



Loreto Secondary School, Balbriggan, Co. Dublin

Home Learning Policy

School Ethos

In Loreto Secondary School, Balbriggan we aim to create a safe and happy environment which enriches the lives of our students. There are carefully developed and monitored systems in place to ensure that each student feels a sense of belonging in the school community. Multi-cultural and multi-faith dialogue is fostered creating an atmosphere of inclusivity.

We are proud of producing consistently excellent examination results. While offering a curriculum that is balanced, integrated and stimulating, the school is continually reviewing and adapting this curriculum to the educational requirements of a changing world.

Aspiring towards excellence and creating high expectations through a holistic approach to education helps shape young women who are able to think for themselves, ready to further develop their diverse competencies, find their own voices and claim their own identities in the service of others. (cf CTJ pp 24)

The Home learning policy was created in accordance with the Loreto Balbriggan Mission statement.

Loreto Secondary School, Balbriggan, is a Catholic girls' secondary school. In the spirit of Mary Ward we aim to develop all the abilities of our students in order that they realise their full potential and use their talents for the service of others.

We also aim to encourage self-confidence and self-esteem in a happy atmosphere and structured environment.

The school community, collaborating together in mutual respect, strives for holistic excellence.

Definition

In a school context, home learning, from an educational perspective, means work given by a teacher to a student or a class that will engage a student in an activity beyond the classroom, examples of which would include the following; reading or writing, research or analysis, reflection on work done during the day, focussed physical exercise relating to sporting activities, practical experiments or activities related to school subjects. Sometimes 'flipped learning' may be required whereby the student is expected to familiarise themselves with the new content (text/audio/video) at home so that they may practice critical thinking on that topic in the next class. This list is not exhaustive and could involve a combination of all.

Rationale

The purpose of home learning is to help the student to revisit and reflect on work that has taken place in the classroom to encourage further reflection. The ultimate aim is to enhance academic achievement and develop students key skills. Home learning is given to supplement what is currently being covered in the class, or in the case of flipped learning, to free up class time for more critical reflection. It may involve a student presenting the work, normally to be done at home, to the teacher.

Home Learning Policy Statement

Loreto Secondary School, Balbriggan believes that home learning plays a pivotal role in the provision of a successful educational experience. The self-discipline required to complete a home learning task should be fostered from the beginning of first year as it is vital at later stages of secondary education and beyond. Student journals should contain all work to be carried out at home and correct use leads to vastly improved time management and organisational skills. These journals provide a link between parents/guardians and teachers and this correspondence via the journal is essential. Our Compass administration system and Gsuite for schools also enhance the contact between home and school. Not only does home learning lead to students working independently, it also reinforces skills learned in class. The emphasis on self-directed learning and goal setting fostered in this school is enhanced by well-planned and organised homework practices. As a Gsuite for education school, Google classroom can be of particular benefit here. Alternative materials and sources of information, not always available in the classroom, may be utilised at home and parents/guardians may become aware of certain projects and have increased knowledge of where their child is at. Home learning also benefits the teacher as he/she can more readily access the progress of each individual student and it support the recognition of potential problems at an early stage.

Aims of Home learning

- To reinforce work carried out in the classroom while it is still fresh in students' minds and therefore more likely to be retained.
- To enhance the educational experience.
- To develop self-directed learning and goal setting habits as per our school self evaluation policy and practice.
- To foster self-discipline and self-motivation in the student, which will be beneficial throughout her school career.
- To create a meaningful link between teachers, parents and students, through journal correspondence, Google classroom and our Compass portal.
- To develop an understanding of reminders, deadlines and time management therefore increasing organisational skills.

Procedures

- Each subject teacher sets home learning appropriate to their students. The nature of the work will vary between year groups, classes, courses and subject specifications.
- Teachers ensure that all instructions concerning homework are clear to everyone in the class and sufficient time is allowed for the student to write down the homework in her journal.
- Teachers and wellbeing tutors regularly check that students are recording home learning correctly.

- Work is assessed and pupils are provided with feedback in a way that facilitates ongoing improvement and learning, and acknowledges achievements made.
 - Home learning should be linked with and integrated into a programme of teaching and learning thereby forming part of the process of Assessment for Learning. It is designed in such a way as to offer the students opportunities for self-assessment. Feedback is vital and dependant again on the student's level and ability and the particular class and subject. Feedback will be most helpful when the learning intentions and criteria for success are clearly understood by the students. The teacher's comments relate to the task in hand, the learning intention and the criteria for success. Records of home learning, progress/grades/ comments are maintained by each teacher.
 - Teachers examine each case of non-presentation of home learning on an individual basis. In the first instance teachers apply their own sanction and communicate via a note in the student's journal/Compass. If a teacher suspects that there is an underlying problem, they are advised to contact the relevant wellbeing tutor. It may be the case that a student is experiencing difficulty with the subject area or is experiencing other difficulties. If these difficulties persist the issue should be referred to the Year Head, the Student Support Team or S.E.N. Co-ordinator as appropriate.
 - A student who has a valid reason for non-completion of home learning must have an explanatory note from a parent/guardian or year head dated and signed in her journal. The student must show the note to all relevant teachers.
 - Persistent non-presentation of home learning will be brought to the attention of the Year Head, in written report form, to allow the situation to be further investigated.
 - Sanctions for non-presentation of home learning and or copying same will be at the discretion of the individual class teacher and in accordance with school's Code of Behaviour.
- In line with the inclusive culture in Loreto Balbriggan, a policy of positive affirmation is fostered in the classroom. Students receive praise and are recognised and celebrated for achievements.
 - Due to the intrinsic value of home learning activities it is important that the appropriate and necessary amount of time is devoted to them. The teacher usually suggests the amount of time that should be spent by the student on any particular activity.
 - Every effort is made by teachers to ensure a balanced evening's work, appropriate to the time of year and the demands of the curriculum.
 - Teachers consider the varying abilities of students when setting or inspecting home learning. Differentiated home work may be assigned in accordance with the varied academic abilities in any given class. Teachers also differentiate where appropriate in the feedback they provide whilst maintaining high expectations from all students.

Guidance for Parents/Guardians

Home learning is an integral part of school life, and in today's hectic lifestyle, must be included in a daily routine. Parents/guardians, play an important role in creating an environment where the student can complete all home learning tasks effectively.

- Establishing a home learning routine will help encourage the student to view home learning as a daily and necessary exercise.
- A positive and supportive learning atmosphere is required for home learning. In a busy home environment where this may be difficult to provide, parents/guardians could choose the option of sending their child to supervised study in school, or public library as an alternative location.
- For young people to achieve their full potential, a healthy diet and lifestyle is essential. It is within this context that the school recommends that all students eat well and keep hydrated when working at home. Daily exercise is also essential as studies and research have shown that there is a significant link between nutrition and physical activity in increasing academic achievement.

- Ensure the school journal is signed weekly and is checked for communications from teachers. It is very important the parents/guardians regularly monitor communication from the school on the Compass App.

Guidance for students

- Students must record all home learning in their journals.
- Students must complete all home learning to the best of their ability.
- It is the responsibility of students involved in extra-curricular activities to find out and complete home learning assigned in their absence.
- Students should seek clarification from the teacher on any aspect of their home learning of which they are unsure.
- Students must make sure their home learning is completed and available for correction at the allocated time.
- Students are expected to present all home learning on time and in a tidy, legible and organised form.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on: 9th March 2020

Signed: 
Chairperson

Signed: 
Principal/Secretary, Board of Management