



# SANCTA MARIA COLLEGE

Ballyroan, Rathfarnham, Dublin 16 D16 V389

## Homework Policy

Our Homework Policy is drawn from our CEIST Charter and should be read in conjunction with the college's Positive Code of Behaviour.

### Our Values

<b>Promoting Spiritual and Human Development</b>	The policy helps shape character, nurture values, and respects the holistic development of the student—mind, heart, and spirit.
<b>Showing Respect for Every Person</b>	The policy promotes treats everyone involved—students, teachers, and families—as whole people with responsibilities, challenges, and dignity.
<b>Creating Community</b>	The policy encourages parents/guardians, students and the college to work together with a shared sense of responsibility, fairness, and mutual respect.
<b>Achieving Quality in Teaching and Learning</b>	The policy is built around aligning homework with learning goals, ensuring fairness and balance, guiding teacher practice, and supporting student independence.
<b>Being Just and Responsible</b>	This policy promotes justice and responsibility, by treating students fairly, by being consistent and transparent, fostering habits of accountability, self-discipline, and ownership of learning.

### Mission Statement

Sancta Maria College is an all-girls Catholic Voluntary Secondary School, under the trusteeship of CEIST and in the tradition of the Sisters of Mercy. We are a compassionate community, which strives to:

- Foster the personal growth and holistic development of all staff and students.
- Embrace Gospel Values, promoting a culture of inclusivity and respect.
- Nurture the full potential of each student through high standards of learning and teaching.
- Promote a positive partnership between all members of the school and wider community.

### Rationale

This homework policy encourages a sense of responsibility for homework amongst all the school partners of Sancta Maria College. Homework consolidates and reinforces skills and understanding developed at school. The final responsibility for the satisfactory completion of homework rests with the learner. Regular homework is a valuable aspect of the learning process and contributes to the development of sound study skills. It helps to build self-discipline, to establish good work habits, to form positive attitudes toward independent study and to develop good habits of enquiry and investigation.

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## Types of Homework

Homework can be short term, e.g., an assignment due for the next day, or long term, e.g., the writing of an essay or the completion of a project over a period of time. Homework can be oral, aural, written, memorising, reading, practical research, project-centered or revision.

## Roles and Responsibilities

### Student

- Students are required to make an honest effort to complete all homework fully and to the best of their ability. They must submit all assignments on time.
- Students should record each item of homework in their Student Journal. Accordingly, it is essential that each student has their journal in every class and keeps it in good order.
- Students must present homework on the date specified by the subject teacher.
- Students absent due to school-related activities must ensure that homework set in their absence is completed, except in exceptional circumstances.
- A student absent from school due to extra-curriculars, is expected to make every effort to complete work missed while absent.
- A student absent from school due to illness is expected to make every effort to complete work missed, upon their return to school.
- All student work should be neat and well presented.
- Regular times should be set each evening for homework, study and revision.
- Non-completion of homework will not be accepted unless verified/explained by written note by parent/guardian in the Student Journal and should be completed and submitted for correction at the earliest possible opportunity.
- Junior Cycle students will ensure that their Journal is signed weekly by the parent/guardian.
- Avoid obvious distractions, e.g., TV, mobile phone, iPad and social networking sites/apps.
- Students should study for the recommended period for their Year Group.

### Teacher

- Teachers should give regular homework and ensure it includes a success criterion e.g. "your homework should include" in conjunction with our SSE policy.
- Teachers should give clear instructions re homework and adequate time for students to record the homework in the Student Journal.
- Teachers are mindful in setting homework of spacing large-scale assignments such as essays and projects.
- Teachers are mindful in setting homework, of other subject deadlines, especially around times such as orals, practical etc.
- On a weekly basis, junior students will be awarded "Homework Star of the Week" on VShare for achieving excellence in homework. Teachers' discretion can also be granted to senior students in conjunction with our SSE policy.
- Teachers will ensure that all homework is geared towards students' abilities in class and that the amount given can be completed in a reasonable amount of time.
- Keeps account of the homework given to students.

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- Teachers will keep a record of homework assignments, of homework completed by each student and, where applicable, of grades for homework.
- Gives homework from examination papers when suitable.
- Corrects, marks and returns homework as soon as practicable.
- Provides regular, positive and formative feedback to students on their homework performance.
- Where homework was assigned to be learned (unwritten homework), teachers will do random testing in class to ensure the work was done.
- Students can be involved in correcting their own homework under the direction of the teacher, as this can be a good learning experience.
- Teachers will communicate any concerns in relation to homework to parents on VSware, via email, on the school app or a phone call home.
- Homework assignments will be relevant to the work being undertaken in class or to revision work and will be purposeful and meaningful.
- Teachers will not accept late homework unless there is a note in the student's journal before the submission date, in conjunction with the school's SSE policy.
- Teachers will make sure students are aware of their responsibility to check what homework has been assigned when absent from class.
- Special consideration will be given to students with additional educational needs.

## **Parent/Guardian**

It is the school's expectation that the parent/guardian:

- Encourages and provides a supervisory role in ensuring students do homework and establish a good study and homework routine at home.
- Monitors the Student Journal and signs it weekly in the case of students in Junior Cycle.
- Provides suitable study facilities – ideally, a quiet place where the student can study away from distractions. The room should be warm, well-lit and have a comfortable desk and chair.
- Ensures no appliances are switched on, such as TV, mobile phone, iPad (unless used for educational purposes) etc.
- Signs notes from teachers, if necessary.
- Encourages regular study time in advance of school and State Exams.
- Communicates with the school through the Journal or by emailing the subject teacher at the earliest possible time, if the parent/guardian has any concerns.
- Furnishes an explanatory note in the event that homework is incomplete or not done. It is the parent's/guardians' responsibility to inform the teacher of any reason why a student was unable to complete a homework assignment.
- Attends Parent/Teacher meetings and supports the homework policy of the school.

## **Principal and Deputy Principal**

The Principal and Deputy Principal will:

- Establish structures and procedures for the implementation of the policy
- Monitor the implementation of the policy

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## Principal, Deputy Principal and Year Heads

The Principal, Deputy Principal and Year Heads will:

- Emphasise the importance of homework as an integral part of the school dynamic.
- Oversee the organisation of study skills seminars each year for students and parents in all Year Groups.
- Clarify the importance of homework by communicating it to the student body as a whole, by speaking to classes individually and by speaking with the individual students who are failing to complete homework on a regular basis.

## Board of Management

The Board of Management will:

- Ensure management and teachers are fully supported and resourced in implementing the Homework and Study Policy.
- Approve and ratify the policy.
- Ensure a review of the policy is carried out regularly.

## Recommended Times for Homework and Study per Night

<i>Cycle</i>	<i>Hours</i>
<b>Junior Cycle</b>	
First Year	: 1.5-2.0 hours of <i>effective</i> work
Second Year	: 2.0-2.5 hours of <i>effective</i> work
Third Year	: 2.5-3.0 hours of <i>effective</i> work and increasing approaching State Exams
<b>Senior Cycle</b>	
Transition Year	: Homework will be given but may be less structured than in Junior Cycle and will often consist of research for extended essays or project work.
Fifth Year	: 3.0-3.5 hours of <i>effective</i> work
Sixth year	: 3.5-4.0 hours of <i>effective</i> work. Weekend study and revision is also essential. The Leaving Certificate is a two-year course and requires substantial effort and dedication over the two years. Studying during the holiday time will be necessary.

All students will have homework every weeknight. The school strongly recommends that students should not have jobs outside of school, as the concentration level required for both class and study is a sufficient demand on the energy levels of growing students.

## Supervised Study/After-School Study

An after-school study facility is on offer within the school – Details in Appendix 1. A very reasonable fee applies, and students must prepay for sessions when booking.

## The Student Journal

- The Journal is an essential item, provided by the school at the beginning of the school year, and is a

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- significant vehicle of communication between teachers and parents/guardians (and vice versa).
- Students are required to have their Journals in their possession while in school and when doing homework.
  - The Journal must be on the student's desk in every class.
  - The Journal must be kept free of graffiti or any other offensive material.
  - Students are required to record their homework for each subject in their journal each day.
  - If a student either defaces or loses their Journal, they will be required to replace it immediately.
  - The Journal is not a private document, and both teacher and parents must be shown the Journal on request.
  - Parents are strongly encouraged to examine the Journal on a daily basis, and parents of students in Junior Cycle are requested to sign the Journal on a weekly basis.

## **Additional Educational Needs**

The primary responsibility for students with additional educational needs rests with the subject teacher. In setting homework for students with additional needs, teachers are encouraged to balance the right of students to share fully in the work of the class, including homework tasks, with their individual learning needs. This is accomplished through the differentiation of the curriculum and homework. These needs may include consolidation and reinforcement of specific skills. For some students, the continuing involvement of parents/guardians is very worthwhile. Subject teachers will ensure that class tasks are manageable and individual skill practices can be incorporated without overloading the student.

Subject teachers will also guide the gifted students in their learning and research. Differentiation of the curriculum and homework is equally important for students in this category.

## **Study Skills**

Intensive study skills seminars are organised for all year groups early in the first term of the new school year. The duration of the seminars varies from one year group to another. The Guidance Counsellor provides assistance to students in drawing up study plans. The topic is also addressed in the S.P.H.E. Syllabus. Each individual subject teacher provides tips on the specific requirements of their own subject area.

## **Incentive/ Reward**

The following incentives are utilised to encourage the completion of quality homework:

- Informal Praise
- Recording of Positive Behaviour on VsWare by subject teacher
- Recording of 'Star of the Week' by the subject teacher, as per the school's SSE targets
- Certificates of Achievement, e.g., 'High Academic Achievement', 'Excellent Progress' and 'Positive Contribution'.

These certificates of acknowledgement and reward are presented formally at Junior Cycle and Senior Cycle Award Ceremonies annually.

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## **Arrangements for Monitoring and Evaluating Homework and Study Policy**

The effectiveness of this Homework and Study Policy needs to be monitored and evaluated. It is envisaged that each subject department monitors homework within the department at subject-department meetings. Teachers need to evaluate the quality of homework and the contribution it is making to learning. The system can also be evaluated through staff appraisal at staff meetings. In addition to monitoring arrangements, the policy needs to be reviewed with students from all years to assess its effectiveness. The key criterion should be the extent to which the policy contributes to students' progress at school and their attitude to learning.

*P. M. Gannon*

Mr. PJ Gannon  
Chairperson of the Board of Management

Date:

26/08/25

*Sorcha McManus*

Ms. Sorcha McManus  
Acting Principal

Date:

26/08/25

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