOMEWORK SKILLS**

**1. Recording Homework**

- All Subjects must be recorded.
- Homework should be recorded on board in homework box.
- Assign a variety of homework types
- Students must record all aspects of homework.
- Use the code to record (W) written, (O) oral work, (L) Learning, (R) revision and (P) practical.
- Give adequate time in class to assign and record homework. Check to ensure this is being done.
- Where possible estimate how long homework should take.
- Students should know the completion date.
- When using on-line platforms homework should be posted before 6pm.

**2. Completing homework – advise to students**

- 1 1/2- 2hours per night X 5 nights.
- Do on day given where possible.
- 10-15 mins. per subject (all aspects)
- Have 2-3 'Homework Buddies' –If missing for class, e-mail them for a photo of Homework Journal
- After 20 mins. approx. leave it, come back to it and 'have another go' when finished other homework. Record time spent in Homework Journal if still unable to complete homework. Parents should sign Homework Journal at this stage.
- Teachers will ask to see evidence of effort made.
- Ensure student cannot access other student's submitted work on- line prior to submitting homework.

**3. Ask for evidence of active learning of work.**

- Check in Homework Journal that learning was written down.
- Check students homework copy.
- Check for date & written attempts to self –test, key notes, sentences, list of key words, diagrams, pictures etc.

**4. Focus on how to learn.**

Preparation for learning 'POKER'

1. Pre-test
2. Overview of key headings
3. Key words
4. Etch & Sketch it -Skill of mind mapping /note taking etc. – 'METHOD'-see below
5. Retest

## How to make notes e.g. METHOD

M = 2 wide margins

E = easy to read / well-spaced

T = tidy, neat, concise / symbols and numbers

H = heading, key word not full sentences

O = Open, points / use diagrams

D = down & designed / leave space to add extra points later

- How to make a mind –map /graphic organiser
- Evidence of Active Learning
  1. Recording self-testing in homework copy.
  2. Mind –map etc.
  3. Use of apps etc.

## 5. Monitor

- Monitor and record homework assignments.
- Give feedback in a variety of forms eg. '2 stars and a wish.'
- Oversee peer and self-assessment e.g. correct on board and students self-assess, use rubric for success criteria

## 6. Revision

- 4 week Revision Targets/Plan for Term Tests (First Term and Summer) in Homework Journal
- Set revision for each week in November/ May.
- Include as part of homework.
- Model quick test recall & brainstorming as part of learning.

## 7. Teach students to be responsible for tracking their academic progress

- Encourage & give time to fill in key test results in Homework Journal.
- Facilitate realistic target setting for your subject in general no more than 2 grades higher egC3- C1).
- Do not use target setting process with 1st years until after 1 term.
- Record student progress using Athena tracking software.
- Tutor / class teacher encourage students to talk about progress with parents.

## Appendix 2

### HOMework GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS OF 1ST YEARS.

PLAN IT.....DO IT.....REVISE IT.....

Ensure your child is in school every day.

#### **HOMework JOURNAL**

- This is the key to success- not a private diary.
- Parents and teachers can look at it whenever they wish.
- Each class must be written in it.
- Journals should be checked regularly by parents.
- Have e-mail address of a number 'Homework Buddies' if in doubt about homework.

#### **WHAT IS HOMEWORK?**

- It is the revision of the day's work.
- It is written work, oral work, practical work revision (re-learning)
- Students should use the code for recording homework
- W = written, L= learning, O= oral, P= practical/do, R = revision T= test (in red)
- It is work to be learned ...to be remembered.

#### **WHERE ?**

- The same place and time every day, if possible. Routine is very important.
- A quiet room and a business like atmosphere.
- A table and supportive chair is recommended.
- Good lighting is essential and the room should not be too hot.
- No FRIENDS / TV / PHONES / MUSIC during homework time.
- Check regularly to see what work is being done.

#### **WHEN AND HOW LONG FOR HOMEWORK?**

- Ensure your child spends the recommended time at their homework
- It is recommended to spend approximately 1.5 to 2 hours five nights a week.
- As soon as possible after school.
- It is important to develop a homework routine and to learn to manage their time well.
- Homework is not advisable after 9.00 P.M.
- It should not be done in the morning before school or regularly at lunch time.
- Encourage completing weekend homework on Friday or Saturday morning.

#### **TIME MANAGEMENT**

- Use a homework timetable.
- 15 – 20 minutes a subject is recommended.
- Do not spend a long time on any one subject. Come back to the subject and have another go at the end.
- Take breaks (max 3 mins) and allocate EXTRA time at the end of the homework time for a particular subject if needed.



## HOW TO LEARN?

- Do homework on the night given.
- Offer advice if your child find a particular piece of homework difficult. Encourage doing their best, making an effort.
- Make sure to concentrate and pay attention when learning.
- Use active learning methods when memorising. Memory works best when you see it, hear it, do it
- Use the 'POKER' method.
  - ✓ Pre-test (what do I know?)
  - ✓ Overview -read-scan (what is this about?)
  - ✓ Key words+ key diagrams
  - ✓ Etch & Sketch -make notes/mind maps = be active!
  - ✓ Retest-write /hear/ draw. Check/circle mistakes.

Remember –'Look: Cover: Say/Write: Check:'

'Reading over' is not learning to remember.

## COPING WITH TESTS

- Help your child to learn to cope with anxiety
- Help them set realistic targets per night for a test that may be coming up.
- PLANNED rather than CRAMMED study.

This means learning every night rather than trying to do it all just before a test.

- Ensure that she is doing regular learning
- Use the weekend for revision.
- Encourage self -testing regularly & practice recalling information by saying & writing  
... be active ... do it....

Help them to learn from mistakes and make sure that corrections are done.

## HOW PARENTS / GUARDIANS CAN HELP DURING SCHOOL TERM

As a parent you need to stay involved with homework. Try to negotiate and advise. It is important to make homework a priority.

This can be done in the following way:

- Encourage homework being done before going out to other activities in the evening.
- Check homework journal regularly.
- Check & monitor homework environment at home.
- Check presentation of written work.
- Insist that the bag is packed the night before.
- Encourage doing their best.
- Encourage asking questions in class.
- Help & encourage self-testing of learning.
- Encourage the gradual moving towards independent responsibility & own homework space.
- Encourage the development of a homework routine at weekends.
- Make sure that your daughter eats well (having a breakfast, lunch etc.).
- Encourage regular exercise and relaxation at lunch time in school.
- Encourage going to bed early on school nights and avoid using devices late at night.

### Appendix 3

#### HOMEWORK GUIDELINES FOR 1st YEAR STUDENTS

##### IN CLASS

- Concentrate in class.
- Look at the teacher.
- Sit away from distractions.
- Wait! Ask appropriate questions if unsure.
- Always have student Journal for class.
- Fill in every class in Student Journal.
- Always take down all the Homework in each class.

##### Recording homework:

- all subjects must be recorded
- code to record all aspects  
(W)written (O) oral  
(L) learning (R) revision  
(P) practical
- Do not write 'no homework' unless the teacher says so.

##### AT HOME

- Set aside 1 ½ -2 hours X 5 nights
- Do homework on the night given
- Do homework early
- Do homework IN A QUIET PLACE

##### Ensure your Homework area is:

- ❖ available when you need it
  - ❖ free from distractions and interruptions- phone, TV, games etc
  - ❖ contains all your study materials
  - ❖ contains a large enough workspace
  - ❖ has a comfortable chair
  - ❖ has enough light
  - ❖ has a comfortable temperature
- 
- Have 2-3 'Homework buddies'
  - 15-20 mins. per subject (8 subjects)-all aspects
  - After 20 mins. leave it & come back to it at the end
  - If in difficulty record time spent
  - No Homework after 9pm-Relax before going to bed.
  - Try to do Homework on Friday.
  - Do not leave Homework until Sunday evening
  - Packing of bag for next day is part of Homework

## Appendix 4

### SENIOR CYCLE

#### HOMEWORK & STUDY GUIDELINES FOR SENIOR CYCLE STUDENTS

##### IMPORTANT BASICS

- You as a Learner- exercise/food/ sleep/ relax.
- Place of Study -desk/no distractions/books/good light/temp.
- When - begin early & finish early /revision before or after homework.
- No disturbances- no phones/pals/have equipment /books.
- 3 -4 hours Homework and Study per night x 6 to include weekend More at weekend for personal study if doing a lot of HL subjects .
- Homework includes W & L assigned for class. Revision may be for a test or your own study topics.
- Do difficult subjects early-easy /enjoyable subjects towards end.
- Watch time when doing homework / study .Max 30/40 mins. per subject then change-if not finished come back at the end.
- Breaks between subjects should only be 3-5 mins.
- Do not do similar subjects together- e.g. not Irish then French .
- Use Active Learning Strategies. –reading is not memorising.
- Extra revision-assign subjects to different days. WHAT SUBJECTS DO YOU NEED TIME FOR?
- Remember to allow for Higher & Ordinary Levels.
- Set a realistic Target in each subject. Use the Target Setting in School Journal.( generally no more than 2 grades above current grade).
- Have a Study Folder FOR EACH SUBJECT.
- 6th years –have requirement of paper on inside of each folder.
- Make out a Revision Topic List FOR EACH SUBJECT –what needs to be revised.
- Make out A REVISION PLAN (do a little often)

- ❖ TARGETS
- ❖ TOPICS
- ❖ TIME
- ❖ WATCH TEMPTATIONS

## Appendix 5

### INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARENTS/ GUARDIANS OF LEAVING CERT STUDENTS

“Plan your Success-Now!”

6<sup>th</sup> Year is a time of hope and often some anxiety for both students and parents. It is vital that students plan their time to make the most of the year. As parents you play an important role this year in supporting your child. We ask you to be actively involved in assisting them to set goals and to manage and organise their time.

Throughout this year stay involved and please ‘check in’ regularly with them.

#### SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Coming to school every day is essential in 6th year. Students should not take unnecessary days or half days off school as course work covered by teachers each day is very difficult to catch up on when missed.

#### PART-TIME JOBS

We strongly discourage part-time work on school nights during term time. It is difficult to be successful in 6th year if doing homework late into the night after work or working long hours over the weekend.

#### STUDY

All 6th years will attend a study skills seminar in September. The focus was on note making, active learning styles and realistic revision planners.

Students need to include regular revision as well as homework each night.

Advice:

- Have a quiet place to study, no TV/ radio or telephone interruptions
- Have a definite study routine each day. A minimum of 3.5 hours homework/study 6 nights per week.
- Set reasonable Targets---use key dates outlined already
- Have a Revision Plan---Set out times and topics to be revised either before/after homework.
- Make sure all subjects are studied.
- We suggest 30/40- minute study /work periods with 5 minute breaks in between.
- Use active study methods--- effective note taking, mind maps and self tests, all of which will be discussed in class.
- Supervised study is available in school.
- Supervised study during school breaks (Feb mid-term & Easter) will be available to students in school at a small cost. We would urge students to use this facility to give structure to their study routine on these days.
- Students need to pace their study throughout the year. They should break up the year into manageable blocks. The intensity of studying should change at various times to avoid burnout.

#### LIFESTYLE BALANCE

Proper diet, regular exercise, other activities and time to relax should be encouraged and are vital as they provide a balance to the hours of study in this highly stressful year.

## STRESS MANAGEMENT

A certain amount of stress can help to bring out their best performance in 6th year but excessive stress can be damaging. Working outside of school, having too many extra- curricular activities, unrealistic expectations or not managing study can lead to overload.

Symptoms include; tension & irritability, disturbed sleep pattern, withdrawal, absenteeism, poor timekeeping, low morale and physical disorders such as ulcers, skin & dietary problems.

We would encourage students to:

- 1) **M**ake school a priority for the next 9 months
- 2) **O**rganise a study plan now in September!
- 3) **M**aintain a balanced lifestyle----relax, eat and sleep well, take some exercise.
- 4) **P**lan some time off at the weekend.
- 5) **P**ractise relaxation techniques like breathing exercises, meditation etc.
- 6) **R**ecognise distress signals and get help early to cope.
- 7) **T**alk to someone at home or at school.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management of Beech Hill College on 27<sup>th</sup> September 2021

SIGNED: Aidan Campbell Date: 27<sup>th</sup> September 2021  
**Cllr. Aidan Campbell**  
**Chairperson**

SIGNED: Patrick McArdle Date: 27<sup>th</sup> September 2021  
**Mr. Patrick Mc Ardle**  
**Principal/Secretary to B.O.M**

