

## St. Brigid's N.S, Ballysax Homework Policy

The Homework Policy of St Brigid's NS, Ballysax, was reviewed and updated in the autumn term of 2021. To conduct the review in a manner to include all stakeholders, the views of parents/guardians, students and teachers were sought. This was done by means of surveys, which differed as appropriate to each relevant stakeholder. Parents/guardians and teachers were invited to complete surveys online and children from 1st to 6th class filled in surveys in hard-copy form.

The results of the survey showed that the majority of students (81%), parents/guardians(88%) and teachers feel that homework is important in helping children learn as part of the children's overall education.

Parents/guardians reported that children's attitudes towards homework ranged from positive/very positive (31%) to neutral (22%) to negative/ very negative (29%).

Parents/guardians reported that homework sometimes causes tension or anxiety at home (66%) and 19% surveyed reported that homework often or always causes tension or anxiety at home.

60% of parents/guardians felt that the amount of time spent by their child at homework was reasonable, 24% felt too much time was spent.

The majority of parents/guardians surveyed said that their child/children need help with their homework, ranging from sometimes (60%), often (15%) to always (21%) The comment was made that at a young age, parents/guardians felt it was important to do homework with their child/children.

81% of children surveyed felt that homework is important in helping them learn.

92% reported that the amount of homework they get is about right. 15% felt they get too much.

61% of children said they need help with their homework sometimes, 15% said they need help most of the time and 8% said they always need help with their homework.

When asked what types of homework children thought could help them learn successfully, 60% said reading, 54% said learning spellings, 54% said learning tables, 50% said Maths activities, 58% said project work and 59% said PE activities.

The teacher surveys also showed that teachers feel there is importance attached to homework.

Teachers were surveyed to ascertain how much time should be spent doing homework at different levels throughout the school, and this is reflected below.

When asked for other feedback on homework, parents/guardians made the following points in favour of homework:

- Homework is an important link between school and home
- Reading, spelling and tables homework is very valuable
- Homework gives parents/guardians an idea of how the child is doing
- Homework is good preparation for the child's future school career

However, the following points were also made:

- There can be a backup of homework on a Thursday night (ie, if spellings/tables are not done each evening)
- Homework creates pressure when children have extra curricular activities
- The school day is long enough
- Concentration for homework is not good
- Having a lot of homework can cause frustration

***The results and information gathered from the surveys is extremely relevant and valuable and has informed the following policy for St Brigid's NS.***

#### **Rationale for Homework in St Brigid's NS**

- To strengthen the link between home and school
- To re-inforce what the child learns during the day
- To practise new skills learned
- To reinforce and practise time management skills which are necessary in many aspects of life
- To strengthen the skills of revision
- To provide additional time to learn in a comfortable environment

It also enables the teacher:

- To support the child's learning
- To monitor progress of the child
- To provide children and parents/guardians with clear and relevant feedback
- To suggest strategies for improvement and goals to be achieved
- To support children in need of additional help or additional challenge

Homework, along with schoolwork, teacher observation, projects, portfolios, diagnostic and standardised tests all lay the foundation for providing an overall picture of children's progress and development as they move through the school.

**Children are asked to do their homework to the best of their ability - no more and no less.**

#### **Homework content:**

- Homework assigned will be appropriate to a child's class and to their individual ability
- Homework will contain a balance between reading, learning and written tasks. Time and effort given to reading and learning is very valuable and is as important as written work.
- Written work will be based on the learning that is taking place in the classroom on a given week or day. However at times, children may be asked to research information and to do project work which is individual to each child. This encourages the child to work independently and with initiative.
- In Junior Infants, Senior Infants, 1st and 2nd Class, each child will have a Homework Folder. This folder contains the homework for each day and should be returned daily.
- Where children are receiving additional support from a member of the SEN Team, the class teacher and the SEN teacher will collaborate in relation to the nature and type of homework the child is to receive. Homework should not exceed the times indicated below.
- Homework may contain "Active Homework". However, even when it doesn't, children are encouraged to be physically active. One hour of exercise per day is the recommended time for children to spend doing physical exercise.
- Homework may include a focus on wellbeing, for example, in engaging in gratitude. Studies show that focussing on positives boosts body, mind and spirit. Children may be encouraged to keep a gratitude journal.
- Sometimes homework may involve the use of laptops/tablets for research or to use educational apps, for example, mathletics. Children have access to Mathletics, an online maths programme, and are encouraged to use it regularly. The use of such devices can enable rich learning opportunities. If your child is using the internet for homework, we ask that you please monitor your child's usage and be mindful of the amount of screen time recommended for children by the HSE, see attached, Appendix 1. The recommended times given include the watching of television.

**The amount of time to spend doing homework:**

Many children have busy lives outside of school and are involved in different extracurricular activities and clubs. This information has been considered when setting the following guides for the amount of time homework should take at each class level. Homework can be included into a child's extracurricular activities each evening from Monday to Thursday.

Junior and Senior Infants: No more than 15 minutes

1st and 2nd classes: No more than 20 minutes

3rd and 4th classes: No more than 30 minutes

5th and 6th classes: No more than 40 minutes

Some children may complete their homework in less time. However, if your child is taking more than the recommended time or is finding any part of homework particularly challenging, please confer with the teacher.

Sometimes in senior classes, children may have project work to do. This can involve research, drawing, interviews, construction and so on, which may bring them over the recommended time given for homework. In these instances, it is important that parents/guardians gauge what is a reasonable time for children to spend at such activities.

Homework is assigned Monday to Thursday. Homework missed due to illness does not normally have to be completed. Homework will generally not be assigned if children are absent from school.

**Communication:**

Please let your child's teacher know if

- Homework couldn't be completed due to family or other circumstances
- Homework is too challenging for your child

You will be contacted if:

- Your child does not produce homework on a regular basis without a note or explanation to the teacher
- Your child needs to concentrate on particular homework
- Your child's homework needs to be modified to be more or less challenging

Children are encouraged to read for pleasure every day and parents are encouraged to read to younger children every day.

The nature of the homework assigned will inevitably change during such times as Book Week, Christmas, Communion or Confirmation time etc. Occasionally children may be given a night off (or a Homework Pass) as a reward for a special effort made by the class or by an individual.

We ask parents to support our Homework policy by:

- Providing space and time for their child to do their homework. Turn off the television, radio and all IT equipment until the homework is finished.
- Checking that the homework is completed and signing the homework journal.
- Discussing interesting aspects of the work assigned.
- Using the method suggested by the teacher for the learning of spellings.
- Regularly checking memorisation of tables.
- Informing teachers of problems when they arise.

The attached sheet, Appendix 2, may help with setting up good routines for homework from an early age.

**Success Criteria:**

- Children are confident in the homework they complete
- The skills and learning engaged in through homework are observed to be strengthened and/or improved
- Teachers can monitor progress
- Valuable communication regarding children's progress is ongoing between school and home

**Ratification:**

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 20-1-22

Signed Elizabeth Smith Chairperson, BOM

# SCREEN TIME FOR CHILDREN

5 Reasons **NOT** to give Screens to Children

- 1. LANGUAGE** Kids who watch screens TALK LATER & LESS
- 2. OBESITY** SCREEN TIME DISPLACES ACTIVITY
- 3. ATTENTION** Screens are Fast, LIFE IS SLOW
- 4. VIOLENCE** MONKEY SEE, MONKEY DO (children think what they see is real)
- 5. SLEEP** Kids who watch screens SLEEP LESS

**SCREEN-TIME recommendations**

0 - 2 YEARS	NO SCREEN TIME
2 - 5 YEARS	1 Hour per Day
5 YEARS +	1 - 2 Hours per Day

Public Health Ontario  
Health Service Executive



*This NEPS Handout has been developed by educational psychologists and is based on current knowledge in this area. It is intended as a guide only. Not all the advice here may apply to any one student or situation. Teachers and parents may wish to identify the strategies that will work best for them.*

## **Homework Tips for Parents of Primary School Children**

Make sure the child is not hungry or very tired when starting on homework. Provide a snack and or rest before expecting the child to start homework.

Have a specific time and place for homework. Stick to this routine consistently and explain it to the child. If necessary, use the clock to show how long the homework will take. The setting should be quiet. TV/Playstation etc should be switched off. Ensure your child has all the necessary books and equipment before beginning.

Try and remain calm and positive with your child.

Praise and encourage your child throughout the homework session.

For children with attention/reading difficulties, consider breaking homework into chunks with brief movement breaks.

Have a pre-written alphabet and number line (on card) and if necessary attach it to the table. Provide counters/money for maths work where necessary.

For writing exercises, if child is becoming frustrated write the beginning of the sentence and encourage him/her to finish, or write some words and encourage him/her to fill in the blanks.

If your child is struggling to read a sentence, give them the word and move on.

Keep the teacher informed of difficulties that your child may be having with homework, particularly if the homework seems to take a long time or if the child often has difficulty in a particular subject area.