

*S.N. Iorball Sionnaigh*

*Polasaí*

*Ar*

*Obair Bhaile*

## HOMEWORK - IT'S ALL A MATTER OF ATTITUDE

Ask any group of children why they get homework and they will give you a variety of answers, most of them negative. Pupils assume that homework is given to deprive them of their favourite television programmes or to keep them out of mischief. Parents often unwittingly reinforce their children's negative attitude to homework. Harassed mothers preparing for an evening meal or struggling in from work are not going to beam with pleasure when asked to help with geometry. Pouncing on Dad for assistance as he comes in from work is hardly going to get an enthusiastic response. When homework becomes a cause of friction in the home, it is resented by the whole family. It should not be the case that parents look forward to alternate weekends as eagerly as their offspring, to get a break from "That Dreaded Homework". However, it is possible to break this vicious circle. Homework, properly set and correctly done, is a useful learning tool, reinforcing the work done in the classroom. It lays the foundation for good study habits for the future. It is important for parents and children to have a positive attitude towards homework at junior level. By the time a student reaches second level it is going to be almost impossible to change bad homework habits. By then, students are less likely to be guided by their parents and they are less likely to be able to help them.

Timing is important. Children need a break between school work and homework. A snack or lunch, a chat about their school day, or perhaps a short playtime in the fresh air, will benefit them. One half-hour's concentrated effort should then see homework completed by the under 10's.

For younger children, homework done after 6 o'clock takes twice the effort for half the results.

As children tire, their concentration span lessens. Pupils who complain that they had two or three hours homework may find that it has been slotted in between T.V. programmes and could have been completed much faster.

Parents can encourage neat and correct homework by ensuring that the child works at a study desk or table in a warm quiet room. Lying on the floor in front of a blaring television set or balancing a copy-book on wobbly knees is guaranteed to produce sloppy homework.

Working beside a plate of baked beans and tomato ketchup is asking for trouble.

The child should be given responsibility for his/her own books and belongings.

Encourage him/her to pack the school bag carefully when the homework is completed.

School books left lying around are fair game for the baby with sticky fingers.

## ENCOURAGE THEM TO WORK ALONE

A parent who helps a child with most of the homework, or, worse still, does it for him/her, is doing the child a grave disservice. No child is going to make an effort while everything is being done for him/her. He/she should be encouraged to work on his/her own apart from the occasional query. It is best to stand back and show an interest. Praise for work well done, or indeed any improvement, is important.

Ideally, homework should be based on work taught in the classroom. If a child has difficulty with some aspect of the homework she/he should show the teacher where she/he has attempted it. Failing this, the parent could write a short note to the teacher explaining that the child did not understand how to do the tasks he/she was set. Perfect homework, done by the parent, misleads the teacher into thinking that a new concept has been understood.

Many children and parents consider only written work as real homework because it is more readily checked by the teacher. Memory work such as spellings, tables and poetry is often neglected. Memorising skills are very necessary for the development of good study habits for the future. Parents can help here by patiently hearing spellings, tables etc. General reading is an important part of homework even if it is not set by the teacher. If you can motivate your child to tackle homework with a positive attitude instead of a resentful one he/she will reap the benefits.

### **Our Aims and Objectives**

- I. To reinforce school learning by providing the necessary practice, integration and application.
- II. To develop attributes of resourcefulness, self-reliance, responsibility, discipline and will power.
- III. To provide the opportunity for the child to experience a sense of achievement.
- IV. To encourage the pupil to cultivate and develop commendable study habits outside the classroom situation.
- V. To benefit pupil learning in an independent environment.
- VI. To strengthen home/school links

### **Content**

1. It is our policy that pupils in all classes will be given homework, however, in infants, the class teacher will use her discretion in this regard.
2. Provision and allowance will be made for pupils with special needs and newcomer pupils.
3. The teachers shall strike a balance between various forms of homework – oral, reading, learning and memorising and written work.
4. Generally homework should be seen as reinforcement done in class.
5. Children in classes I – VI are expected to take note of this homework in their homework journal.
6. The pupils are expected to have their homework journal inspected and signed by the parents/guardians at the week-end.
7. The following is a guideline of time allocation:
 

Infants	:	15 – 20 minutes
Rang I & II	:	30 Minutes
Rang III & IV	:	45 Minutes
Rang V & VI	:	1 Hour
8. Homework, on occasions, may be used as part of the system of rewards and sanctions.
9. If homework is incomplete or untidily done, the pupil shall complete or re-write untidy work during lunch time. There is a supervised room for this. If a pupil consistently fails to do or complete his/her homework the parents shall be contacted to discuss the problem.
10. Pupils may be rewarded for very good homework and effort with same.
11. Pupils are given guidelines to assist with study skills: Routine, free from distraction and interruption, at a desk or table, etc. Parents are advised accordingly.
12. Pupils are encouraged to make an earnest effort to complete their homework.
13. Pupils are encouraged to inform the class teacher when they are

experiencing difficulties with regard to homework.

14. Parents can assist their pupils undertaking homework tasks by establishing a routine for the pupil: Same time each evening, same room, at a table / desk, removing distractions or disruptions from the area, setting an agreed amount of time, etc.
15. Parents are actively encouraged to monitor their child's homework and inspect their journal. They are also encouraged to lend assistance but are strictly discouraged from 'doing' the child's homework.
16. Where parents are aware that their child is experiencing difficulties they may assist by providing further explanation, doing a number of easier examples or writing a note in the child's journal to inform the teacher about the nature of the problem the child is experiencing.