

ATHY COLLEGE

HOMEWORK POLICY

WHAT IS HOMEWORK?

Homework includes

Work assigned by teachers in class for students to do at home. It can include

- written work,
- reading,
- learning off,
- note-taking,
- project work,
- drawing,
- diagrams,
- practical assignments- e.g. collecting ingredients for Home Economics class.

Assigned homework is almost always directly connected to work being covered in class at the time.

Homework may be given for the next day, eg Maths, or students may be given an allotted number of days to complete an assignment, eg an essay. **(This is why proper use of the journal to record when homework is due is very important.)**

Homework may also include making a record of work done in a practical class, eg writing up a science practical. It may also be a project on-going over a number of weeks and assessed on completion.

When such homework assignments are fully finished, personal study could also include independent learning and revision for up-coming examinations.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

This policy aims to present the policy of Athy College in the area of homework.

The policy's objectives are to outline the educational reasons for homework, having offered a broad definition of homework. The school's policy is then outlined.

The policy then outlines the supports and sanctions available in the area of homework.

The policy will be based on good practice. It will include input sought from all teachers, representative groups of students (the Student Council) and parents (through the Home School Community Liaison Person).

THE PURPOSE OF HOMEWORK

Homework is a vital part of the process of learning. Most importantly it re-enforces the work covered in class. It is essential in preparing for examinations and promotes the development of good study habits. Homework improves a student's prospects of higher academic achievement.

Doing homework properly helps develop the skills needed for life-long learning so that students will have the skills necessary to learn independently in the future. Completing homework to the best of a student's ability helps to build a student's confidence and a sense of achievement.

Homework allows parents to become involved in helping students' learning, as they support students while they are learning at home.

Research shows that students who do homework consistently perform best in State Examinations.

POLICY

- Homework that is set will be appropriate to the programme which students are taking. This means that the length and number of homework assignments given, and the time which students need to spend completing them, will vary depending on the year group, the programme and the range of ability in the class.
- Individual class teachers are the best monitors of how many homework assignments should be given in their particular subject on a weekly basis.
- Students will be given advice on how to plan their homework – not to leave assignments until the day before they are due – to avoid an overload of homework on a particular evening.
- Homework may be set at different levels within a class group to take account of mixed ability – i.e. the practice of differentiation as it is relevant to homework.
- All students must complete assigned homework to the best of their ability.
- **Homework should be recorded by students in their school journals during each class.** Where a specific assignment has not been set students must note what was covered in class that day and then revise that material during the time set aside for homework.
- Teachers will keep records of homework given to and presented by students. These records will be available to be referred to at appropriate times, eg parent-teacher meetings, consulting with students, inspections.
- Homework will be examined by teachers and copies will be collected regularly. Homework may be corrected in class, by peer or self-assessment directed by the class teacher or work may be taken up by the teacher to be marked and returned to the student.
- Students benefit most from homework when they pay careful attention to the teachers' comments and feedback. Parents are encouraged to support students' learning by discussing teachers' feedback with students.

SUPPORTS FOR STUDENTS

- Students will be given regular advice on how to organise their homework efficiently throughout their years in Athy College. In the Junior Cycle programmes, this is taught early in the school year as part of the SPHE (Social Personal and Health Education) programme. In the Senior Cycle programmes, advice is given by teachers in their particular subject areas. The school's Guidance Department offers regular advice, direction and support on how to plan homework and study effectively.
- An information session for first year students and their parents/guardians includes clear guidance on homework at second level. The HSCL co-ordinator also gives input to parents/guardians on how to support students doing homework. This includes discussion on where to do homework, how to make a homework plan, the importance of parental involvement, interest and encouragement, checking the journal, attending the parent-teacher meeting – etc. (A copy of a handout for parents forms an appendix to this policy.) This meeting takes place each September.
- Information sessions at the beginning of 5th and 6th years of the Leaving Cert Established programme give guidelines to students and their parents/guardians on homework and study in the senior cycle. The focus is on maximising each students' opportunity to realise his/her academic potential. Guidelines are given on the amount of time that homework involves at this level. (Copies of handouts given to students are appended to this policy.)
- Published guidelines for amount of time spent at homework (ASTI) are as follows:
 - First year approx. 1.5 hours
 - Second year approx. 1.5 to 2 hours
 - Third year approx. 2 to 3 hours
 - Senior cycle (leaving cert est.) approx 3 hoursThese are guidelines and the amount will vary considerably with the programme that a student is taking.
- Tutors, year heads and the Guidance Counsellor are available to offer individual advice to students. Students and their parents/guardians are encouraged to discuss possible solutions where a problem exists. The school always welcomes the chance to meet with parents/guardians –

- if not at the parent-teacher meeting, then by appointment at a suitable time.
- Teachers will, as appropriate, reward very good homework and significant improvement in homework. “Green Cards” and notes to parents in the journal may be used for this purpose.

WHEN HOMEWORK IS NOT DONE

- Teachers understand that, in exceptional and rare circumstances, a student may, for a valid reason, be unable to complete homework. On an occasion such as this, a student must bring a note of explanation, dated and signed by a parent/guardian, and present it to his/her tutor and teachers.
- Where homework is not completed, in the first instance the subject teacher will speak to the student about the matter and will explain the sanctions that will apply if the problem continues. Communication about the problem can be improved when teachers use the journal to alert parents to a detention for failure to produce homework and when parents look at student journals regularly.
- Sanctions may include:
 - Lunchtime detention.
 - A note to parents/guardians in the school journal. It is, therefore, very important that parents/guardians check the journal regularly.
 - Written referral of a persistent homework problem to the student’s tutor/year head.
 - Additional assignments.
 - Where a student persistently (more than four times) does not do homework class teachers must report the problem **in writing** to the tutor. Unless there are exceptional circumstances, the student will then be placed “On Report”. “On Report” is effective because it involves the student, all his/her teachers and his/her parents/guardians in solving the problem. Parental support is vital in supporting the student’s learning.
 - Any other sanction deemed appropriate.