

Le Chéile E.T.N.S. Homework Policy

September 2024



Introduction

This document is intended to provide details of the whole school plan for homework of Le Chéile Educate Together National School. Our aim is to promote a consistent approach to homework and make expectations clear across all classes. We endeavour to make homework a meaningful and valuable learning experience for children, insofar as possible.

This homework policy was formulated having reviewed the existing policy and then having consulted parents/guardians, teachers and pupils in 2024. Feedback was sought via staff meetings, parent survey and focused discussions in relation to current homework practices, along with new approaches being trialled.

Our child-centred approach means that we put students at the heart of all policies and practices and involve them in decision-making where appropriate. Feedback from our pupils included

1. Reading at home as having the most benefit.
2. Homework should reinforce the work done in class.
3. Pupils enjoy both practical and creative homework e.g. active and projects.
4. The guideline for one hour is too long in 6th class.
5. More than one night to complete homework would be better.

6th class pupils also suggested that learning be focused on the concepts being taught and give children a chance to practice things they are unsure of.

A detailed survey of parents in 2024, highlighted

- Greater need for consistency.
- How some children e.g. neurodivergent can struggle with homework and how it can cause stress.
- Homework journals are useful but another place to access homework would be ideal so parents can see what the teacher assigned.
- Some parents do not want screens used for homework and some would like to see it dropped altogether (approx. 21%). The vast majority of parents do want homework.
- Parents would like to see more checking/monitoring of homework and more feedback.
- The emphasis of homework should be on reading.
- Senior homework is too long and a different approach is required to prepare 6th class for secondary school.

Feedback from teachers highlights how crucial it is for parents to read to and with their children. The benefits include improved literary skills, more extensive vocabulary, greater concentration and higher levels of creativity and imagination. Drawing, colouring, arts and crafts, games and puzzles, being active and doing jobs at home as well as the informal use of maths like baking, measuring, counting are important ways that parents can support a child's learning and develop life skills.

The input of pupils, parents and staff has fed into this policy.

1. Why give homework?

- To enhance pupil learning and reinforce what a child learns during the day.
- To provide a link between teacher and parent and encourage parental involvement in their child's education.
- To foster independence, self-reliance and responsibility.
- In general, homework is meant to be achievable by a child working on their own. Sometimes with senior classes, some homework is designed to challenge children's ability and provide opportunities for creativity.
- Children are expected to do their homework to the best of their individual ability – no more, no less.

2. How often is homework given?

- Weekly homework is given, to be completed Monday – Thursday from October to May
- A copy of the weekly homework will be put on Aladdin for parents to check if necessary. Children and families may then select the evenings when homework is completed. Teachers will explain what days homework is due to be corrected. This will allow increased flexibility for families.
- Over the course of the year, homework will vary. An emphasis will be placed on getting to know the pupils in September.
- Sometimes at the discretion of the class teacher or the principal, children are given "Homework off" as a treat or as acknowledgment of some special occasion.

3. What is the content of homework?

- Ideally homework will contain a balance between reading tasks and written tasks. However, it should be noted that homework time devoted to reading and informal learning is as important as written work. Structured written homework will begin in third class.
- Homework will regularly contain reading, spellings, tables, drawing/colouring, collecting information/items. Learning and being active will also be emphasized.
- When selecting project work teachers in choice boards should choose meaningful and enjoyable learning opportunities for children related to the topic or theme being taught in class. This will include project-based homework, as well as wellbeing focused activities. Senior pupils may be asked to complete work at home.
- Spellings/reading/tables should generally be practised every day from Monday to Thursday.

4. How is homework structured throughout the school year?

Term 1	Term 2	Term 3
September- NO HOMEWORK for the first 4 full weeks	January, February- as per policy	May- as per policy
October, November- as per policy	March- songs/ poems in Irish in addition to written	June- NO HOMEWORK
December- choice boards instead of assigned written	April- choice boards including active homework, no written	

5. How much time for homework?

The following are guidelines for time spent at homework. Different children will complete the same homework in different lengths of time. Time spent will vary from day to day and also from the beginning to the end of the school year. The time allocation is the maximum time a child is to spend on their homework, **and they should stop when the time limit is reached regardless of the volume completed.** While the focus is on quality over quantity, pupils should ensure that homework done reflects their best efforts.

Class	Means of Communication	Time Guideline	Content
Junior Infants	Homework Pack	Up to 10 mins	Phonic sounds, blending sounds and reading from Term 2
Senior Infants	Homework Pack	Up to 10 mins	Reading
Teachers of junior classes may assign activities to help develop fine motor skills activities e.g. drawing, colouring and cutting.			
1st class 2nd class:	Journal	Up to 20 mins	Literacy: Reading, Spellings Numeracy: Tables, maths skills
Written homework begins in 3 rd			
3 rd class	Journal	Up to 20 mins	Literacy: Spelling, Reading, Skills Numeracy, Tables, maths skills (1 page of written work per week for both literacy and numeracy)
4 th class	Journal	Up to 30 minutes	Literacy: Spelling, Reading, Skills Numeracy, Tables, maths skills (1 page of written work per week for both literacy and numeracy)
5 th class	Journal	Up to 40 mins	Literacy: Spellings, Reading, Skills Numeracy: Tables, Maths skills Gaeilge: Irish reading and spellings
6 th class	Journal and Google classroom	Up to 40 mins	Literacy: Spellings, Reading, Skills Numeracy: Tables, Maths skills Gaeilge: Irish reading and spellings <u>Additional Preparation</u> Projects e.g. in English and SESE, J.E.P., yearbook, science fair

6. What is the approach to spellings?

The approach to formal spelling tests every Friday will change from October 2024. Children will be given time to practice and use the spellings assigned over the week in a variety of different ways and not always with written tests e.g. dictation, games, peer and group work. The goal is long term retention of spellings.

7. How much help should parents give?

- Parents should provide children with a suitable place and time to do their homework.
- Children should do written homework themselves and parents should only help when the child has difficulty.
- If a child has difficulty with homework, parents should help the child to overcome the difficulty with further explanation or examples, but not by doing the homework for the child. In this case the parent should write a note to the teacher explaining the problem.

- Prevent interruptions or distractions, like T.V., other devices or other children.
- Praise your child's efforts and ask him/her their opinions / views.
- Have resources such as pencils and colours readily available.
- Parents will be informed when their child is participating in Guided Reading .

8. What are the guidelines for Guided Reading (Senior Infants and First class only)

During Guided Reading Programmes parents/ guardians are asked to

- Write in the title of the book every day on the sheet.
- Listen to your child read the new book 2-3 times. Give help with tricky words, fluency and intonation. Discuss the reader content.
- Sign Reading Log sheet daily (Monday- Thursday). This is a record of your participation at home. Comments on your child's reading and progression are encouraged in the comments section.
- Put the Reader and Log Sheet back in the reading pack and returned to school every day so that we can provide your child with another book.

9. How often should parents monitor homework?

- Homework will be sent on a weekly basis via the Aladdin Noticeboard.
- Parents should sign the journals and record the time taken. Please use the comments and notes box to communication any further information relating to homework.
- Children often feel that reading is not real homework. Parents can play an important role in listening to reading and items to be learned ensuring this work is done well.
- Children may be required to submit homework directly to their class teacher, or alternatively via Google Classroom for 6th class.

10. How often do teachers monitor homework?

- Generally, teachers will check written or project homework towards the end of each week. Reading/spellings/tables may be checked daily.
- Some items of homework (and classwork) may be checked by children themselves under the direction of the teacher. This can be a useful part of the learning process for children.

11. How and when should parents communicate with the teachers about homework?

- Parents are welcome to communicate with the class teacher with any homework related questions or concerns.
- When your child cannot do homework due to family circumstances.
- When your child cannot do homework because she/he cannot understand some aspect or if you have any questions related to the homework given.
- If the time being spent at homework is often longer than the recommended amount of time.

Please note:

If a child is absent due to sickness teachers do not assign homework, as if they are well enough to do homework they should be in school.

If a child is absent due to holidays, teachers do not assign homework because it creates additional workload for teachers when parents have opted for holidays during term-time.

If there are exceptional circumstances e.g. critical illness, please contact the class teacher.

Support teachers may assign reading homework at a suitable level for individual children.

Good school attendance is an important part of our home-school link and parents are reminded not to take holidays during term time. Explanations for absences can also be put in journals.

12. When should homework be done?

Each family situation is different - both parents working, child minders, single parent families etc. Ideally, homework should be done soon after school while your child is still fresh, however, some children need a break before starting homework. Homework should never be left until morning time before school.

Remember: If homework is a stressful experience between parent and child, something is wrong! This leads to poor learning and defeats the whole purpose.

Should this happen on a regular basis, please contact the class teacher.

Ratification and Review

This policy was ratified by the BOM on 30th September 2024 and will initially be reviewed in September 2025 and thereafter every 2 years.

The policy was communicated to teachers and implemented in classes from Jun Inf to 6th Class from 30th Sept 2024. It will be available for the wider school community on our school website.

