



## Homework & Study Policy for Sancta Maria College

*“The school is innovative and creative in its response to the needs of the students so that the highest standards are achieved and maintained.”*

**CEIST Charter**

### **RATIONALE**

The policy encourages a sense of responsibility for homework amongst all the school partners of Sancta Maria College.

It 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.

### **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-centred 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 Journal. Accordingly, it is essential that each student must have her Journal in every class and keep 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 for a period of time is expected to make every effort to complete work missed while absent.
- 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 and Transition Year 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 like Facebook & Twitter.
- Students should study for the recommended period for their Year Group.

**Teacher:**

- Homework should be assigned to students based upon reasonable expectations.
- Teachers should give regular homework and ensure that it is purposeful and relevant to class work.
- 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.
- When assigning homework, teachers will take into account the students' ages, ability, time available to the student and the number of subjects being studied.
- Keeps account of the homework given to students
- Gives homework from examinations papers, when suitable
- Corrects, marks and returns homework as soon as practicable
- Provides regular and effective feedback to students on their homework performance
- 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, initially through the Journal and, where necessary, by a phone call home.
- Teachers will explain the sanctions involved if homework is not fully completed and handed in when it is due.
- Encourages students to engage in study beyond the limits of homework alone and reminds students of the importance of scheduling revision
- Special consideration will be given to students with special educational needs.

**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 1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> Year
- 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 there are no appliances switched on, such as TV, mobile phone, iPad, etc.
- Signs notes from teachers, if necessary
- Parents should encourage regular time for study in advance of school and State Exams.

- If parents have any concerns, they should, at the earliest possible time, communicate with the school through the Journal or by making an appointment with a teacher.
- Furnishes an explanatory note in the event that homework is incomplete or not done. It is the parent's/parents' 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:**

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

**Principal, Deputy Principal and Year Heads:**

- Will emphasise the importance of homework as an integral part of the school dynamic
- Will oversee the organisation of study skills' seminars each year for students and parents in all Year Groups
- Will 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:**

- Ensures that the policy is developed and evaluated from time to time
- Approves the policy
- Ensures a review of the policy is carried out regularly
- Ensures management and teachers are fully supported and resourced in implementing the Homework & Study Policy

**RECOMMENDED TIMES FOR HOMEWORK AND STUDY PER NIGHT**

| <i>Cycle</i>        | <i>Hours</i>  |
|---------------------|---|
| <b>Junior Cycle</b> |   |
| First Year          | : 1.5-2.0 <i>effective work</i>   |
| Second Year         | : 2.0-2.5 <i>effective work</i>   |
| Third Year          | : 2.5-3.0 <i>effective work</i> 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 <i>effective work</i>   |
| Sixth Year          | : 3.5-4.0 <i>effective work</i> . 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 week night. The school recommends strongly that students should not have jobs as the level of concentration 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, purchased at the beginning of the school year, and is a 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 homework for each subject each day.
- If a student either defaces or loses her Journal, she 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 from 1<sup>st</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> Year are requested to sign the Journal on a weekly basis.
- Class Tutors check and sign the Student Journal weekly.

### ***Special Educational Needs***

The primary responsibility for students with special educational needs rests with the subject teacher. In setting homework for students with special 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 of 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 collaborate with the Learning Support Teacher, the Resource Teacher and the S.E.N. Co-ordinator to ensure that class tasks are manageable and individual skill practices can be incorporated without overloading the student.

Subject teachers will also guide the gifted student 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. They are provided by an external agency for a very reasonable fee to the student. 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**

- Note of Commendation in Student Journal
- Informal Praise
- Certificates of Achievement, e.g., 'Most Academic' and 'Most Deserved'. These certificates of acknowledgement and reward are presented formally at Junior Cycle and Senior Cycle Award Ceremonies annually.

### **SANCTIONS AS EXPLAINED IN THE COLLEGE'S POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR CODE**

| <b><i>Stage 1: Positive Behaviour Code</i></b>  | <b><i>Staff Member</i></b> | <b><i>Sanction</i></b>  |
|---|----------------------------|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student does not have Journal, books, copies, equipment or homework in class</li> </ul>  | Teacher                    | <b>Teachers may:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give verbal warning</li> <li>• Inform parents/guardians via Student Journal or phone if no Journal available</li> <li>• Ask student to move position in the classroom</li> </ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student loses Student Journal</li> </ul>   | Teacher                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student purchases replacement Journal</li> </ul>   |
| <b><i>Stage 2: Positive Behaviour Code</i></b>  |                            |   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student persistently does not have Journal, books, copies, equipment or homework in class</li> <li>• Student is persistently misusing her Journal</li> <li>• Student is persistently late</li> <li>• Student is persistently disruptive</li> </ul> | Teacher                    | <b>Teachers may:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have a private word with the student at an appropriate time</li> <li>• Have a private word with her Tutor or Year Head to ascertain if there are any concerns regarding the student in question</li> <li>• Refer student for appropriate support</li> <li>• Give detention</li> </ul> <p>The notification is signed by the parent/guardian and given to the Detention Supervisor.</p> |

|   |         |  |
|---|---------|--|
| <b><i>Stage 3: Positive Behaviour Code</i></b>  |         |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student is persistently uncooperative</li> </ul> | Teacher | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher makes a record in the Conduct Book and the student signs</li> <li>• Teacher notifies parents via Student Journal</li> </ul> |

### **ARRANGEMENTS FOR MONITORING AND EVALUATING HOMEWORK & STUDY POLICY**

The effectiveness of this Homework & 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 is contributing to the progress students make at school and their attitude to learning.

### **TIMEFRAME**

**This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on: Tuesday, June 3<sup>rd</sup> 2014**

It will come into force on: Monday, 25<sup>th</sup> August 2014

It will be reviewed after two years.

Signed: John Shortt

(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Date: June 3<sup>rd</sup> 2014

Date of Next Review: September 2015

Signed: Gerardine Kennedy

(Principal)

Date: June 3<sup>rd</sup> 2014