



# **Homework Policy**

**Version 1.0**

**November 2008**

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“Glenstal Abbey School is a school within a monastic community characterised by moderation and mutual respect. It seeks to provide a balanced and disciplined environment which emphasises values such as integrity, kindness and respect and it seeks to maintain an inclusive climate of learning where each child can fulfil his own potential”

## Scope

This policy applies to the whole school community, i.e. students, teachers, tutors, housemasters and study supervisors, supported by parents during the course of the academic year and beyond.

## Rationale

Glenstal Abbey School seeks to promote a love of learning among its students. Autonomous learning is central to the educational philosophy of Glenstal Abbey School and is particular to the talents, learning style and character of each individual student. Homework is a central element of the school’s effort to promote autonomous learning.

This policy aims to inform the school community of the school’s position regarding homework and thereby to promote consistency and individual engagement in the approach to homework. Just as students have individual learning styles so too the school community accepts that teachers may have reasonable grounds for adopting different teaching and assessment styles. This policy gives practical expression to the school’s mission to promoting a love of learning and personal fulfilment.

Teachers and students play an equal role in, and carry equal responsibility for implementing the policy.

## The purpose of homework

- It consolidates and reinforces skills and understanding developed in class.
- It encourages students to develop the skills, confidence, self-discipline, organisation and motivation needed to study effectively on their own. This is an essential tool to prepare for life-long learning and intellectual flexibility.
- It builds on and develops learning in class, for example through additional reading.
- It enables students to prepare future lessons.
- It fosters student independence in the management of their learning.
- It directs research.
- It provides teachers with feedback on student progress.
- It can be tailored to the individual learning requirements of the individual student.

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 Journal, which is given by the school to the students specifically for this purpose.
- Every student should enter the written homework into the correct subject copy. It should be dated e.g. homework for day/month/year. The questions and answers should be clearly written. This aids revision.

- Students should ensure that they retain their homework after it has been assessed for learning as it is the single most important record of progress and learning.

### **The amount and nature of homework appropriate for students of different ages:**

Best practice suggests that the amount of time that should be spent by students at Second Level, on average, on homework should fall within the following ranges:

- First Year 1½ hours
- Second Year 1½ – 2 hours
- Third Year 2 – 3 hours
- Transition Year Varies depending on project work and activities. TY students will have at least 1 hour 20 minutes of regular homework each evening
- Fifth Year 3 hours
- Sixth Year 3 hours. Weekend study and revision is also essential.

Some students will complete all tasks quickly and correctly and may appear to have given very little time to their homework. Other students may put in huge amounts of time and effort and appear to enjoy only modest success. Teachers 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, presented on time and to the best of the student's 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 students 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.

### **Expectations regarding Homework**

Teachers may expect

- That students will record all homework
- That students will make an honest effort to complete homework on time
- That students will have adequate facilities to enable them to do their homework, i.e., adequate space, light, heat ventilation, freedom from noise and other interference such as television, radio, music, etc.
- That study supervisors will supervise study periods as appropriate
- That students will spend time at their studies whether or not work has been assigned
- That if students have homework at weekends that this work will be completed to an appropriate standard for the next day of class. In particular parents should encourage students to complete such school work that may be assigned outside of term time or at weekends.
- That if students have evening classes, that they will nonetheless have completed assigned homework for all other subjects.

Students may expect

- That homework in each subject area will not take up an unreasonable amount of time
- That adequate allowance is made for time-consuming homework, such as essays etc.
- That homework will have a clear objective, linked to study programmes

- That homework will be fully explained
- That homework will be assessed for learning by their teacher and a record kept of work given and progress achieved
- That adequate time will be given in class for the recording of homework
- That homework will be assigned according to ability
- That teachers will monitor homework and to help identify students with particular difficulties
- That class tutors will be available to help them improve their learning strategies and organisation of their work
- That teachers will impose appropriate sanctions for uncompleted work e.g. yellow slips, detention etc
- That their fellow students will not disturb their study time

### **Study Provision**

Students are provided with a reasonably peaceful, suitable place in which they can do their homework free of distractions, e.g. provide suitable desk, chair, adequate light and heat.

Regular times are set aside for study.

Students will not be unduly disturbed by their fellow students

Since computers are an integral part of today's world, it is inevitable and essential that the Internet is a source for much of student research. The computer Room is available to students to support their learning.

### **Study skills**

It is very important that students should have frequent and increasing opportunities to develop and consolidate their competence as autonomous learners. These can be achieved through tutorials on study skills, target setting and mentoring schemes. Intensive study skills programmes are organised for Third, Fifth and Sixth Years. The Tutor and Learning Support teacher will advise students on ways to maximise their potential through appropriate study skills. Each individual class teacher provides regular guidance on study methods within his/her own subject area. Meeting homework deadlines may not be always easy for students. They should not be excused homework, but may need extra help with strategies to manage it.

Students are encouraged to work in study groups that may meet outside of organised study periods or class time unless otherwise agreed with relevant supervisors, tutors or teachers.

### **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, with their individual learning needs. These needs may include consolidation and reinforcement of specific skills. 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 the student. Where possible, subject teachers will guide the gifted student in their learning and research.

## Feedback for students

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 regularly as they deem appropriate in line with student learning needs.

A variety of methods are used to assess homework for learning depending on the content and the age of the student:

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


## Arrangements for monitoring and evaluating homework policy

The effectiveness of this homework policy needs to be monitored and evaluated. It is envisaged that each subject department monitors homework within the department at subject department meetings. Teachers need to evaluate the quality of homework and the contribution it is making to the individual student's learning. Teachers and students shall have due regard to differentiating their teaching according to student ability. The system can also be evaluated collaboratively through staff appraisal at whole staff or relevant department meetings. The key criterion should be the extent to which the policy is contributing to the progress students make in developing their skills and attitudes as autonomous learners.

## Review

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis.

## This policy adopted by the Board

Signed: 

## Chairperson Board of Management

Date: November 26<sup>th</sup> 2008