

Mercy Secondary School, Kilbeggan

Policy on Homework / Study

October 2021

Mercy Secondary School recognises the values of Homework/Study as a means of reinforcing and embedding learning. Homework/Study may take a variety of forms, which can include written tasks, oral/aural work, memory work etc. It should be noted that effective Homework/Study skills need to be learned, practiced and developed.

There are many good reasons why Homework/Study is set and why students should complete it.

Homework:

- Promotes independent learning.
- Promotes self-organisation.
- Promotes self-responsibility for learning.
- Fosters the habit of class preparation.
- Encourages reflection on what was covered during class.
- Consolidates and reinforces previous learning.
- Encourages associative learning.
- Allows student to work at their own pace.
- Provides regular feedback to student on personal progress.
- Provides parents/guardians with an insight into the curriculum.
- Provides parents/guardians with an insight into student ability and present skill level.
- Helps teachers to monitor individual progress.

Homework/Study – Standard Practice for Students in Mercy Secondary School

- That each student should have a Homework/Study timetable in his/her journal.
- That each student should enter a note of the Homework/Study to be done at the end of each lesson.
- That each student, to the best of his/her ability complete his/her Homework/Study to the standard specified by the teacher.
- That each student understands that consistent failure to deal responsibly with Homework/Study will result in sanctions as set out in the Code of Behaviour.
- That each student should follow the Homework/Study guidelines as presented in the student's journal.

Homework Guidelines

The key to doing quality homework

In Class

- Be a prospector – prospectors are active learners who think with the teacher for the key points of the lesson being presented.
- Use your journal to accurately record homework given. You will not remember – we forget 70% of what we hear within a day.
- Remember that “learning” homework is as important as written work and must be recorded.
- Never leave the classroom not understanding what to do, ask the teacher.

At Home:

- Work in the same place, a place that you associate with study.
- Study away from distractions – no tv, no radio, undisturbed, with a place to store your books and materials. Discuss this with your parents.
- Study in a warm but well ventilated room.
- Keep your study area tidy, it is not a storage area.
- Have good but not glaring light.
- Make a homework/study timetable and check it before your start. (You will get help to make this in school.)

When to do homework/study:

- According to your homework/study timetable.
- When you are still fresh and alert.
- At a time when you are not likely to be disturbed.

Getting started:

- Check in your journal the work you have to do.
- Get your books ready.
- Start with what you like in order to get “in the mood”.

Doing it:

- Do the homework on the night it is given to you.
- Vary your easy and hard subjects to stop you becoming bored.
- Start each piece of work with the question “What do I have to be able to do this ?”
- Specific goals – your results will be predictable if you set specific goals. For example: Non-specific goal: “I will try harder at school next term and do more study.” Specific goal : “I will improve my geography mark by 8% by the Christmas Test”. A specific goal must be:
 - Attainable – have a homework/study plan and follow it.
 - Measurable – ask your teacher about your progress.
 - Have a time limit – e.g. the Christmas exam.
 - Presentation and Quality of work counts
 - Don’t just do it, do it “right”.

How to present your homework:

- Have a dedicated copy for each subject.
- Draw a margin down the side of the page.
- Rule off underneath the previous piece of work.
- Put a proper title and date.
- Neat handwriting.

- Reread what you have written and do any crossings-out neatly.
- Use a new paragraph for each new idea when writing prose.
- Make use of underlining, numbers, capitals and brackets.
- Make sure that diagrams and drawings are accurate and clear.
- Check spelling and punctuation before you hand it in.
- Remember to put your copy in your bag.
- Hand in your work on time.

Finally . . .

- Go over the work when you get it back to correct mistakes and to write in any important points that you missed out.

Why bother doing homework or studying?

- To improve yourself and understand the world around you.
- To qualify yourself for a job or college place.
- To improve your self esteem.
- To help your teachers assess how well you have understood an idea or topic and if you are ready to move on to new material.

How long should I spend at homework and study each night?

It is difficult to say how much time anyone should spend at homework or study. The quality of time spent is more important than quantity!

| Suggested | Minimum |
|------------------|---|
| First Year: | 1.5 hours per night 5 times per week |
| Second Year: | 2 hours per night 5 times per week |
| Third Year: | 2.5 hours per night 6 times per week |
| Transition Year: | 2 hours per night or as recommended for project work |
| Fifth Year: | 3 hours per night 6 times per week |
| Sixth Year: | 3.5 hours per night 6 times per week |

Supervised study is available in school for examination years. Other years can apply if there are places available.

Homework/Study – Standard Practice for Teachers in Mercy Secondary School, Kilbeggan

- Each teacher will dictate the note to be entered by the student in his/her journal.
- Each teacher will take due account of the student's Homework/Study timetable in setting the work to be done.
- Each teacher will ensure that the Homework/Study set is reasonable and differentiated where appropriate – all students should be able to experience some level of achievement with Homework/Study
- Each teacher will have in place a means of checking, correcting and recording Homework/Study on a consistent and reasonable basis.
- Each teacher will use all available classroom sanctions/strategies to achieve and maintain expected standards in Homework/Study. The teacher will report students who fail to deal responsibly with Homework/Study through the Year Head Class Tutor System.
- Teachers should encourage students to follow the Homework/Study guidelines presented in the student's Journal.

Guidelines on Homework/Study for Teachers

- It should be noted that Homework/Study is not always written work. There are many types of Homework/Study including – reading, writing, drawing, thinking, memorising, revising and studying.
- Give Homework/Study regularly but be aware of the time and effort required to complete the work.
- Ensure sufficient class time for all students to record the Homework/Study assignment in their homework Journal.
- If the assignment is an unusual one or of a new type, give a sufficient explanation as well as examples and allow students to ask questions to clarify their understanding.
- Spend time explaining to your students how you want Homework/Study presented.
- If you have students with literacy or learning difficulties, insist that they show you that they have correctly written down the Homework/Study. Also, check that they understand what you want them to do for homework.

There are many reasons why a student may not complete and hand in homework:

- Lack of motivation or interest in school success.
- Lack of ability or understanding of the topic or task.
- Lack of skills.
- Home, family, life problems may be impacting on a student's capacity to complete Homework/Study.

Always tell the Year Head about any student who consistently fails to do Homework/Study. The Year Head may be able to explain why the work was not done or advise on proceeding with sanctions.

Homework/Study – Parents/Guardians Role

It is expected that parents:

- Display an interest in the Homework/Study given and being done by students.
- Be familiar with study guidelines and advice being promoted by the school through the School Journal.
- Help the student in organising and maintaining an effective Homework/Study timetable.
- Check and sign the Journal each week and respond by encouragement and sanction as appropriate.
- Contact the school directly or through the Journal to tackle problems early on.

Mercy Secondary School supports and encourages homework/study among students by:

- Provision of after school facilities for 3rd and 6th year students on an agreed basis and for other students if space allows.
- Provision of Homework/Study guidelines for students in the student's Journal.
- Supporting the system of sanctions and rewards operated by class teachers, team tutors and year heads.
- Facilitating study skills programmes for all students through S.P.H.E. and guidance programmes.

This policy has been ratified by the Board of Management at its meeting of

Date : **21st October 2021**

Signed : *Paul Daly* Chairperson

Signed : *Garrett Farrell* Principal

Next review date : **21st October 2022**