

## **Homework**

*(See draft Homework Policy on [www.avsdonegal.com](http://www.avsdonegal.com))*

### **Introduction**

The Abbey Vocational School believes that homework plays a pivotal role in the provision of a successful educational experience.

From the beginning of First Year each student is expected to establish a homework routine. Each student is expected to keep a record of all homework in his/her Journal, which is given by the school to the students specifically for this purpose. Journals are regularly monitored by the form teacher and available to all teachers should they wish to communicate with parents. All homework should be completed and organized as guided by the subject teacher, and should be dated. This assists with revision. A class teacher will communicate initially through the journal if a student fails to present written assignments or has failed repeatedly to complete learning assignments.

### **The Purpose of Homework**

- It consolidates and reinforces skills and understanding developed at school.
- It encourages students to develop the skills, confidence, self-discipline and motivation needed to study effectively on their own.
- It provides an opportunity for the student for self-assessment and to check if he/she has understood the work done earlier. It helps teachers to monitor individual progress.
- It sustains the involvement of parents in the management of students' learning and keeping them informed about the work students are doing.
- It develops an understanding of journal entry, reminders, deadlines and time management, therefore increasing organisational skills.

### **The amount of homework appropriate for students to different ages**

The intrinsic value of homework activities is far more important than the precise amount of time devoted to them. Best practice suggests that the amount of time that should be spent on average, by second level students, on homework should fall within the following ranges:

- First Year            1.5 hours
- Second Year        1.5 to 2 hours
- Third Year            2 to 3 hours
- Transition Year    Varies depending on project work and activities
- Fifth Year            3 to 3.5 hours
- Sixth Year            3.5 hours minimum. Weekend study and revision is also essential

Teachers and parents need to consider the varying abilities of students when setting homework or when inspecting homework.

The school expects that all homework is completed on time and presented on time. It should be done to the best of the students' ability in a neat and tidy fashion. It is very important that homework,

including sanctions for not completing it, should be consistently applied across the school so that all pupils see the arrangements as fair.

**If a student has been absent the onus is on the student to discover what work has been set and to endeavour to complete it within the time given in as far as is possible.**

For this purpose it is worthwhile having a contact number of another student who was present in class.

If the student has been ill, a period of time will be given to the student to complete missed assignments. It is also necessary for both teacher and parent to ensure that there is a healthy balance between time allocated to homework and time allocated to extracurricular and leisure activities.

## **Homework Journal**

The following practice should be observed by all students in relation to their homework journals.

- Date to be entered at the top of each page
- Separate entries for different subjects
- When homework is completed, a mark should be made to show this
- Due date should be noted when taking down and completing homework
- Students should plan carefully for the completion of long-term projects

## **The role of teachers in supporting students**

Teachers will write homework on whiteboard where necessary giving students time to record in their journals.

Teachers will make parents aware of any problem in this area by sending a note home in the journal.

Teachers will be aware of demands made on students in other subject areas and allocate sufficient time to complete assignments.

They will ensure homework is clearly marked to identify areas for improvement. Feedback should be constructive, practical and given in an appropriate time frame.

Records of homework, grades and comments should be maintained by each teacher.

## **Appropriate tasks for homework**

The range of tasks which are appropriate for students of various ages are many and varied. Some examples are as follows;

Written assignments	Learning assignments	Essay writing
Reading	Investigations	Interviews
Drill practice	Simple experiments	Research
Drafting	Report Writing	Designing
Revision Work	Practice of some procedure	Problem solving
Making a model	Drawing	Word processing
Projects	Watching a documentary	Listening comprehension
Preparing for debates, role-plays, presentations etc.		Preparing for class tests or exams

Tasks should have a clear objective, linked to study programmes. They should be both challenging and interesting. Teachers are encouraged to check that their overall homework programme is meaningful and balanced in the type and scale of tasks and manageable for students. This balance is not always possible and can vary considerably from day to day. However, it should be noted that homework time devoted to reading and learning is as important as written work.

**All students should spend time at home on their studies whether or not work has been assigned.** If no homework has been set then students have an obligation to go over material they have recently studied in class to make sure that they have fully understood it.

## **Special educational needs**

In setting homework for students with special needs teachers are encouraged to balance the right of students to share fully in the work of the class, including homework tasks if applicable, with their individual learning needs. These needs may include consolidation and reinforcement of specific skills. For some students, the continuing involvement of parents is very valuable. Subject teachers will collaborate where possible with Learning Support teachers to ensure class tasks are manageable, and individual skill practice can be incorporated without overloading students.

## **Feedback for pupils**

Students look mainly to teachers for a response on the quality of their work. Effective marking and feedback have always placed demands on teachers, but both are fundamental to helping students make progress. Teachers check homework on a regular basis.

A variety of methods are used to correct homework: e.g.

- Teacher correction
- Class correction
- Class discussion
- Students exchange work for correction
- Students write out answers in form of a test
- Some items of homework (and class work) may be checked by students themselves under the direction of a teacher. This can be the useful part of the learning process for students.

The school reports to parents on the progress of students and indeed reporting is a crucial part of the relationship between school and parents. Traditional school end-of-term reports that take the form of a grade or mark and a generalised comment for each subject can be reassuring and supportive for the parents of students. Parent/teacher meetings offer valuable opportunities for the school to move beyond the marks, as it were, and to present more comprehensive assessments of progress. As well as allowing a focus on progress achieved, such meetings provide an opportunity to nominate areas that need specific attention and to indicate what needs to be done to improve student performance

## **ICT :**

An increasing number of pupils have access to computers in the home or through their out-of-school activities. In keeping with the school homework policy pupils will be encouraged to make use of home computers and ICT resources available through such places as After School Clubs, Libraries and Youth Clubs or at home.

### **Where appropriate pupils will be given opportunities to make use of ICT resources to:**

- Carry out research to support classroom work, projects etc
- To complete work begun in school
- To carry out or present a homework task As linked to our approach to equity of access, pupils who do not have ICT resources at home should not be disadvantaged.

To seek to facilitate this, provision is made to permit the use of computers beyond normal school hours where possible. When using ICT / Google classroom or any VLE students should:

- recognise that the effective use of ICT is a skill in itself, which needs to be developed, but when used well it can be an extremely powerful aid to communicating ideas.
- incorporate the use of ICT whenever appropriate to improve the quality of their work
- recognise that VLE may be used to enrich their learning in a number of ways, including providing a vehicle for receiving and submitting homework
- check regularly for links which may have been added to help with research and extended learning
- In keeping with appropriate digital citizenship, only use the VLE for appropriate academic discussion.

Reference to the code of behaviour and expectations around this also apply to this mode of communication