

GCS Homework & Study Policy September 2012

TITLE OF POLICY: 1ST YEAR HOMEWORK & STUDY POLICY
SCOPE: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The policy is for students/parents/teachers of Gorey Community School.2. The initial phase will be implemented with 1st year student of 2012/2013 subsequently with all first year groups.
RELATIONSHIP TO SCHOOL'S MISSION/VISION/AIMS <p>In line with the schools mission statement this policy further promotes a whole school approach to homework and study in first year inclusive of teachers, parents/guardians and students.</p>
RATIONALE: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Good homework/study practice is a foundation of teaching and learning.2. Homework extends school learning.3. This homework and study policy will help students to consolidate and to gain a better understanding of skills and information they learn in school.4. Homework/study enables the student to take responsibility for his or her own learning and it promotes student independence and initiative.5. Homework/study facilitates evaluation of both teaching and learning for the teacher, as well as the student.6. The policy is a means of students and teachers gaining more satisfaction from school/homework/study. This will lead to the highest standard of learning with students achieving their full potential, resulting in satisfied and enthusiastic parents/guardians.
GOALS/OBJECTIVES: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. To enable both students and teachers to gain more satisfaction from work done in an organised and orderly fashion.2. To foster a consistent approach to the completion of homework/study and encourage students to take responsibility for homework/study thereby reinforcing the learning that has taken place in the classroom.3. To encourage parents/guardians to play an active role in monitoring homework/study.
POLICY CONTENT: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Students will be assigned between 1.5 to 2 hours homework each weekday night in 1st and 2nd year, 2-3 hours each weekday night in 3rd year, 3-3.5 hours each weekday night in 5th year and 3.5-4 hours each weekday night in 6th year. Transition year homework varies depending on project work and activities.2. Each subject department will make decisions and recommendations regarding the implementation of the homework/study policy in their subject area.3. Teachers and students will implement the 6-step plan at the outset of first year according to the timescale shown in Appendix 1.4. Teachers will:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Note homework in the homework box on the top right hand corner of the board at the start of class;• Give the approximate time the homework should take;• give students an opportunity to ask for clarification on homework given;• make an attempt to assign a variety of homework types e.g. research, written, oral, practical etc;• Allow for differentiation when assigning homework tasks i.e. set common achievable homework with varying expectations and for the teacher to apply their knowledge of student ability and reading/writing levels when setting homework;• ensure that homework is monitored and feedback is given and recorded in accordance with the professional judgement of the teacher;

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- present homework as something positive that contributes to learning;
 - initially implement the policy with emphasis on the positive and on encouraging the students to produce a high standard of homework.
5. Students will:
- record and complete homework and will ask for help.
 - Be helped and encouraged to develop study skills and strategies in how to do homework given by each subject teacher (presentation, date, number of copies, etc.);
 - have the necessary equipment in class;
 - participate in a sanction and reward scheme to encourage completion of homework;
 - in certain circumstances, be offered a place in the homework club provided the student satisfies the criteria necessary to attend as determined by the Gorey School Completion Programme, under the guidance and funding of the Department of Children and Youth Affairs.
 - record work done in class for revision purposes if homework is not given;
 - find out work missed when absent and arrange to catch up.
6. Parents/guardians are encouraged to:
- attend a meeting in August/September which will include input on the homework policy and on the role of the parent/guardian in relation to the policy;
 - monitor and sign the journal each day, for the duration of the 6-step plan (see Appendix 1) and take an interest in the quality of the homework their child is submitting;
 - sign the journal each week;
 - inform the class tutor or the year head if their child is experiencing ongoing difficulties with homework completion.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

Board of Management

1. Support the policy.

Principal, Deputy Principal, Year Heads

1. Monitor the implementation of the policy.
2. Try to ensure that necessary resources are in place to support the implementation of the policy including tutors having tutorial time with their class group.
3. Organise/coordinate the 6-step plan including reinforcing the policy and ensuring structures and procedures for the consistent and enthusiastic implementation of the policy.
4. Year head to organise the rewards/sanctions scheme in consultation with class tutors.
5. Year-head to regularly visit the classes and engage in spot checks, pep-talks, etc.
6. Year-head to organise additional supports for the policy where appropriate (e.g. outside speakers/study skills seminars)
7. Principal/Deputy Principal to make spot-checks in classes.
8. Year-head to organise and coordinate the initial meeting with parents/guardians.
9. Meet with parents/guardians regarding homework issues when appropriate.

Subject teacher

1. Set appropriate homework and give a time indication for completion.
2. Write homework in the homework box on the top right hand corner of the board at the beginning of class and give time in class for students to take down homework especially in the initial phase.
3. Check students are recording the homework in journals.
4. Ensure students are clear as to what they are expected to do.

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5. Undertake initial training of student in best practice, encourage good homework practice and effective study skills.
6. Implement the rewards and sanctions scheme.
7. Monitor homework, provide feedback to students and keep records in accordance with the professional judgement of each teacher.
8. Reinforce skills learned by students in the homework club.

Tutor

1. Reinforce the homework policy and positive aspects in relation to homework, facilitate the 6 stage plan with the assistance of mentors and facilitate study skill sessions providing support and encouragement in developing good homework practise.
2. Foster good practice in terms of time management.
3. Help students to organise themselves.
4. Check and sign the journal weekly.
5. Implement the agreed rewards /sanctions scheme.
6. Refer issues of repeated non-completion of homework to year head for appropriate action and keep the year head and support personnel informed.

Guidance Department and Learning Support Team

1. Provide support and guidance to students/teachers/parents/guardians, in particular concerning students with special needs.

Parent Association is encouraged to:

1. actively support the policy;
2. promote the policy among parents/guardians by whatever means is appropriate.

Parents/Guardians are encouraged to:

1. actively support the policy;
2. provide suitable conditions in the home for homework;
3. monitor their child's homework and encourage good practice regarding time spent, quality of presentation and quality of work;
4. sign the journal daily for the duration of the 6 step plan and weekly for the remainder of the year;
5. show support for the rewards and sanctions scheme applied by the school in relation to homework.

Students

1. Record homework in journal: subject /homework /completion date/estimated time.
2. Record actual length of time taken for each task set in journal.
3. Record work done in class if homework is not given.
4. Present homework in an acceptable, satisfactory manner.
5. Complete homework to the best of his/her ability.
6. Use homework as an opportunity to improve his/her learning.
7. Communicate difficulties with homework to subject teacher.
8. Ask for help if experiencing difficulties.
9. Show his/her journal and homework as requested to a parent/guardian daily/weekly for signing.
10. Find out work missed when absent and arrange to catch up.

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Appendix 1A:

The First Year Student plan for improving learning from homework

This appendix outlines the 6 step plan that will be implemented during the first term and possibly at other times in First Year. It aims to teach students how to do homework. The first few steps may last for a number of weeks to allow students to settle in. All subject teachers in first year are encouraged to focus on the particular area outlined below during the relevant stage. The year head will issue reminders as to the focus each week. What follows are guidelines for teachers in these areas.

Step	Focus	Remember
1	Get it done RECORD BEST EFFORT NEAT CLASS EQUIPMENT	Write your homework or what you did in class into your journal after every subject. Subject/homework/Estimated time. Ask the teacher questions to make sure you understand the homework. Do your homework neatly When finished your homework tick it off and write down the time it took you to do it. Have all necessary equipment in class each day.
2	Understanding WRITE DOWN USE EXAMPLES USE TEXTBOOK ASK FOR HELP	Your teacher will explain good ways to do homework in different subjects. Write down any difficulties you had with your homework after you make a real effort at each part. Underline key words. Follow an example done in class. Find the section in the book that might help you. Ask for help from someone.
3	Correcting homework CHECK LEARN IMPROVE	Teachers will correct homework in different ways. You can also correct homework yourself - reread, check answers in book, compare your work to that of another student. Be sure you know what you did well and what you need to improve on. Make sure you rewrite anything that could have been better. If your homework seems to be wrong, try to learn from your mistakes and try again.
4	Taking notes (journal pg 18) OWN WORDS SHORT FOR YOU ORGANISE	Ask your teacher for suggestions on note taking in each subject Use your own words Use headings, key points, diagrams, etc. Note what you have difficulty remembering/understanding Organise your notes
5	Studying (journal pg 18) SURVEY QUESTION READ RECALL REVIEW	SURVEY: Skim through whatever you want to learn to get an idea of what it is about QUESTION: Ask yourself what you expect to learn from this? READ: in detail RECALL: Try to remember the main points and write them down in note form REVIEW: Check what you want to learn to make sure that your Recall was correct.
6	Revision (journal pg 19) OFTEN ACTIVE TEST YOURSELF	Your homework before an exam should involve mostly revision Revision should be done continuously Make a revision timetable Be active - write, draw, notes, tests After studying, close book/copy and try to do it yourself

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Appendix 1B: The Second Year / Third Year Student plan for improving learning from homework & study.

This appendix outlines the timeframe for repeating the 6-step plan outlined for first years. It aims to teach students how to do homework. The first three steps will be dealt with within the first month and the remainder of the first term will focus on study skills. All subject teachers in second year are encouraged to focus on the particular area outlined below during the relevant stage. The year head will issue reminders as to the focus each week. What follows are guidelines for teachers in these areas.

Time	Step	Focus	Remember
Sept	1	Get it done RECORD BEST EFFORT NEAT CLASS EQUIPMENT	Write your homework or what you did in class into your journal after every subject. Subject/homework/Estimated time. Ask the teacher questions to make sure you understand the homework. Do your homework neatly When finished your homework tick it off and write down the time it took you to do it. Have all necessary equipment in class each day.
Sept	2	Understanding WRITE DOWN USE EXAMPLES USE TEXTBOOK ASK FOR HELP	Your teacher will explain good ways to do homework in different subjects. Write down any difficulties you had with your homework after you make a real effort at each part. Underline key words. Follow an example done in class. Find the section in the book that might help you. Ask for help from someone.
Sept	3	Correcting homework CHECK LEARN IMPROVE	Teachers will correct homework in different ways. You can also correct homework yourself - reread, check answers in book, compare your work to that of another student. Be sure you know what you did well and what you need to improve on. Make sure you rewrite anything that could have been better. If your homework seems to be wrong, try to learn from your mistakes and try again.
Oct	4	Taking notes (journal pg 18) OWN WORDS SHORT FOR YOU ORGANISE	Ask your teacher for suggestions on note taking in each subject Use your own words Use headings, key points, diagrams, etc. Note what you have difficulty remembering/understanding Organise your notes
Nov	5	Studying (journal pg 18) SURVEY QUESTION READ RECALL REVIEW	SURVEY: Skim through whatever you want to learn to get an idea of what it is about QUESTION: Ask yourself what you expect to learn from this? READ: in detail RECALL: Try to remember the main points and write them down in note form REVIEW: Check what you want to learn to make sure that your Recall was correct.
Dec	6	Revision (journal pg 19) OFTEN ACTIVE TEST YOURSELF	Your homework before an exam should involve mostly revision Revision should be done continuously Make a revision timetable Be active - write, draw, notes, tests After studying, close book/copy and try to do it yourself

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Note:

In January, the policy will be reviewed with students to inform a decision as to what should be the focus of the remainder of the year. This may involve repeating some of the previous steps.

Appendix 2

This appendix outlines a variety of approaches to monitoring, correcting and recording homework. Different strategies are appropriate for different situations and the teacher will choose methods that best suit their subject and their learning outcomes for the lesson. This list is not conclusive and offers merely a sample of possible approaches that can be used in accordance with the professional judgement of each teacher.

Monitoring

- Spot check on a sample of the students in the class by subject teacher to check work is done
- Students self correct their work from a master sheet or from the board
- Students swap copies and correct each others work while teacher circulates
- Use of homework stamp in students copies
- Oral correction – teacher and/or student calls out homework solutions and other students correct their work
- Collection of copies – for whole class or for a different sample of students from week to week
- Quick test on homework that involved learning to check if students learned their work effectively
- Student asked to state what they learned from doing their homework at the start of class
- Subject teacher to notify year head if a student is regularly not complying with the homework policy
- Photocopy and display a sample of well-presented or well done homework as an example to others in class (ensuring a wide range of students' work is displayed)
- Highlight common errors by asking where students went wrong and what have they learned from their mistakes

Recording of Monitoring

- Teacher records standard of homework for a sample of students in their teacher journal regularly – mixture of good and unsatisfactory notes
- Teacher records standard of homework in a number of student journals
- Notes:
 - Teachers may use stamps or stickers to record standard of homework.