



**NORTH WICKLOW
EDUCATE TOGETHER
SECONDARY SCHOOL**

Homework Policy

1. Our School

North Wicklow Educate Together Secondary School is a voluntary secondary school under the patronage of Educate Together. Our school provides a caring and supportive school community that nurtures each student's personal, social, and academic potential throughout their school career.

Our ethos provides a strong moral, ethical and spiritual framework for the whole school community, and informs all policies and practices in the daily life of the school. Students follow Ethical Education which includes learning about different religions and belief systems. The school currently has an enrolment of around 300 students with an AS class. A Board of Management devolves the running of the school to the Principal and the staff.

The four core principles of Educate Together are equality based, co-educational, child-centred, and democratically run. An Educate Together school provides an ethical curriculum that focuses on the ethical, moral, and social development of young people. It provides the knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes that young people need to enable them to make informed moral decisions and prepare them for life in a pluralist society which embraces diversity. The boundaries of confidentiality will be part of every subject, visible in every lesson and particularly embedded in SPHE and RSE lessons.

2. Our School Mission Statement

North Wicklow Educate Together Secondary School is dedicated to creating a co-educational, learner-centred, caring, happy and positive environment where equality and democracy are celebrated and nurtured. We are committed to enabling students to become creative, empathetic, life-long learners who are prepared to meet the challenges of the 21st century in a sustainable and ethical way.

We embrace collaborative educational practices both in our school and through engagement with the wider community. Through the process of teaching and learning we aim to inspire, support, and challenge all students to develop their skills and passions. In doing so, we dedicate ourselves to empowering all students to truly understand themselves and others better so that when they leave school, they are ready to actively engage in society and to lead purposeful, fulfilling, and happy lives.

3. Purpose of the policy

"Homework involves the complex interaction of more influences than any other instructional device" Cooper (1989). In North Wicklow Educate Together we are aware that there are many factors affecting the completion of homework. The purpose of this policy document is to work together with students, parent/guardian/carers, and teachers to create best practice and do homework more accessible and achievable for students.

4. Definition of homework for the purpose of this policy

Homework is typically defined as any tasks "assigned to students by teachers that are meant to be carried out during non-school hours" (Cooper, 1989a, p. 7).

The completion of homework is influenced by the interconnection of three main factors:

- Students (age, ability, motivation, and study habits)
- Home (space, parent/guardian/careral support, and ability to help)
- School (quality and design of homework, follow up and feedback)

5. Purpose of homework

Homework is referred to in Looking at Our Schools 2016 under Domain One of Teaching and Learning. An effective statement of practice is described when the students “take a positive approach to both their class and homework”. A highly effective statement of practice is “when students then have both a **positive** and **reflective** approach to their class and homework”.

Our aim in North Wicklow Educate Together is to create a positive approach to homework and a reflective attitude.

Homework is a beneficial learning tool when teachers use it effectively. It can help consolidate learning and it can be useful for ongoing assessment. Homework improves learning outcomes for adolescent learners, and it provides insight for parent/guardian/carers about their child’s learning.

“When teachers design homework to meet specific purposes and goals, more students complete their homework and benefit from the results and more families remain involved in their children’s education...” (Epstein & Voorhis, 2001)

6. Roles and Responsibilities

We are aware that staff, students, and parent/guardian/carers need to work in collaboration to improve learning outcomes for students.

“Homework requires a tripartite relationship. Teachers and pupils and parent/guardian/carers are all just as important as each other. Everyone needs to work together to ensure that homework is a positive tool which helps children learn and develop.” (Rudman, 2014, p. 189)

Teachers:

When designing and assigning homework teachers need to give consideration to the external factors that can affect the completion of homework.

“When teachers design homework to meet specific purposes and goals, more students complete their homework and benefit from the results” (Epstein & Voorhis, 2001)

1. Teachers have agreed on a whole school level that the following approach constitutes good homework:
2. Teachers will assign homework to be written into the journal and record it on Teams. This will ensure that it is easily accessible for students and parent/guardian/carers.
3. Homework instructions should be clear for all students.
4. Homework should not be assigned as a matter of routine. Homework should be assigned judiciously and given careful consideration. Homework should be assigned, “only when there is a clear purpose in regard to student learning” (Marzano & Pickering, 2010.)
5. Homework must be appropriate and doable. Students should be able to complete their homework on their own without help with clear success criteria. To ensure this, homework should be differentiated where and when appropriate.
6. Teachers will instruct students to record the homework in the journal.
7. Sufficient time should be allocated in the lesson for the teacher to explain the homework and allow the student to leave the lesson with clarity and confidence. Students will be afforded

sufficient time to ask questions. They should know what to do and how to do it. This will prevent confusion, decrease the habituation of errors, and increase confidence.

8. Teachers should implement a time limit for homework tasks. This can be written beside the homework in the journal.
9. Homework is assigned with a submission date.
10. Variety of homework is important to stimulate interest and engagement.
11. Choice is important when assigning homework. This could be the number of questions or a choice of which exercises to complete. Implementing choice can make homework personal and authentic. "Educators have come to appreciate the motivational role of personalised learning, choice and self-assessment" (Vatterott, 2018)
12. Teachers can assign compulsory and optional non-compulsory homework for differentiation.
13. Prompt and effective feedback is pivotal in the learning journey. Teachers may choose between formative, summative, oral, aural, written, demonstrative, whole class, individual and/or collaborative feedback depending on the requirements of the learning.
14. Homework should never be used as a punishment as this reinforces a negative attitude to learning.
15. If a student does not complete homework continuously this should be recorded it on vsware. Allocating negative vsware points should be done with thought and consideration.
16. The teacher should contact the parent/guardian/carer if the student is not completing homework. Collaboration with the tutor, year coordinator and ASN team is essential
17. Teacher should encourage students to seek help if they are experiencing difficulties and/or require an extension due to extenuating circumstances.

Students with Additional Needs:

In addition to the above, students with additional needs will require:

- Differentiated instructions
- Further examples of success criteria
- Differentiated time limits
- Longer time frames for completion
- Additional scaffolding for completion of their homework
- Open communication and flexibility with parent/guardian/carers on homework

Students:

Our aim is for students to have a positive and reflective approach to their homework. In order for students to develop and progress with their learning, students are:

1. Responsible for recording their homework (and time required) in their school journal.
2. Expected to leave the lesson with clarity and confidence. Students need to ask questions if required.
3. Appreciative of the benefit of homework and complete it to the best of their ability with effort and pride.
4. Encouraged to ask for explanation, examples, or extension work.
5. Encouraged to show their journal and their work to their parent/guardian/carers.

6. Encouraged to speak to their teacher if they are experiencing difficulties and/or require an extension due to extenuating circumstances.
7. Asked to participate in a discussion with subject teachers on homework and exercise their choice when offered it.
8. Expected to catch up on homework if they fall behind or meet new deadlines.

Parent/guardian/carers:

It is important that parent/guardian/carers are involved and support their child's learning.

“ Homework can provide insight for parent/guardian/carers about their children's learning and it can connect home and school” (Harris and Robinson) but there is a significant shift of parent/guardian/careral involvement once students move to post Primary (GUI study, 2018)

It is the responsibility of parent/guardian/carers to:

1. Support their child in providing an appropriate workspace for students at home to complete their homework.
2. Encourage their child to complete homework to the best of their ability.
3. Assist their child with a plan and routine so that homework can be completed
4. Check their child's journal, vsware or teams regularly to ensure that homework is completed until they can do this independently.
5. Encourage their child to communicate difficulties with their teacher.
6. Communicate respectfully with the teachers if their child is experiencing stress or upset when completing homework and work together towards a common goal.
7. Attend and support an information seminar on homework if provided

7. In Summary:

To develop consistent whole school practices with homework and improve learning outcomes for our students:

Teachers	Tutor	Student	Parent/guardian/carers
<p>Assign doable homework Linked to classwork Quality Homework Clear written instructions Explain/ give examples Provide Success criteria Time limits Choice Student consultation Differentiation Provide possible extensions due to unforeseeable circumstances. Link with parent/guardian/carer. Create a collaborative learning environment where upon students feel comfortable to ask for assistance. Provide prompt feedback</p>	<p>Monitor journal Support the student Link with subject teachers Help develop a plan Link with parent/guardian/carer</p>	<p>Record homework in journal Ask questions for clarity Do it with pride and best of ability Ask for extension / example allow parent/guardian/carers to monitor look for help if needed Follow a homework plan</p>	<p>Support their child with an appropriate space encourage their child help develop a routine/ plan check their journal and monitor communicate any difficulties attend homework seminars</p> <p>Notify the subject teacher of any external circumstances which affect the student's ability to complete the homework in the time allocated</p>
	<p>Year Coordinator</p>		
	<p>Phone parent/guardian/carer link with ASN organise meetings Develop and monitor a plan</p>		

Ratified by the Board of Management

Date: June 2021

Chairperson of the BOM: _____

Principal: _____ Date of review: _____

Appendices:

Appendix I : Bibliography:

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Cooper, H. M. (2015). *The Battle Over Homework: Common Ground for Administrators, Teachers, and Parents*. Simon and Schuster.

Epstein, J.L. and Van Voorhis, F.L. (2001) More Than Minutes: Teachers' Roles in Designing Homework. *Educational Psychologist* [online], 36(3), 181–193. Available at:

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