



## St Brigid's GNS

### Homework Policy

This document outlines the whole school plan for homework at St. Brigid's National School following three cycles of the SSE process (school self-evaluation) from 2022-2025. Our goal is to establish a consistent approach to homework that clarifies expectations across all classes. We strive to ensure that homework serves as a meaningful and valuable learning experience for our students.

#### Why Assign Homework?

1. **Reinforcement of Learning**
  - To reinforce and consolidate what students learn during the school day.
2. **Parental Involvement**
  - To create a bridge between teachers and parents, encouraging parental engagement in their child's education.
3. **Fostering Independence**
  - To promote independence, self-reliance, and responsibility as part of lifelong learning.
4. **Achievability**
  - Homework is designed to be achievable for students working independently, reflecting their individual abilities. Younger students may require more support than older students.
5. **Opportunities for Challenge and Creativity**
  - Some assignments may be intended to challenge students' abilities and encourage creativity.

Students are expected to complete their homework to the best of their individual ability.

This rationale serves as a foundation for our homework policy, guiding our practices to support student learning and development.

## Homework Frequency at St. Brigid's National School

Homework is assigned on a weekly basis, typically to be completed from Monday to Thursday.

### Flexibility in Homework Schedule

We recognise that students and families have varying commitments and responsibilities outside of school. Therefore, we offer flexibility in the homework schedule, allowing classes the option to complete their weekly activities when it suits them. This flexibility enables students to manage their time effectively and reduces the stress that may arise from a rigid homework schedule.

- **Options for Completion:** Teachers may provide students with the choice to select which nights they prefer to complete their homework. This approach empowers students to take ownership of their learning while accommodating family schedules.
- **Support for Students with Special Educational Needs (SEN):** For students with SEN, the Special Education Teacher (SET) will work collaboratively with classroom teachers to co-plan homework assignments tailored to meet individual needs outlined in their School Support Plans. This ensures that homework is accessible and appropriately challenging, fostering an inclusive learning environment.
- **Communication with Parents:** Teachers will communicate with parents regarding the flexible homework options, encouraging families to work together with their child to determine the best approach for completing assignments. Parents evening in September provides parents with the opportunity to learn of class teachers expectations for homework.

Occasionally, at the discretion of the class teacher or the principal, students may receive "homework off" as a reward or in recognition of a special occasion. This practice acknowledges students' efforts and provides a well-deserved break from their homework routine.

## Content of Homework at St. Brigid's National School

The content of homework is designed to provide a balanced and enriching learning experience for students. Ideally, homework will include a variety of tasks that promote reading, offline and online learning, and short writing exercises. It is important to recognise that the time devoted to reading and learning is as valuable as traditional written work (SSE process, data collection).

## Homework Components

- **Variety of Tasks:** Homework will regularly include:
  - **Reading Activities:** Encouraging daily reading to enhance literacy skills.
  - **Spelling Practice:** Reinforcing spelling through regular practice.
  - **Phonological Awareness Activities:** Sounds and word work.
  - **Math Tables:** Daily practice of multiplication tables to build fluency in math.
  - **Short Writing Exercises:** Engaging in written tasks that reinforce spellings or tables.
  - **Creative Activities:** STEAM activities or SEE project work.
  - **Project-Based Maths Homework:** Opportunities for students to engage in hands-on project maths that reinforce their classroom learning.
  - **Wellbeing Activities:** Tasks focused on social-emotional learning and wellbeing, promoting a holistic approach to education.
  - **Active Homework:** Homework that incorporates physical activity, such as engaging in a specific physical education (PE) task or exercise.
  - **Faith Based Homework:** Grow in love

## Homework Schedule

- **Assignment Timing:** Homework will be assigned on Mondays to be completed by Thursday or Friday. This schedule allows for increased flexibility for families, enabling students to manage their time effectively. As the nature of homework in the junior end lends itself to a daily structure, ideally homework from J1 - 2nd class should be completed daily in line with the teachers recommended structure to allow maximum consolidation of learning.
- **Daily Practice:** Spellings, reading, and math tables should be practiced every day from Monday to Thursday to reinforce learning and build foundational skills.

This comprehensive approach to homework ensures that students are engaged in various learning experiences while accommodating the needs of families and promoting a balanced educational experience.

## Time Allocation for Homework at St. Brigid's National School

The following guidelines provide a framework for the amount of time students are expected to spend on homework. It is important to note that different children will complete the same homework in varying lengths of time, and the time spent may fluctuate from day to day and from the beginning to the end of the school year. Ultimately, it is the

quality of the homework that matters more than the quantity. The following are general time allocation guidelines:

- **Junior / Senior Infants:** Up to 15 minutes
- **1st Class / 2nd Class:** Up to 20 minutes
- **3rd / 4th Class:** Up to 30 minutes
- **5th / 6th Class:** Up to 40 minutes

For students with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and those in special classes, homework is differentiated based on each child's individual needs. Tasks may include a choice board featuring a variety of activities, tailored programs for literacy, phonics and numeracy, life skills activities, or skill development tasks directly related to each child's School Support Plan.

The time allocations listed above represent the maximum amount of time a child should spend on homework. Students are encouraged to stop working once the time limit is reached, regardless of the amount of work completed. While the focus is on the quality of homework, pupils should strive to ensure that their efforts reflect their best work. It is also important to note that reading for pleasure is not included in these time guidelines.

### **How Homework is Assigned at St. Brigid's National School**

At St. Brigid's National School, homework is assigned through SEESAW, a digital platform that allows for effective communication between teachers, students, and parents. To ensure that all students have access to digital tools, teachers check for device availability at the beginning of the school year through the "Getting to Know Your Child" parent survey.

### **Technology**

At St. Brigid's, we are committed to our pupils' wellbeing and healthy development, which includes limiting early exposure to social media. We actively promote a smartphone-free pledge and work in partnership with parents to foster a culture of connection, creativity, and care. Guided by our digital technology strategy, we use digital tools purposefully under teacher/parental supervision to support and motivate learning, while preparing children for the modern world.

### **Digital Communication vs. Digital Homework**

Digital communication is primarily intended for parents to help them support their child's learning at home. Digital communication is used to inform parents about the homework their child is doing. This is especially important for classes from Junior Infants to Second Class, where parental/adult

supervision and involvement are expected. Digital communication is primarily intended for parents, to help them support their child's learning at home.

## Digital Communication

At St. Brigid's, we prioritise **digital communication** over digital homework.

**Digital Communication** refers to the sharing of information using digital tools and platforms. This includes:

- **Announcements (Aladdin):** Important updates regarding school events.
- **Homework Assignments (SEESAW):** Clear instructions for homework tasks.
- **Feedback (SEESAW):** Constructive responses to students' submissions.
- **Updates (Aladdin/SEESAW):** Ongoing communication about students' progress.
- It is important to note that responses to these communications do not necessarily have to be created on a digital device.

## Digital Homework

- Digital Homework may be assigned occasionally at the discretion of the teacher; however, the primary use of digital devices at St. Brigid's is for communication. Digital homework involves assignments that require students to use digital tools or online platforms to complete or submit their work. While we may occasionally incorporate digital homework, the focus remains on meaningful learning experiences that do not solely rely on technology.
  - Digital Homework is primarily assigned to students from the senior end of the school (3rd - 6th) and is associated with project work e.g. creating digital projects using Canva/Adobe Spark, designing online materials etc.
  - Digital homework may be used in junior classes where device access is available for the purposes of growing a student's portfolio e.g. audio recordings of reading, videos of practical maths or experiments, pupil self-assessment rubrics.
  - Special Education - digital homework may be assigned for an intervention period with a specific purpose of facilitating repeated practice with high motivation e.g. rote learning, typing skills or closed reading exercises.

## Considerations for Students with Limited Access

Teachers will take note of students who do not have access to a device for digital communication. In such cases, teachers will make arrangements to support these students, which may include:

- **Alternative Assignments:** Providing paper-based assignments or alternative tasks that do not require technology.
- **Access to School Resources:** Allowing students to use school devices during designated times.
- **Collaboration:** Digital homework allows for easy sharing of homework through screenshotting with childminders/after school agencies/grandparents etc.
- **Translation** - For children and families who speak English as a second language SEESAW offers translation options for all homework text.

## How Much Help Should Parents Give?

At St. Brigid's National School, we believe that parental involvement is crucial to supporting children's homework completion. Here are some guidelines on how parents can effectively assist their children with homework:

1. **Create a Suitable Environment**
  - Provide your child with a designated place and time to complete their homework, free from distractions.
2. **Encourage Independence**
  - Children should complete their written homework independently. Overseeing parents should offer assistance only when the child encounters difficulties.
3. **Support Through Explanation**
  - If a child struggles with homework, parents should help by offering further explanations or examples to clarify concepts, but they should not complete the homework for their child. If assistance is needed, parents should write an email to the teacher explaining the issue.
4. **Minimise Distractions**
  - Prevent interruptions or distractions during homework time, such as turning off the television and limiting noise from other children.
5. **Provide Positive Reinforcement**
  - Praise your child's efforts and encourage them to share their opinions and views about their homework. This fosters a positive attitude towards learning.

#### 6. Ensure Resources are Accessible

- Keep necessary resources, such as pencils, colors, and paper, readily available for your child to use while completing their homework.

#### 7. Shared Reading

- Shared reading is not considered homework in the traditional sense; rather, it is meant to be an enjoyable activity between parent and child. Encourage reading as a fun and engaging exercise, as children often perceive reading as less serious homework.

#### 8. Listening and Engagement

- Parents can play a significant role by listening to their child read and ensuring that the items to be learned are understood and completed well. This involvement helps reinforce learning and builds confidence.

By following these guidelines, parents can effectively support their children's homework experiences while promoting independence and a positive attitude toward learning.

### Monitoring Homework at St. Brigid's National School

**How Often Should Parents Monitor Homework?** Homework will be sent on a weekly basis via SEESAW. Parents should check the homework on a Monday.

#### Key Points for Monitoring Homework:

##### 1. Weekly Review:

- Parents should take time each Monday to review the homework assigned for the week. This helps to establish a routine and ensures that students understand their tasks and responsibilities for the week ahead.

##### 2. Discuss Homework with Your Child:

- After reviewing the homework, parents should discuss the tasks with their child.

##### 3. Set Expectations:

- Parents should use this opportunity to set expectations for completing homework throughout the week. Discussing a plan for how and when the homework will be completed can help children manage their time effectively and reduce any last-minute stress.

##### 4. Communicate with Teachers:

- If parents notice any difficulties their child is facing with homework or have questions regarding assignments, they are encouraged to communicate with the teacher in line with our parent teacher communication policy. Email info to request a phone call meeting/email response. Open communication

fosters collaboration between home and school, allowing for a more supportive learning environment.

#### 5. Parent expectations:

- Homework provides valuable repeated practice and supports the consolidation of learning, which is essential for developing literacy skills. When homework is not completed, these opportunities for reinforcement are missed, which may, over time, impact the child's progress.

### How Often Do Teachers Monitor Homework?

At St. Brigid's National School, teachers play an essential role in monitoring homework to support student learning and ensure academic progress.

#### 1. Assessment:

Teachers will check homework at a minimum on a weekly basis. Teachers from JI - 2nd class may check homework on a daily basis. This regular assessment is crucial for several reasons:

- **Ensuring Pupil Accountability:** Weekly checks help hold students accountable for completing their assignments on time. Junior classes may use rubrics/parent checklists/reading sheets with signatures to ensure pupil accountability.
- **Understanding the Material:** By reviewing homework, teachers can gauge how well students are grasping the material covered in class and identify any areas that may need further clarification or reinforcement.

#### 2. Peer Review:

Some items of homework (and classwork) may be checked by the children themselves under the direction of the teacher. This peer review approach offers several benefits:

- **Promotes Self-Assessment:** Allowing students to review their own work encourages them to reflect on their understanding and identify areas for improvement.
- **Fosters Responsibility:** Engaging in peer review fosters a sense of responsibility among students, as they learn to take ownership of their learning process and support their classmates.

#### 3. Collection and Feedback:

Teachers may collect\* and correct homework assignments, providing feedback to help students improve. Feedback can be delivered in various ways, including:

- **Comments on SEESAW:** Teachers can post constructive comments on SEESAW, addressing specific strengths and areas for growth. This feedback helps students understand their performance and what is expected in future assignments.

\*Junior classes homework folder must stay in the school bag throughout the week.

#### 4. Ongoing Communication:


Regular monitoring and feedback facilitate ongoing communication between teachers, students, and parents. This collaborative approach ensures that everyone is informed about the student's progress and can work together to support their learning journey.

By employing these strategies, teachers at St. Brigid's National School actively engage with students' homework, promoting a culture of learning, responsibility, and continuous improvement.

#### Review & Ratification:

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 10<sup>th</sup> April 2025 and will be reviewed as necessary.

Signed:   
Chairperson of Board of Management  
Date: 10/04/25

Signed:   
Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management  
Date: 10/04/25