Homework Policy

Scoil Pól

This policy at a glance

- Homework is about quality, not quantity: short, purposeful and linked to classwork.
- Time guidelines are totals for all subjects each night, from about 1 hour in First Year to about 2 hours in Sixth Year.
- Not every subject sets written homework every night, and major deadlines are coordinated across subjects.
- If your child has worked for the guideline time and made a genuine effort, they may stop: just write a note in the journal.
- Homework is adapted where needed, and it is never set as a punishment.

1. Introduction

Scoil Pól is a co-educational, voluntary Catholic secondary school in Kilfinane, Co. Limerick. It was founded by the Sisters of Charity of St Paul the Apostle, and its trustee is the Le Chéile Schools Trust. Our motto, *Omnibus Omnia*, guides our commitment to the whole person: academic, social, emotional and spiritual.

This policy sets out how homework is set, managed and supported at Scoil Pól. It should be read with the school's Assessment Policy, as homework is an important part of formative assessment and of each Learning Cycle.

2. Rationale

Homework helps students practise and remember what they learn in class, prepare for new work, and build the habits of independent study. Research shows that homework helps learning at second level, but only up to a point. Cooper, Robinson and Patall (2006) reviewed studies from 1987 to 2003. They found that more than about two hours a night brings no extra benefit, even for senior students, and that overloading students is counter-productive. Homework works best when it is short, purposeful, linked to classwork and followed by feedback.

At Scoil Pól, homework is about quality, not quantity. It should support students' learning and wellbeing and must not adversely affect their wellbeing. This approach is aligned with the Department of Education and Youth's Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice and the NCCA Junior Cycle Wellbeing Guidelines.

3. Policy Objectives

This policy aims to:

- make sure homework is purposeful, manageable and consistent across the school
- make sure no student is overburdened, through clear time guidelines and coordination across subjects

- give students regular feedback on their homework
- help students build good study habits and organise their own work
- support parents/guardians to take an interest in their child's homework
- make homework fair for every student, including students with special educational needs and students without technology at home

4. What Good Homework Looks Like

Good homework:

- has a clear purpose, explained by the teacher and linked to the lesson's learning intention
- can be completed by the student independently, within the time guideline
- is varied: written work, learning, reading, research, practical and creative tasks
- is reviewed, with regular feedback to the student
- is recorded in the student journal before the end of class, and written on the board for Junior Cycle classes

5. Time Guidelines

The times below are the **total for all subjects**, not per subject. They are guidelines: some nights will be lighter and some heavier, but the week should balance out.

Year	Monday to Thursday (total per night)	Weekend (total)
1st Year	About 1 hour (lighter in the first weeks while students settle in)	Up to 1 hour
2nd Year	About 1¼ hours	Up to 1½ hours
3rd Year	About 1½ hours	Up to 2 hours
Transition Year	2–3 hours per week, mainly project and portfolio work	As needed for projects
5th Year	About 2 hours	Up to 2½ hours
6th Year	About 2 hours, plus planned revision	Up to 3 hours, including revision

6. Avoiding Overload

- **Not every subject every night.** Subject departments agree a homework pattern for Junior Cycle classes (for example, written homework two or three times a week per subject), so the nightly total stays within the guideline.

- **Time guide for each task.** Teachers tell students roughly how long a task should take. If a student has worked for the guideline time and made a genuine effort, they may stop. Parents/guardians write a short note in the journal and the teacher takes this into account.
- **Coordinated deadlines.** Projects, CBAs, AACs and long assignments are given with enough notice and broken into steps. Year Heads keep a shared deadline calendar on Teams, so a year group has no more than two major deadlines in the same week.
- **Before exams.** No new written homework is set the night before an end-of-Learning-Cycle exam, and in the week before, homework is focused revision.
- **Breaks and holidays.** Homework over mid-term breaks and holidays is kept light, mainly reading or revision. Exam classes may be given a revision plan.
- **Adapted where needed.** Homework is adapted for students with special educational needs, in line with their Student Support File, and for students learning English as an additional language.
- **Fair access.** Students without technology at home are not disadvantaged. Tasks that need a device or the internet can be done in school, in the computer room at lunchtime, or at supervised after-school study.

7. Using AI for Homework

Homework is a chance for students to practise and to show what they can do themselves. AI tools, such as chatbots, can support this when they help a student learn, not when they do the work for them. Many AI tools have a minimum age, often 13, and some need a parent's or guardian's consent for users under 18. Students should only use tools they are old enough to use. Parents/guardians are asked to check which AI tools their child uses and to monitor their use at home, as they do with other personal devices. For example, a student may use AI to explain an idea in a different way, to quiz themselves on what they have learned, or to get suggestions on how to improve a draft they have written themselves. A student should not use AI to write answers, essays or solutions and hand them up as their own work.

Teachers will tell students when AI may be used for a task and how. Where a teacher has not said, students should use AI only to help them understand, not to produce any part of the work. Students should be honest about when and how they used it. Coursework for CBAs and AACs follows the separate national rules for that work. Where a teacher is concerned that work is not the student's own, they talk to the student first, in line with Section 8. No homework task requires AI, and students who do not use it are not disadvantaged.

8. When Homework Is Not Done

The teacher first finds out why. The student may not have understood the task, may have run out of time, or may be dealing with something at home or in their wellbeing. Where homework is regularly not done, the teacher contacts the parent/guardian through the journal or by phone. If the problem continues, it is referred to the Pastoral Care teacher and then the Year Head, in line with the Code of Behaviour. Homework is never set as a punishment.

9. Roles and Responsibilities

Who	Responsibilities
Board of Management	Approves the policy and makes sure it is reviewed. Considers reports from the Principal on how it is working.
Principal and Deputy Principals	Put structures in place to implement and monitor the policy. Arrange its review every two years.
Subject departments	Agree homework patterns for each year group and coordinate major deadlines with Year Heads.
Year Heads and Pastoral Care teachers	Monitor the homework load of their year group, using the Tuesday and Thursday check-ins to ask students how they are managing. Keep the shared deadline calendar and follow up where students are struggling.
Guidance Counsellors and SEN Department	Support students who find homework difficult and advise teachers on adapting homework.
Subject teachers	Set homework in line with this policy, with a time guide for each task. Write homework on the board for Junior Cycle classes. Review homework, give regular feedback and teach study skills. Record homework set and completed on VSware, and contact parents/guardians when difficulties arise.
Parents/guardians	Provide a suitable time and place for homework, and monitor the use of personal devices. Check and sign the school journal each week and log in to VSware. Tell the school if their child regularly spends much longer than the time guideline or finds homework difficult. Help their child catch up on work missed through absence. Alert Pastoral Care/ Year Head/ SLT if difficulties with Homework or completion.
Students	Record all homework in the school journal. Complete homework to the best of their ability, within the time guideline, and present it neatly. Ask for help when they don't understand a task. Catch up on work missed through absence or school activities, and revise class material regularly.

10. Links to Other Policies

This policy works alongside the school's **Assessment Policy**, **Code of Behaviour**, **SEN Policy**, **Wellbeing Policy** and **Acceptable Use of ICT Policy**. All are available at www.scoilpol.ie/information/policies or from the school office.

11. Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years by the Principal, Deputy Principals, the Student Support Team and the Pastoral Care team.

Policy adopted by the Board of Management on: **15th October 2026**

Next review date: **October 2028**

Signed: _____ Date: 15th October 2026
Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed: _____ Date: 15th October 2026
Principal