

# **Loreto Wexford Secondary School**



## **Homework Policy**

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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 up to 20% of 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
- Comments made by parents at 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:

<b>Year</b>	<b>Hours per school day on homework and revision</b>
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 (on the basis of 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.

### **Classroom-Based Assessments (CBAs) and Whole-School Assessment**

Classroom-Based Assessments (CBAs) are now a feature of life for students and teachers in 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> years under the Framework for the Junior Cycle. They are intended to give students the opportunity to display their understanding of aspects of course specifications in a variety of ways.

After consultation with stakeholders in the school, the following guidelines have been approved by the Board of Management to facilitate the smooth operation of CBAs in the school:

1. The period allowed for each CBA gives sufficient time for all work to be researched, prepared and presented. During this period, all school activities – curricular and extra-curricular - should proceed as normal. Students are expected to catch up on any class work missed when absent at school activities.

2. Students should continue their normal range of out-of-school activities during the periods when CBAs are taking place.
3. It is advised that teachers will not conduct class tests in a subject during the period when that subject has a scheduled 3 to 4 week CBA window. This is intended to reduce stress on students and over-assessment.
4. Teachers will set less homework than normal in a subject during the period when that subject has a scheduled 3 to 4 week CBA window. Such homework will only be related to the CBA in question.
5. CBAs will not be scheduled for the month of May.
6. Teachers will not conduct mock/practice CBAs. However, preparatory work for CBAs is to be encouraged.
7. CBAs will not be discussed in detail with students in 1<sup>st</sup> year in order to minimise any possible stress.
8. CBAs should be manageable for both students and teachers. They are not to be stress-inducing events. Any problems associated with CBAs that cause stress should be discussed with the Principal or Deputy Principals.

In relation to whole-school assessment, the following points have been agreed:

- a. Christmas reports for all year groups should be based on continuous assessment during the first term. Formal class tests at Christmas will be discontinued after December 2019. This is to maximise teaching time in all year groups and to eliminate the possibility of over-assessment in year groups in which CBAs have to be conducted.
- b. Formal school examinations will be conducted in all subjects each May in 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> years.
- c. Mock examinations will be held for 3<sup>rd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> year students in the two week period prior to the February mid-term break.
- d. To reduce associated stress levels and to provide greater flexibility with its completion, teachers will set longer periods of time for the completion of homework, particularly at Leaving Certificate level.