



Home Learning Policy

Introduction

At Galway Educate Together Secondary School, we are committed to fostering an environment where every student feels safe, valued, and supported in reaching their full potential. Respect for oneself and others is a core value that underpins our daily interactions. As a school under the direct patronage of Educate Together, our ethos is built on four key principles: we are co-educational, equality-based, child-centred, and democratically run.

Our Home Learning Policy outlines the practices and procedures that support and encourage effective student learning. It also plays a key role in promoting the school's distinctive ethos, fostering positive relationships, and guiding our policies and day-to-day practices.

The Home Learning Policy works in tandem with the school's Code of Positive Behaviour. Together, these documents outline the responsibilities that students and their parent(s)/guardian(s) accept upon enrolling at Galway Educate Together Secondary School.

Purpose of Home Learning

Home Learning is a vital component of each student's educational journey. It reinforces classroom learning, prepares students for upcoming lessons, and supports the development of key skills such as self-discipline, responsibility, and organisation.

Home Learning & Study Time Guidelines

The nature and content of home learning is determined by individual subject teachers. This policy aims to provide clear guidance to students, parents/guardians, and teachers regarding the recommended total time allocation for home learning and study each day. The school expects students to dedicate approximately the following amount of time to home learning/study daily:

1st Year: 1 - 1.5 hours

2nd Year: 1.5 - 2 hours

3rd Year: 2.5 – 3 hours (home learning and revision)

4th Year: 1 - 2 hours

5th Year: 2.5 – 3 hours

6th Year 3 – 3.5 hours (home learning and revision)

(For 3rd and 6th Years, weekend study and revision are essential)

Nature and Expectations of Home Learning

Home learning can take various forms and may be either short-term (due the next day) or long-term (e.g., essay writing or project completion). The types of tasks set will vary depending on the subject and the age of the student. These tasks are designed to develop a wide range of skills and support learning beyond the classroom.

Examples of home learning activities include:

- Written Assignments
- Making Presentations
- Learning Assignments
- Report Writing
- Essay Writing
- Designing and Drawing
- Craft Work
- Reading
- Revision Activities
- Investigations and Problem Solving
- Conducting Interviews
- Practising Procedures
- Preparing for Debates, Presentations, or Role-Plays
- Carrying Out Simple Experiments
- Research Projects
- Library Visits (School or Public)

- Model Making
- Watching Educational Videos or TV Programmes
- Reviewing Class Notes
- Preparing for Class Tests or Exams
- Completing Exam-Style Questions
- Word Processing Tasks
- Listening Comprehension Exercises

Please note: This list is not exhaustive or prescriptive. Tasks may vary depending on learning needs and subject requirements.

Student Responsibility and Study Habits

All students are expected to engage with their studies at home, regardless of whether specific tasks have been assigned. Both written and oral tasks are equally valuable. When no formal homework is set, students are expected to review and consolidate recently covered material to deepen their understanding.

If a student is absent, it is their responsibility to find out what work was missed and to complete it within the given timeframe, as far as possible. In cases of illness, a reasonable extension will be provided to allow the student to catch up on missed assignments.

The Journal

Each student is issued a Student Journal at the beginning of the academic year. This journal must be brought to every class each day and used consistently to record all assigned home learning tasks on the appropriate date.

The Student Journal serves as an important organisational tool, helping students manage their workload and stay on top of their studies. It also acts as a key line of communication between the school and home, allowing parents/guardians to stay informed about their child's learning and responsibilities.

Students should be aware that their journal may be reviewed by teachers and parents/guardians at any time and are expected to keep it neat, accurate, and up to date.

Implementation – Roles and Responsibilities

A successful home learning programme relies on clear roles and shared responsibility among the school, teachers, students, and parents. The following outlines the expectations for each group:

The School

The school is responsible for ensuring that home learning is a meaningful and integrated part of the overall curriculum. It should be thoughtfully planned and aligned with classroom instruction, contributing to students' academic progress and the development of independent study skills.

Tutors

Student journals will be reviewed weekly by tutors to ensure engagement and follow-up where necessary. Students will be facilitated in organising their journals for the recording of home learning in the week ahead during Monday's tutor class.

Teachers

- Assign meaningful and appropriate home learning tasks on a regular basis
- Clearly communicate success criteria and due dates for each assignment
- Specify whether the use of an iPad or other specific resources is required and ensure this is recorded in the Student Journal.
- Provide differentiated or extension tasks where appropriate to meet the needs of all learners.
- Review, correct, and give timely feedback on submitted work, identifying areas for improvement. This may include:
 - Written comments
 - Verbal feedback
 - Peer assessment and class discussion
- Recognise and reward student effort through the school's praise and house point systems.

Students

Before leaving school each day, students should take a moment to ensure they have:

- Recorded all home learning tasks accurately in their Journal,
- Packed their iPad, notebooks, and any other materials needed to complete that evening's work.

This daily routine helps students stay organised, develop good study habits, and take responsibility for their learning. Students should also:

- dedicate appropriate time to complete assignments to a high standard,
- submit work on time and engage with any feedback provided,
- ask for help, if help is needed.

Parents/Guardians

Parents/Guardians are required to sign the Student Journal each week in the space provided. They are also encouraged to check it regularly, as it serves as the first point of contact from teachers if home learning is incomplete or if additional support is needed. Parents/guardians should communicate with the school if they feel that additional help is needed.

Responding to Incomplete Home Learning – A Restorative Approach

When a student does not submit their home learning by the agreed completion date, the school follows a staged, supportive process that aligns with our restorative approach. This process is designed to encourage responsibility, provide support, and maintain positive relationships.

Step 1: Initial Discussion and Support (Class Teacher)

- The subject teacher will have a supportive conversation with the student to understand the reason for the missed work and offer help as needed and to highlight the importance of completing home learning.
- The student will be given the opportunity to complete the home learning within a specified, agreed timeframe and will be asked to present the home learning to the teacher at the agreed time.
- The teacher will record details on VShare which is accessible to Parents and Guardians.

Step 2: Further Discussion and Support (Class Teacher)

- A more significant RP conversation will take place, the teacher will try to understand why home learning has not been completed again and highlight its importance.
- The teacher will record details on VShare which is accessible to Parents and Guardians.

Step 3: Email Home (Class Teacher)

- Home will be contacted via email or school app, and support will be offered including the option to avail of our supported Home Learning Club on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The aim of this Home Learning Club is to help students get into good habits and support the student. In consultation with the parent/guardian, and depending on the needs of the student, further supports can be discussed. The Year Head will be copied on the communication.
- A reply to this email is expected.

Step 4: Meeting with Parents or Guardians (Year Head)

- If there is no reply and/or no improvement, a meeting between the Year Head and the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) will be organized to address the concern and agree on appropriate intervention strategies which may include attendance at Home Learning Club.

GETSS Home Learning Pledge

As a student of Galway ETSS, I have read and agree with the terms of the GETSS Home Learning Policy and will work hard to complete my home learning to the best of my ability.

Signed (student): _____ Date: _____

As a parent/guardian of a student in Galway ETSS, I have read and agree with the terms of the GETSS Home Learning Policy and will support my child's engagement with home learning to the best of my ability.

Signed (parent/guardian): _____ Date: _____