

Homework Policy

This policy has been formulated by the school community to establish guidelines and procedures for homework.

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School Details:

Name: Douglas Rochestown Educate Together National School

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Roll Number: 20413N

Principal: Dr. Alan Sheehan

The school premises consist of the area within the school boundaries/fence at Carr's Hill. School start/end times are as follows:

Start Time:	End Time:
8.30 am	1.10 pm/2.10 pm

The school doors open at 8.20am. The school provides supervision of pupils within the school grounds only from 8.20am – 1.20pm for Junior and Senior Infants and from 8.20am – 2.20 pm for all other Classes. Please note that no responsibility is accepted for anyone in the areas outside the school fencing. Please also note that no responsibility is accepted for pupils arriving before 8.20am or for supervising pupils after 1.20pm/2.20pm.

General Information:

Douglas Rochestown ETNS is under the patronage of Educate Together. It is based on four key principles: Child-centred, Co-educational, Democratic and Equality-based.

Douglas Rochestown ETNS follows the curricular programmes prescribed by the Department of Education and Science, which may be amended from time to time, in accordance with Sections 9 and 30 of the Education Act (1998).

Rationale

The primary purpose of homework is to revise, consolidate and reinforce what has been taught in class. It is an important skill for children to learn while simultaneously encouraging children to gain responsibility for their learning. It provides an opportunity to review aspects of the curriculum as

well as provide an opportunity to reflect on experiences and knowledge developed during the school day. Therefore, homework should have a specific purpose linked to school learning. Ideally homework will review aspects of the curriculum using relevant activities that are of interest. Homework provides time for research or project work that might not be able to be completed in class. Also, homework plays a valuable role in mastering tables and spellings. In short, homework should take account of where the child's learning is at and should be at an appropriate level that reflects the work achieved at school.

An equally important role of homework is to involve parents in their children's academic development. Homework gives parents the opportunity to understand what is being taught in the school curriculum. It supports communication between home and school regarding the topics being addressed and likewise gives parents a sense of how their children are developing by providing direct evidence of their children's learning progress. Also, parents are able to provide 1:1 attention and support, facilitating children's academic development.

Finally, homework has an important role in developing good independent work habits. It develops the ability to self-directed learning, preparing children for secondary school and future learning experiences by establishing a homework routine and independent study skills.

Aims of Policy

In general, the broad aims of this homework policy are to:

- Enhance pupil learning
- Reinforce concepts introduced in class in the home environment
- Promote a similar approach to homework across all classes
- Strengthen links between home and school
- Establish the roles and responsibilities of teachers, parents and pupils regarding homework.
- Consider the pros & cons of homework and to create a positive & flexible attitude towards homework (Appendix 1)

Content (Types of possible Homework)

Homework is assigned at all class levels: *Junior Infants to Sixth class*. It may include a selection of activities including reading tasks, learning tasks, writing tasks, drawing, collecting information, active homework, project work and ethical education homework. Homework may involve the use of distance learning platforms as set out in the Distance Learning Policy.

The type of homework and amount of homework assigned will vary by class level, the needs of the children and at the discretion of the teacher. Where a child is receiving additional support from a member of the SEN team, the SEN teacher & class teacher may collaborate on the type of homework appropriate. Homework set at infants' level and from 1st to 6th class may also be structured by topic/ theme/ subject.

Children often feel that reading and learning tasks are not 'real' homework. Parents should value the important role they can play in listening to reading and items to be learned, ensuring this work is done well.

HOMEWORK IN THE INFANT CLASSES

Infants are not expected to complete written homework every day. However, parents are asked to read with their child every day regardless of whether there is new reading material assigned. Parents will be aware of required written homework by checking the weekly homework note emailed by the class teacher each Friday, as infants do not have homework journals or diaries.

Frequency and Duration of Homework

Homework is assigned for Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays but not on Fridays with certain exceptions:

- If homework has been neglected during the week
- In senior classes some project work is undertaken at weekends.

Sometimes at the discretion of the class teacher or the principal, children are given 'homework off' as a treat or as acknowledgement of some special occasion.

The time a child should spend on homework is difficult to specify exactly in that it depends on several factors including:

- the child's age.
- the child's level of concentration.
- the time of day that homework is undertaken.
- home factors such as distractions, demands of younger children, etc.
- the child's learning ability.
- the time of year.

The following are general guidelines for time spent at homework:

- Infants: Up to 20 minutes
- 1st and 2nd Class: Up to 30 minutes
- 3rd and 4th Class: Up to 40 minutes
- 5th and 6th Class: Up to 60 minutes

It is important to remember that it is the quality and not the quantity of homework that matters. If parents have a concern about the amount of time a child is spending on homework, they should speak to the class teacher.

Roles & Responsibilities

Pupils should:

- Enter homework accurately in the homework diary or view it online via the relevant online platforms (1st - 6th Classes).
- Ensure they take home relevant books and copies.
- Respect rental books & resources belonging to the school.
- Complete homework assignments to the best of their ability.
- Present written work neatly.

Parents/Guardians should:

- Encourage a positive attitude towards homework in all subjects from an early age.
- Agree on a suitable time for doing homework, considering age, the need for playtime, relaxation and family time.
- Encourage and support children to organise themselves for homework. Have all books and materials to hand.
- Support children in accessing distance learning platforms where needed.
- Provide a quiet place, suitable work surface, free from distractions and interruptions.
- Encourage neat presentation of written work within a reasonable time frame.

- Check that the assigned oral learning as well as written homework has been completed. Sign the homework diary if applicable (1st-6th classes). Noting the time spent completing homework in the journal is helpful feedback.
- Check that the child has all necessary books, homework journal, copies, pencils, mathematical equipment, dictionary, if needed for the next school day.
- Communicate difficulties to the teacher using the homework journal or by email.

Teachers should:

- Encourage a positive attitude towards homework.
- Set relevant homework at an appropriate level.
- Explain to the children and parents where to access the assigned homework (journal, distance learning platforms etc)
- Review assignments given and correct homework where applicable.
- Provide feedback to students.

Monitoring homework

Teachers will monitor homework weekly. Some items of homework may be corrected by children themselves, under the direction of the teacher and parents. This can be a useful part of the learning process for children as it promotes accountability and learning from mistakes.

Incomplete Homework

If a child has not completed their homework a note should be provided by parents. When homework is incomplete on a regular basis the teacher may contact parents with a view to resolving the situation and offering support. Teachers will use their discretion to assess appropriate actions & sanctions for incomplete homework, taking due regard for issues surrounding the matter. If the issue of incomplete homework continues, the teacher and principal will meet with the parents to discuss the matter.

Appendix 1: Pros & Cons of Homework

When drafting this policy, we asked for feedback from the parents and staff. These are the responses received:

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication: giving parents/guardians a regular insight into children's schoolwork • Consolidation: tasks that reinforce children's learning • Independent learning: gives children a chance to develop organisation and independence • Develop areas of interest through further reading and project work • Can help students to practise at home • Parents/guardians can check what students learn at school • Helps students to spend more time & practice on a topic or focus area they find challenging • Places some responsibility on parents/guardians for the formal aspects of learning. • If project based and about real life learning through experience, can be a fun shared experience for parents/guardians and child. • For families who have recently moved to Ireland and where English is not the first language, homework can provide an essential bridge between school and home. • In an ideal world(!) homework would be child centred and adapted to suit individual children's learning needs and capabilities . • Helps develop time management, diligence, responsibility • Establish the habit of homework for future • Opportunity to talk to the child about what's happening in school • To recap and consolidate the classroom learning. • To confirm if the child has grasped the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stress at home: having to force children to do homework causes tension between parents/guardians and children • Ineffective? Research suggests that homework does not impact children's learning at primary school level • Attitude to learning: children's negative attitude to homework potentially impacts their attitude to school and learning in general • Can reduce time for outdoor play, extra curricular activities and down time- all of which have positive impacts on both health and cognitive development • Too much homework can make students feel tired • It is very difficult to make homework relevant to all or even most children, homework that is not challenging or too challenging will reduce motivation. • Children with additional needs can be particularly affected if the homework load is too onerous. • Homework can potentially narrow a view of education if it only focuses on formal learning and not the "joy" of day to day, real life learning through experience and "doing". • In families where literacy may be an issue, the homework needs to be shaped and individualised to suit the needs of the parents to ensure its effectiveness. • Learning in the younger years should be more play-based • Can be a poor use of teacher's time assigning, marking and chasing it when not returned - considerable time taken for something that might not be effective. Better spent on preparation, resourcing, pupil feedback? • Amount of books needed for daily

concept.

- To allow us as parents to gauge our children's progress
- To allow us as parents to understand what our children are learning so that we can supplement outside of school e.g. sounding out words, digraphs etc.
- To ease the transition to secondary school where they will be required to complete an increased volume of homework and independent study.
- Can help keep students' level of knowledge up to date
- Provide regular and repeated revision of topics covered throughout the year (Mental Maths and English in Practise)
- Allows children with learning needs a further chance to practise a skill or engage with a concept with the support of an adult
- Can be a positive social interaction between the child and others (e.g. interviewing grandparents, talking homework)
- Homework can allow class time to be used to extend children's learning (e.g. reading part of a novel for homework then using what the children have read as a stimulus for further work in class such as drama, oral language discussion, etc)

homework is causing the weight of schoolbags to exceed Dept. of Education guideline weights

- Home-school communication better achieved through other means, e.g. Seesaw app, newsletter, opportunities to visit the class to share work
- Students can become so tired while doing their homework that finally their parents/guardians will finish it (own experience, not in Ireland)
- Inequality in the amount of parental support received by some children can increase the educational gap between children.
- Working or busy parents have to use some of the limited time they have with their children in the afternoon completing homework.