**Kildangan NS Homework Policy**

**Introduction**

This policy was drafted following a consultation process involving the students, parents, teachers and the Board of Management of Kildangan National School between November 2012 and February 2013.

**Relationship to School Ethos**

Kildangan School celebrates the uniqueness of the child, as it is expressed in each child’s personality, intelligence and potential for development. Our commitment to the holistic development of the child is reflected in the value placed on developing consistent homework habits. Homework fosters independence, self-reliance, self-esteem, cooperation and responsibility and lifelong learning. It is an essential part of primary education as it re-enforces what children learn in school. It provides a link between teacher and parent and encourages parental involvement in their child’s education.

**Policy Rationale**

Why give homework?

* To reinforce what the child learns during the day.
* To develop in the child a positive independent work ethic and strong study habits that will stand to them as they progress in their education.
* To provide a link between teacher and parent.
* In general, homework is meant to be achievable by a child working on their own, to the best of their ability. Younger children, however, will obviously need more support than older children. It is normally based on what has been taught in class.
* Children are expected to do their homework to the best of their individual ability – no more, no less.

**Homework Content**

Ideally homework will contain a balance between reading tasks, learning tasks and written tasks. This balance is not always possible and can vary considerably from day to day. However, it should be noted that homework time devoted to reading and learning is as important as written work.

Homework will regularly contain reading, spellings, tables, written work, pieces to be “learned by heart”, drawing/colouring, collecting information/items and finishing work started in class. Children often feel that reading and “learning by heart” 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.

**Duration of 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. It is important to remember that it is the quality and not the quantity of homework that matters. The following are general guidelines only:

Junior/Senior Infants 15-30 minutes 1st/2nd Class 30-40 minutes

3rd/4th Class 40-60 minutes 5th/6th Class 60-70 minutes

**How often is homework given**

Homework is given on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays but not on Fridays. There are two exceptions:

* If homework has been neglected during the week
* In senior classes some project work is undertaken at weekends

Sometimes at the discretion of the class teacher or the principal, children are given ‘homework off’ or a ‘homework pass’ as a treat or as acknowledgment of some special occasion.

Please note extra homework may sometimes be given during the week or at the weekend if a child has not done homework, not made a suitable effort or has presented very untidy work.

**Roles & Responsibilities**

**Teachers are expected to:**

* Set appropriate homework, review assignments and provide feedback to students.
* Monitor and differentiate homework to cater for all pupils.
* Think critically about what they assign and why it is being assigned.
* Evaluate the homework regularly to ensure that it is of benefit to the children.
* Ideally, teachers will check homework on a daily basis, however with such large class numbers; it may not be possible to check each child’s homework every day.
* Older children will learn to correct some items of homework themselves, under the direction of the teacher. This is a useful part of the learning process as it promotes responsibility and self-esteem.

**Students are expected to:**

* Enter homework accurately at school in their homework diary.
* Ensure they take home the relevant books and copies.
* Complete homework assignments to the best of their ability.
* Present written work neatly.

**Parents/Guardians are expected to:**

* Encourage a positive attitude towards homework in all subjects from an early age.
* Encourage children to work independently as far as possible. Resist over-helping.
* Encourage children to organise themselves for homework. Have all books and materials to hand. The pupil should have the homework journal open to tick off work as it is completed.
* Agree a suitable time for doing homework, taking into account of age, the need for playtime, relaxation and family time.
* Monitor how long the child is spending at homework. Set clear but realistic starting and finishing times to keep children focused and to avoid homework ‘dragging on’ all evening.
* Provide a quiet place, suitable work surface, free from distractions, interruptions and TV.
* Encourage good presentation and neatness within a reasonable time.
* Read with/to the child regularly, in a relaxed atmosphere where the emphasis is on enjoyment.
* Sign the homework diary, checking that all homework is complete.
* Check that the child has everything they need for the next school day.
* Communicate any difficulties to the teacher using the homework journal – especially when the child cannot do homework due to family circumstances, cannot do homework because she/he cannot understand some aspect or if the time being spent at homework is often longer than the recommended amount of time.

# \*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.

**Homework for Absent Children**

Following a request from a parent/guardian for a teacher to prepare work for a child who is absent, the following procedures apply:

* If the child is absent due to illness, the class teacher will endeavour to provide some work in order to ensure that the child will not be too far behind class work on his/her return
* If the absence is due to holidays or other similar events then the advice is that the child should read during the time off.

At all times it is school policy to encourage children to attend school every day where possible, in this way all children will receive an equal opportunity to learn.

**Implementation**

This policy supersedes previous policies and is effective from April 2013.

**Ratification & Communication**

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management and communicated to parents thereafter in March 2013.

**Review Timetable**

This policy will be reviewed in 2 years’ time and amended as necessary by means of a whole school collaborative process.