

## **Mercy Secondary School, Kilbeggan**

### **Policy on Homework / Study**

### **October 2024**

Mercy Secondary School recognises the values of Homework/Study as a means of reinforcing and embedding learning. Homework/Study may take a variety of forms, which can include written tasks, oral/aural work, memory work etc. It should be noted that effective Homework/Study skills need to be learned, practised and developed.

There are many good reasons why Homework/Study is set and why students should complete it.

#### **Why bother doing homework or studying?**

- To improve yourself and understand the world around you.
- To qualify yourself for a job or college place.
- To improve your self-esteem.
- To help your teachers assess how well you have understood an idea or topic and if you are ready to move on to new material.

#### **Homework:**

- Promotes independent learning.
- Promotes self-organisation.
- Promotes self-responsibility for learning.
- Fosters the habit of class preparation.
- Encourages reflection on what was covered during class.
- Consolidates and reinforces previous learning.
- Encourages associative learning.
- Allows student to work at their own pace.
- Provides regular feedback to student on personal progress.
- Provides parents/guardians with an insight into the curriculum.
- Provides parents/guardians with an insight into student ability and present skill level.
- Helps teachers to monitor individual progress.

#### **Homework/Study – Standard Practice for Students in Mercy Secondary School**

- That each student should have a Homework/Study timetable in his/her journal.
- That each student should enter a note of the Homework/Study to be done at the end of each lesson.
- That each student, to the best of his/her ability complete his/her Homework/Study to the standard specified by the teacher.
- That each student understands that consistent failure to deal responsibly with Homework/Study will result in sanctions as set out in the Code of Behaviour.
- That each student should follow the Homework/Study guidelines as presented in the student's journal.

## **The Key to Doing Quality Homework:**

### **In Class**

- Be a prospector – prospectors are active learners who think with the teacher for the key points of the lesson being presented.
- Use your journal to accurately record homework given. You will not remember – we forget 70% of what we hear within a day.
- Remember that ‘learning’ homework is as important as written work and must be recorded.
- Never leave the classroom not understanding what to do, ask the teacher.

### **At Home:**

- Work in the same place, a place that you associate with study.
- Study away from distractions – no tv, no radio, undisturbed, with a place to store your books and materials. Discuss this with your parents.
- Devices/Laptops/Phones should be used under the supervision of parents/guardians where possible.
- Study in a warm but well-ventilated room.
- Keep your study area tidy, it is not a storage area.
- Have good but not glaring light.
- Make a homework/study timetable and check it before your start. (You will get help to make this in school.)

### **When to do homework/study:**

- According to your homework/study timetable.
- When you are still fresh and alert.
- At a time when you are not likely to be disturbed.

### **Getting started:**

- Check in your journal the work you have to do.
- Get your books ready.
- Begin with a subject you like in order to make a positive start.

### **Doing it:**

- Do the homework on the night it is given to you.
- Vary your easy and hard subjects to stop you becoming bored.
- Start each piece of work with the question “What do I have to be able to do this ?”
- Make specific goals – your results will be predictable if you set specific goals.

*For example:* Non-specific goal: ‘I will try harder at school next term and do more study.’

Specific goal : ‘I will improve my geography mark by 8% by the Christmas Test’. A specific goal must be:

Attainable – have a homework/study plan and follow it.

Measurable – ask your teacher about your progress.

Have a time limit – e.g. the Christmas exam.

Presentation and quality of work counts

Don’t just do it, do it right.

**How to present your homework:**

- Have a dedicated copy for each subject.
- Draw a margin down the side of the page.
- Rule off underneath the previous piece of work.
- Put a proper title and date.
- Use neat handwriting.
- Reread what you have written and do any crossings-out neatly.
- Use a new paragraph for each new idea when writing.
- Make use of underlining, numbers, capitals and brackets.
- Make sure that diagrams and drawings are accurate and clear.
- Check spelling and punctuation before you hand it in.
- Remember to put your copy in your bag.
- Hand in your work on time.

**Finally . . .**

- Go over the work when you get it back to correct mistakes and to write in any important points that you missed out.

**Recommended time for homework and study:**

It is difficult to say how much time anyone should spend at homework or study. The quality of time spent is more important than quantity!

Suggested	Minimum
First Year:	1.5 hours per night 5 times per week
Second Year:	2 hours per night 5 times per week
Third Year:	2.5 hours per night 6 times per week
Transition Year:	1 hour per night or as recommended for project work
Fifth Year:	3 hours per night 6 times per week
Sixth Year:	3.5 hours per night 6 times per week

Supervised study is available in school.

## **Homework/Study – Standard Practice for Teachers in Mercy Secondary School, Kilbeggan**

- Each teacher will dictate the note to be entered by the student in his/her journal.
- Each teacher will take due account of the student's Homework/Study timetable in setting the work to be done.
- Each teacher will ensure that the Homework/Study set is reasonable and differentiated where appropriate – all students should be able to experience some level of achievement with Homework/Study
- Each teacher will have in place a means of checking, correcting and recording Homework/Study on a consistent and reasonable basis.
- Each teacher will use all available classroom sanctions/strategies to achieve and maintain expected standards in Homework/Study. The teacher will report students who fail to deal responsibly with Homework/Study to the Year Head.
- Teachers should encourage students to follow the Homework/Study guidelines presented in the student's Journal.

### **Guidelines on Homework/Study for Teachers**

- Homework/Study is not always written work. There are many types of Homework/Study including – reading, writing, drawing, thinking, memorising, revising and studying.
- Give Homework/Study regularly but be aware of the time and effort required to complete the work.
- Ensure sufficient class time for all students to record the Homework/Study assignment in their homework Journal.
- If the assignment is an unusual one or of a new type, give a sufficient explanation as well as examples and allow students to ask questions to clarify their understanding.
- Spend time explaining to your students how you want Homework/Study presented.
- If you have students with literacy or learning difficulties, insist that they show you that they have correctly written down the Homework/Study. Also, check that they understand what you want them to do for homework.

### **There are many reasons why a student may not complete and hand in homework:**

- Lack of motivation or interest in school success.
- Lack of ability or understanding of the topic or task.
- Lack of skills.
- Home, family, life problems may be impacting on a student's capacity to complete Homework/Study.

Always tell the Year Head about any student who consistently fails to do Homework/Study. The Year Head may be able to explain why the work was not done or advise on proceeding with sanctions.

### **Homework/Study – Parents/Guardians Role**

It is expected that parents:

- Display an interest in the Homework/Study given and being done by students.
- Be familiar with study guidelines and advice being promoted by the school through the School Journal.
- Help the student in organising and maintaining an effective Homework/Study timetable.
- Check and sign the Journal each week to ensure that Homework is completed to an appropriate standard.
- Contact the school directly or through the Journal to tackle problems early on.

### **Mercy Secondary School supports and encourages homework/study among students by:**

- Provision of after school study for students.
- Provision of Homework/Study guidelines for students in the student's Journal.
- Supporting the system of sanctions and rewards operated by class teachers and year heads.
- Facilitating study skills programmes for all students through S.P.H.E. and guidance programmes.

Signed: *Paul Daly*

Chairperson of Board of Management

Date: **7<sup>th</sup> November 2024**

Signed: *Garrett Farrell*

Principal/Secretary to the  
Board of Management

Date : **7<sup>th</sup> November 2024**