

Homework Guidance 2022-2023

4th-5th-6th

Reading

This is a very important part of homework and should be practised every night. The children are usually given one, two or sometimes three pages of reading to practise. Part of this may be done orally with a parent (perhaps half a page) and the rest silently, as they should be at a level now to cope with silent reading. Library books will be given to the children weekly. Book reviews will also be written occasionally on what they have read, but I do not want the love of reading fiction to be spoiled by the thought of a long written exercise follow-up each time they read a book.

When reading, the children should be encouraged to read with a good voice expression, obey punctuation marks and read for meaning. In other words, the reading should flow and the reader should be comfortable with expression and with the subject matter they are reading.

Some audio books are available on Youtube and they are a great way for reluctant readers to access literature, especially the classics. This can be done on the car radio via Bluetooth, for example.

Spellings

The children have a weekly spelling test every Thursday. The spellings are based on the lists in the Nelson Alphabetical List. They have 18 English spellings and 9/12 Irish spellings weekly. The children are frequently spot-checked on a third of these spellings.

In learning the spellings, the children are encouraged to use the method of **Look, Say, Cover, Write & Check**. They are also encouraged to look for visual clues and patterns in the words they are learning. I advise them to learn the spellings before they do any written homework, and then at the end of the written homework, to go to someone and have the spellings asked without looking at them again in the meantime. These should be written by the pupil when being tested, as spelling is a written exercise. In this way, they have shown that the spellings have stayed in the memory for a period of time. As an incentive and to ensure that the children are working on spellings that challenge them, they can move up targets, depending on how many sets they get right in the current target.

Maths

Work from the *Ready, Steady, Go!* or other Mental Maths books will be included most nights, except when some new work has to be practised from the Planet Maths/Operation Maths textbook with the aim of reinforcing work done in class. Work should be presented neatly and the children should keep the rule of 'only one digit in a square'. *Ready, Steady, Go!* teaches the skills required to mentally calculate the answers to problems, rather than just test the pupils on their knowledge. It also encourages the children to look for patterns in Mathematics. Any topic being revised that the child is not familiar with should be skipped without stress and the teacher will go over it the next day. We will be doing the difficult Wednesday maths word puzzles in class, so on a Wednesday night, the children will do the Friday work.

Tables or other lists of number facts will also have to be learned to aid with mental computation. They will be tested weekly in first term, with 50 multiplication number facts in five-minute tests. Games are played in class to reinforce their knowledge and add a fun element. The 'Hit the Button' game on the web is ideal for practising these at home. They will also learn the 11s and 12s.

I would also encourage children to use IXL.com or similar websites to aid with improving their Maths skillset. IXL is free, provided no more than 10 questions per day per computer are practised. It covers the Irish Maths curriculum from infants up to Leaving Cert. Other useful free websites are multiplication.com, sumdog.com, www.topmarks.co.uk and mangahigh.com. These present maths work to children in child-friendly visual ways and can be rewarding if used regularly.

Writing

Writing homework may occasionally be included, which could come from any subject. Literacy skills are practised over all subject areas, so we always expect good penmanship, neatly presented work and accurate spelling. Joined writing is encouraged once proficiency is achieved; it is not essential if it proves too problematic or slows the pupil down. Sometimes unfinished written tasks at school can be finished at home.

Irish Reading

The new Irish curriculum (2016) focuses more on oral language, but Irish reading in Am Don Léamh should still be practised every night. *The audio of each story is uploaded to the school website under "Classes"* (www.stconals.ie) The children will usually be given a page to practise which will have been worked on in class. Revision of past reading is also advisable, especially earlier in a given theme. Again, the observance of punctuation, good voice modulation, a brisk pace and reading for meaning are essential. A positive approach to Irish reading is important to model for the children and the children should be able to practise with relative confidence, even if a parent hasn't a good command of Irish.

General Points

- We would request that the homework diary be reviewed and signed by a parent/guardian.
- Homework is essential in revising topics, practising necessary skills and it also gives parents/guardians an opportunity to feel involved in their child's learning. If children are struggling in any particular area or are taking too long to complete their work, it is important that the teacher be notified, so that unnecessary stress can be avoided.
- Free Websites and activities which can be both educational and fun for children include Wordle, Globle, www.seomraranga.com, www.topmarks.co.uk, www.multiplication.com, www.primarygames.com, www.timestables.me.uk and www.scoilnet.ie.
- A useful website for Irish pronunciation is www.focloir.ie

If you have any queries at any time, please feel free to ring me at the school during breaks.

Best wishes,

Tom Plunkett