

Independent Study Policy

Rationale

The governing body recognises the impact of independent study on student progress. Research suggests that three of the factors that can have the biggest impact on student performance for the lowest cost are:

- homework
- students learning effective study and memory techniques
- effective feedback from teachers on how to improve.

Through independent study it is intended that students will:

- learn and develop effective study techniques
- become more confident in managing their own learning
- consolidate and reinforce skills and understanding covered in lessons

Policy

1. All students are entitled to independent study opportunities
2. Some independent study will be compulsory – this will be referred to as homework and it will be expected that all students complete this work. This will be published on Edulink/Google classroom.
3. Some of these opportunities will be optional, although strongly encouraged: including attendance at after school clubs, fixtures, practices, study sessions and visits.
4. The balance between these two types of independent study may vary between subjects, and between students and groups of students within the same subject.
5. Parents should be informed about the work students are doing with the aim of maintaining their involvement in the management of students' learning.
6. Teachers should, wherever possible, provide differentiated learning opportunities which may involve an element of student choice.
7. Feedback to students on any independent study they have undertaken is an essential part of the process and should be given promptly.

Independent Study Guidelines

Independent study skills should be carefully planned as part of a department's scheme of work. It is important that students understand that independent study is essential for improving subject knowledge, recall and understanding. Independent study can take a variety of forms, such as:

- homework tasks set for all students to complete
- any review of the work studied in class-this should form a regular part of the learning for all students in all subjects
- rehearsals, practices, attendance at or taking part in performances, other trips or after school clubs and workshops
- research assignments
- practical exercises or volunteering (school farm, within a department etc)
- reading a broadsheet newspaper; listening to a podcast or other broadcast; reviewing an article
- developing software skills and programming
- preparation of a shared resource (leaflet, poster etc) for the class
- preparing a presentation

Completing unfinished work that was intended as classwork may be a necessary activity, but would not be regarded as a homework task.

Longer term projects will always have interim deadlines, allowing progress to be monitored, thus ensuring students get appropriate feedback before the final deadline.

We provide a study club after school for disadvantaged students or those who cannot work at home. This is staffed by trained sixth form students who support those who attend in their studies.

We may be able to provide ICT equipment for disadvantaged students who do not have access at home.

ORGANISATION

It is the responsibility of all teachers to teach, promote and model independent study for all students.

The nature, type and length of homework will vary according to the age and abilities of the student and the subject. In some cases, compulsory homework may not be regarded as essential or desirable.

Teachers should always allow a reasonable amount of time for homework to be completed. Students may have commitments and teachers should, therefore, avoid requiring homework for the following day. It is expected that students will always have independent study to work on (review, consolidate, make revision materials etc).

The amount of homework set will vary. The amount of time spent on homework will vary between individual students depending on the course choices selected.

Where students take a learning support option, teachers will provide additional support in maths and English. We do not encourage students to complete homework tasks in these lessons.

All homework and independent study will be issued via Edulink/Google classroom. During the lesson, teachers will fully explain tasks and if an assignment is to be completed over a long period, interim deadlines will be provided.

MARKING AND FEEDBACK

It is good practice to share with the students the assessment criteria that will be used for marking the work at the point when the homework is set.

Students should be given feedback as soon as is practicable after the due date for completion of the homework.

Students appreciate high quality feedback and may be disappointed or demotivated if they feel that their efforts are not being recognised. If work is set and it will not be teacher assessed this needs to be made clear in advance.

The nature of the feedback could include:

- oral feedback with self-marking or peer marking by students
- standard written feedback in the form of a mark scheme or model answer

- awarding of an attainment grade or a mark for individual pieces of work, or as a summative grade for a section of work which includes one or more pieces of homework

Written feedback should make constructive suggestions about how work could be improved in the future, or set targets for achievement in the next phase of the course.

Not all pieces of work need to be marked in detail – in some cases it will be sufficient to check that the work has been completed.

IMPLEMENTATION

Subject Teachers will monitor the homework and independent study completed by the students.

Students need to take responsibility for ensuring work is completed on time. The subject teacher will record if homework is not done on time and this will be followed up if this is habitual.

Heads of Year are responsible for monitoring the setting of homework across their year groups and for alerting the appropriate Subject Leader and/or Head of Faculty if there are concerns.

Subject Leaders and heads of faculty are responsible for the nature and quality of set work and independent study.

As a general guide, the amount of homework is likely to increase:

- as a student passes through the school from year 9 up to year 13
- if a student is aiming for higher grades in any subject
- if a student selects courses which involve a greater degree of project and portfolio work.

A guide to the amount of homework expected will be published in the course booklets to assist students and parents in making appropriate choices at both Key Stage 4 and post-16.

For students on level 3 (advanced) courses in years 12 and 13 it would be expected that each subject teacher would provide regular independent study instruction and tasks, which would include formal homework. The main method of communicating with parents will be via the Edulink website.

Parents are encouraged to check the Edulink website and or google classrooms regularly and to discuss homework and managing time with their child.

Wherever possible, parents will be encouraged to provide a suitable place, away from distractions, for their children to complete homework. Where this is not possible, parents should encourage their children to attend the after school study club.

Students are responsible for checking that they know what work has been set.

Students also need to take responsibility for making sure that work is completed on time. If there are problems about meeting a deadline, students should discuss this with subject teachers. Where there are concerns about the overall amount or nature of homework being set this could be discussed with subject teachers, form tutors or parents/carers as appropriate.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The policy will be reviewed every three years by members of the Senior Consultative Group. Views of students will be sought through the School Council and tutor group surveys.

Date approved by governors	2020
Date for review	2023

NB Sept 2020