



# Loreto Secondary School

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Office hours: 7.45am to 4.15pm Monday to Friday

Tuesday, 5 April 2022

Dear parents/guardians and students,

I wish to bring the following points to your attention at this time.

## School Hours from Monday, 25 April 2022

Following recent consultations with staff and students, it has been decided to continue on a permanent basis with the school hours that were introduced as a Covid measure from August 2020.

In effect, this means that lunch each day will be 40 minutes in duration – 13.05 to 13.45 - and that closing times will be 15.45 on Monday and Tuesday, 15.05 on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday.

Morning break will be extended to 20 minutes each day – 10.45 to 11.05. To facilitate this, the first class each morning will commence at 08.45.

Staggered break and lunch times will cease at the end of this week i.e. on Friday, 8 April 2022.

These hours will commence on Monday, 25 April 2022.

## Homework Policy

In recent weeks, the school has reviewed its homework policy. The new policy is set out here for your information. Shaded areas indicate where support from parents/guardians is especially welcome.

School policy on homework was formally reviewed in March 2022 for several reasons:

- Evidence provided by the school's Academic Council that the performance of some students in each year group was deteriorating
- Feedback from interventions made by Year Heads with underperforming students
- Homework surveys that showed 51% of students were not doing the recommended amount of homework
- Feedback from recent parent-teacher meetings about the perceived lack of homework, particularly in the junior years
- Evidence of blank/almost blank homework journals of many students
- Students' requiring Guidance Counselling support regarding too much homework
- The need to re-establish good practice following the profound challenges presented over the previous 2 years by Covid-19

Key points:

1. Homework is an important element in reinforcing the student's grasp of material and work covered in class. It allows the teacher to informally assess how well the students have grasped new concepts and allows both the teacher and student to identify the next steps of learning. It consists of both written assignments and the learning of work done in class.
2. Homework is corrected in a variety of ways at the discretion of the individual teacher. These methods may include the teacher collecting and correcting it and giving a grade or comment-only marking. It could also consist of the teacher demonstrating in class how the homework should have been completed and students peer or self-correct. Alternatively, the teacher gives the students the marking scheme or the list of "features of quality" and students peer or self-correct. The teacher ascertains during such activities how well students are progressing.
3. The school expects that all homework will be completed on time and to the best of a student's ability. All homework – written and learning – is to be recorded daily by all students in their School Diary.
4. From September 2022, the school will be using a new software package that will be used to record the non-completion of homework by students.
5. Students are encouraged to spread their homework evenly through the week to minimise the risk of overload on any given night.
6. It is important that students feel comfortable enough to mention to their subject teachers if they are under pressure and if they desire a reasonable extension to submitting a homework essay or project. In addition to this, teachers welcome students telling them if they have a number of tests on a particular day so that the teacher can change the date of a test if possible.
7. Students who miss class due to school matches, medical/dental appointments are expected to find out from their colleagues what homework was set by the teacher and to complete it on time
8. The School Diary of students in 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> years is to be signed on a weekly basis by both the Class Teacher and a parent/guardian.
9. As students differ so much 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 daily on homework and revision by each individual student. However, the following general guidelines are offered:

Year	Hours per school day on homework and revision
1st	1.5
2nd	2
3rd	2.5
TY	Variable in accordance with amount of project work

5 <sup>th</sup>	3
6 <sup>th</sup>	3+

10. In line with these guidelines, the following is the suggested amount of homework to be set per subject (based on a single class period) per day:

<b>1<sup>st</sup> Year</b>	10 to 15 minutes
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Year</b>	15 minutes
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Year</b>	15 to 25 minutes
<b>5<sup>th</sup> Year</b>	20 to 25 minutes
<b>6<sup>th</sup> Year</b>	25+ minutes

11. In addition to the completion of homework, students are also expected to follow a revision programme drawn up in accordance with guidelines issued at study skills talks facilitated by the school. Revision is the key to ensuring that a student develops and retains a knowledge of material covered in class in earlier weeks, months or years.

12. Parents/guardians are asked to ensure, where possible, that students are afforded a suitable room at home in which to study i.e. quiet, adequately ventilated/heated and equipped with a proper table and chair.

13. Parents/guardians are strongly recommended to take an active interest in their daughter's academic and overall progress. They should familiarise themselves with this policy and feel free to discuss any concerns about homework with their daughters and/or teachers.

14. When completing homework, students should only access their mobile phone/device if it is required for the completion of work. Students are not being honest with themselves if they allow their phones/devices to distract them from their work.

15. Parents/guardians and students should also ensure that any part-time jobs held by students do not interfere with the full and proper completion of homework and revision. The school strongly recommends that 6<sup>th</sup> year students do not engage in any part-time work in term time as their commitments to study are already considerable.

16. Homework will not be set for students at mid-term breaks or Christmas, Easter and Summer holidays. Students, particularly at senior cycle, may use such periods for revision at their discretion.

17. Class tests will not be scheduled for immediately after mid-term breaks or Christmas, Easter and Summer holidays.

18. Mock examinations for 3<sup>rd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> year students will take place in the two-week period immediately prior to the February mid-term break.

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This review is intended to re-commence the good practice that prevailed in the school before the considerable disruption caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. We would like to see this revised policy being fully implemented from Monday, 25 April 2022.

### **School tours to Spain and France**

The school extends its best wishes for enjoyable and safe school tours when TY and 5<sup>th</sup> year students and their teachers head to Andalucia in Spain and Paris respectively on either side of the Easter holiday.

We wish to thank the School Tour Company for making the arrangements for us and Ms. Ursula Zimmermann who has done outstanding work as organiser for both trips.

### **Leaving Certificate Oral and Practical Examinations**

These examinations will be held in the school from Saturday, 9 April to Thursday, 14 April, inclusive.

Our Examination Aide, Mr. Eoin Cummins, has provided all necessary details to 6<sup>th</sup> year students this week.

We wish all students every success in these examinations.

### **Easter Holiday**

The school will close for the Easter break at 15.05 this Friday, 8 April and will re-open at 08.45 on Monday, 25 April.

Because of their tour, 5<sup>th</sup> year students will not return to school until 08.45 on Tuesday, 26 April.

I wish all members of our school community a very pleasant Easter break.

Kind regards,

Billy O' Shea,  
Principal.