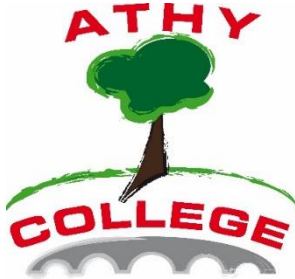


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Athy College Kildare

Homework Policy

Signed: _____

Chairperson of Board of Management

Approval Date: _____

Signed: _____

Principal

Approval Date: _____

MISSION STATEMENT

In a caring school we are dedicated to fostering educational excellence empowering all students to reach their full potential – academic and social, physical and spiritual. Through partnership and cooperation, we openly respect and nurture the dignity and uniqueness of each individual’.

ETHOS

Athy College is a caring school. The staff are dedicated to fostering educational excellence and earnestly endeavour to empower all students to reach their full potential – academic and social, physical and spiritual. Through partnership and cooperation, the staff of Athy College respect and nurture the dignity and uniqueness of everyone.

Athy College defines education as the on-going development of all students so that they may realise their true and best selves. The college motto is “Fas agus Foghlaim” (Lifelong Learning). From the outset students are taught they are partners in their own education. The school aims to prepare students for public examinations, in an age when academic qualifications are indispensable for admission to further education and entry into employment. The school recognises that its students are of varying cultural and social backgrounds and have a wide variety of aspirations and abilities.

The school embraces the vital role that parents, and guardians play in the overall education for their children. The school also recognises the importance of the community in which the student lives. For this reason, every effort is made to ensure that the student is aware of his/her role in the community and is encouraged to be positively involved in the wider community.

Scope

This policy applies the entire school community – students, parents and teachers during the course of the school year.

Rationale

1. To inform the school community of the school’s position regarding homework.
2. To promote a uniformity and a consistent approach to homework.

What is homework?

Homework is subject based work assigned by a teacher, for completion by a student, alone or with others, outside of class. It may be oral, aural, written, reading, practical research, project centred or revision.

The Purpose of Homework

1. To reinforce and supplement class work.
2. To complete work begun in class.
3. To prepare for future work.
4. Examination Preparation.
5. To give student's the skills to develop independent working habits.

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.

Homework Procedures

- 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.

Expectations Regarding Homework

Teachers May Expect That:

- Students will record homework in the student journal.
- Students will meet all deadlines (as per school rules)
- Students will try to complete all homework honestly.
- All requested work will be presented.
- Parents will supervise homework as appropriate
- Parents will present a signed and dated explanation note if homework is not done or incomplete. This homework will must be completed the following day.
- Students missing class time due to extracurricular activities must obtain and complete homework assigned in their absence.
- Students will catch up on all missed homework due to absence due to illness or other reasons.

Students May Expect That:

- Homework in each subject area will take a reasonable amount of time.
- Homework tasks will be clear and the purpose explained.
- Adequate allowance is made for time consuming homework such as essays etc.
- Homework will be relevant to class work/course work.
- Homework will be monitored and corrected.
- Feedback will be given on homework, individually or in a group setting.
- Adequate time will be given in class for the recording of homework.

Parents May Expect That:

- Notification will be given regarding their child's difficulties with homework.
- They will have the opportunity to discuss homework problems with the relevant teacher via the school pastoral care system. Discussions with teachers on homework will occur at a mutually agreed time.
- Teachers will be conscious of learning difficulties when assigning homework.

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.

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.

Homework Club Homework Club is available to students each evening to assist students with the completion of their homework.

The Student Journal

The journal is an essential item, a full detailed account of how to use the student journal is available at the start of the student journal.

The journal contains:

- Space to record homework for each class.
- Space for parents to sign after checking their child's work on a weekly basis. Parents are strongly advised to check the student journal on a daily basis.

Duration of Homework

Time management is an important skill and students must be responsible for their homework and reasonable in the time they allocate to it. The length of time spent on homework will vary, depending on the year group, level of ability, time of the academic year but the following time guideline may be useful:

- First Year Students - 1 hour – 1.5 hours
- Second Year Students 1.5 hours – 2 hours
- Third Year Students 2 hours
- Fifth Year Students 2 – 2.5 hours
- Sixth Year Students 2.5 – 3 hours
- LCA Students - 1 hour

If students complete their homework within the above time guidelines, they are expected to put the remainder of this time into revision/study

When Homework Is Not Done?

As homework is an essential part of school life, it is reasonable to expect that all students will make an honest effort to complete all homework assigned to a satisfactory level. This is outlined in our school rules. Situations may arise from time to time which prevents students from completing their homework. In these cases, no sanctions will apply provided an explanatory note has been received from a parent on the day that homework is due. In the absence of a note, sanctions will apply.

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.

The following sanctions may be imposed for failure to present homework:

- Request from parent for explanation for lack of homework.
- Lunch time detention imposed by the subject teacher.
- Withdrawal of lunch time privileges
- After school detention imposed by the subject teacher.
- Written referral of a persistent homework problem to the student's tutor/year head.
- Year Head detention for repeat offences.
- Meeting with Parent/Guardian to discuss on going issues regarding failure to produce homework.
- Any other sanction deemed appropriate.